

Doing the Works of God, Pt. 1

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We have finished a two-part sermon entitled *Looking Ahead*, and indeed, we have a unique focus as God's people as we are to be prepared for final events in a very unique way now more than ever at the end of this age of mankind, whether it begins in a week, whether it begins in a month, whether it begins in a year or ten years. And that's a difficult task, it really is, in many ways, but that's how we have to think. And that's unique to us more than ever before.

We've always had a plan or been told to plan ahead ten years and then five years, basically, it was kind of the thought, and then of course, we had a period of time where we were preparing for right away in 2012. And we've lived that and now we're living through a period of time where we don't know and we are just to be alert and on guard and learn the spiritual lessons associated with all of that, to do our part and grow by that. So anyway, we are very unique in the sense of the focus we have to have.

I was thinking about the elections that we've just finished here in the US and what's taking place in Europe. And no matter what is happening there are things that continue to take place that are shaping up in the sense of understanding that we can be so very, very close, and yet being prepared for a long period of time too. If that's God's will, if that's God's purpose, so be it. So, we have to think that way.

But over there in Europe, especially talking this last week to Jeremy about some of the news and so forth that's over there, it's very much like what you hear in the States on the left, very one sided. And so, people's minds over there are being filled with things coming through the news that are more to that side, and they don't hear the other part. So, their attitude toward a new president, toward a new cabinet, toward things that are going to be done is not getting better, it's getting worse.

And what people actually believe then about this country and what's associated with it and its leadership you can see how these things are more and more fitting into place in Europe and what's coming, because again, I've said it many of times there was a time not too long ago when it was very, very hard to imagine how on earth Europe would ever come to a point of doing what they're going to do in that Fifth Trumpet. And now it's easier to see and it's not going to take all that much in that respect, especially when things begin happening depending on what happens.

You look at different things that are happening as far as politics are concerned and realize that God has a plan, God has a purpose, and God is in control of the timing. But just have to say, it's certainly appears as though things are happening very quickly, that this is the time that they're being pushed more, and this is the administration that could do that in terms of some of the things that could take place as far as what they're telling them.

Watching some news today and thinking about what people are saying concerning NATO and some that aren't paying their fair share yet in the sense of the countries that are over there, which was something that was done in the first administration of the newly elected president. And he did push Europe to hold up their portion, but they're still not doing it, and this is a gripe amongst many, that they're still not doing their part. And as one individual made the comment on there that they should be doing that and more considering the state of Europe right now and concerning what's happening in Russia and Ukraine.

So again, topsy-turvy world, things are in a horrible shape, in that respect, and being pushed closer and closer to the edge. So, we're unique; we have to be prepared, and we are looking ahead in a very unique way. But it's incredible the times we are in.

So, with that focus of looking ahead in the unique way that we are, we cannot afford to be Laodicean. We cannot afford to be lukewarm. We cannot be coasting or taking it easy as far as our spiritual lives are concerned. We are to be working. We are to be working. We need to focus on that in this particular series now so we're going to begin a new series in the sense of how we are to be more strongly focused than ever before in our lives, and to understand this is something God has given us to do. It's a part of a work we're supposed to do.

You know, there was a time in Worldwide where we spoke of "the work," and we had it in a certain framework of things having to do with *The Plain Truth*, with the telecast and broadcast. And certainly, that was a primary push of a work God was doing through the Church in the world and for its purpose at that time and what was accomplished, and then letting things go into the period of time of Laodicea after Herbert Armstrong died and that which would lead up to an apostasy. It was something that had to take place in the sense of timing of events and showing the power and might of Almighty God and the mercy of God and the power of God to help His people when needed.

But again, all along the way we as God's people have to make choices. And so, we learn what kind of choices led up to an apostasy. We needed to learn that. It needed to be an example for those through the Millennium and the Great White Throne. And so, on and on it goes.

But now we're focusing on a work in a different manner in the sense of that which is spiritual for the Church. And it's not about what we are doing in the sense of the world, because what we're doing is puny, it's microscopic compared to what was done in Worldwide. It truly is. When you talk about the millions of *Plain Truths* that were going out every month all over the world in several tons of languages, it's incredible what took place during that period of Philadelphia.

But looking at us and what we're trying to do, what we're striving to do, we're still striving to have a message that's out there and available, but in the world we live in nobody wants it, nobody cares. It's just the way it is at the end here.

But we're going to focus on this in a little bit different style today in the sense of what we're supposed to be doing, so let's pick it up in John 6. And this sermon series is entitled *Doing the Works of God*.

And certainly, Herbert Armstrong was doing that in a very powerful way because of the focus of what was to be done even on a physical scale to accomplish something on a spiritual plane of preparing people within the Church, of calling thousands and thousands and working with them during that period of time, and even setting the pace and the way for the Church at the end-time here that would have a foundation and truth established within it that we would have to recapture in one respect and reformat in another respect, and then begin to build upon it again. So, we've lived a very unique time.

John 6:25—Now, when they found him (speaking of Joshua) on the other side of the sea, they said to him, Teacher, when did you come here? So, Joshua answered them saying, Most assuredly, I say to you, you do not seek me because you saw the signs, of things he'd been doing and so forth, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. So, it was very physical and that's what he's telling them, in essence, which they couldn't understand.

And so, he went on to teach. And over and over again on the different parables and the things that happened, and in his teaching, he's teaching things that are on a spiritual plane that no one can see yet. They cannot grasp it yet. So, they're written for us, they were taught by the apostles and so forth early on, and we're going through it now.

It says, **Joshua answered them saying, Most assuredly, I say to you, you do not seek me because you saw the signs you saw, but because you ate the loaves and were filled. Do not labor, do not work, in other words, for the food which perishes.** So, things that happened like this are incredible because these were the opportunities of being able to teach, and it's for the Church, it's for those who have God's spirit.

...do not labor/work for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life. So, what does that mean to us? Well, we should easily see that. We understand that which we need in order to grow spiritually. We understand there's a relationship with God Almighty and Joshua the Christ and that which we're to do day by day to draw close to God, to remain close to God, to fight for this way of life, to fight against this, and we have to have God's help. We can't do it on our own. And so, we are able to learn from that there is that which is food that comes from, the source is, God, the power of His holy spirit.

And so again, it's telling us right here that this is something you have to labor for. You have to work for it. It doesn't just happen. It's not owed to us just because we go to Sabbath services, or we go to a Feast of Tabernacles. It's what we put into it, work, and we have to see it as that.

Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures (lasts, continues) into everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you. Because God the Father has set His seal on him.

And so again, they didn't comprehend any of this. It wasn't for their time. It's for us. It's for all in God's Church through time.

So again, it was about Christ and what we're able to receive through him. Repentance of sin. That takes work. It takes work to examine ourselves, to cry out to God for help to be able to see things in our life so that we can repent. And if we don't do it then... And that's work. To keep on top of those things, to keep focused.

Anyway, going on: **Then they said to him, What shall we do that we may work the works of God?** So, what is God's work? Well, there's a creation going on. It's pretty simple for us. There's a creation that's ongoing. It's been started nearly six thousand years ago, those that are being worked with, those that God has chosen to continue in a creation that's above and beyond the physical realm. It's spiritual. It's about His Family. It's about Elohim and it's about the firstfruits of that Family. And so, people have been called through time going through different experiences, and they all had things that they had to do in a response to God.

Joshua answered and said to them, This is the work of God, that you believe in or into or unto him whom He sent. Now, we see what the world has done with that in a protestant way because they can't grasp that which is spiritual, they don't see that which is spiritual, and so there is that which they have to work with in the sense of that which they see on a physical plane, and they see Christ. And so, we see all that in the protestant world and their concept of Christ, but it's not about his purpose of coming. It's not about him being our Passover, and it's not about him being our High Priest, in that respect, and the life you have to change because of that because we want to repent, we want to become different.

Instead, the world is taught in the protestant world, "Just come as you are." "Just come as you are." That's a damnable lie. It really is very destructive. "Just come as you are. You can do anything, be anything you want, live ever how you want to and then come..."

I've mentioned this before. Used to go on harvest runs from Oklahoma up into the Dakota's or over into Montana with combines and that one time there was one individual that worked for the same crew that I did from South Dakota, and got to know very well, and he was a catholic. Young guy, like I was, same age just about, I think. And talked to him about a couple of those things are different times and it's like this idea of his he could do basically whatever he wanted but he could go to church and go through this rigamarole and then come out and he was okay and just go do whatever he wanted to do again.

And you think, what kind of a religion is that? Used to boggle my mind. You can just live, do whatever you want to do. It didn't make any sense.

So again, what an incredible thing to see things on a physical plane in the world but to understand what this is when it talks about, again here, that you believe in, "this is the work of God, that you believe in or into or unto him whom He sent." So, it's a matter of what is taught by Christ, what was given through

Christ, things to understand about him being our Passover and on and on it goes. We'll build on this as we go along.

So again, "believing unto Christ" is not a matter of saying, "Yes, I believe," you know. I think of when we had in the ministry this concept of Christ coming or Christ came in the flesh or Christ... It's like, "Well, we believe that." And you think, "Well, so does the protestant world. What's different about those verses?" And we didn't understand at that time it was about a present progressive thing, that he's coming into our lives on a spiritual plane and living through us in that respect, and that's what those verses were about.

But I remember talking to a minister, especially one in particular (and others), but especially one where that concept was one of... Had no understanding it was about Christ dwelling in us spiritually but strictly a matter of something physical, "Yes, he came. That's what this verse is about. He came in the flesh." Think, doesn't prove anything.

But in our lives, there is proof. In the Church, the things we see, the things we grasp we experience it. We experience things when God begins to draw us and opens our minds, and nobody can take that away from you. You've been able to see things that you can go talk to others about (and generally do when you first come along), and it's like they look at you like you're... They're kind of interested maybe at first and then they see the seriousness of what that means – a lot of changes in life. Christmas, Easter, no more of that. No more working on the seventh day Sabbath. And all of a sudden, they're not so interested. You're just kind of a weird person to your family or to friends or co-workers or whatever it might be.

It takes work; what I just mentioned takes work. Things you're willing to stand up to and stand against, that takes work. Not necessarily that which is physical, it's all within the mind in what you're going to do. To stand fast, to fight for this way of life, it's a spiritual relationship with God, a spiritual relationship through Christ, and to understand what this is all about and the battle that is before us and what's required to do the works of God.

We are the works of God! We are God's work! Now, that might mean some physical things at different times, like it did during Philadelphia, and in part a little bit about what we're doing that's more of a witness in that respect as to the way the world is at this time. People really do not care about God whatsoever and getting farther and farther... Not the truth anyway. And so, that's a part of that process.

But the real thing to understand and grasp, and what Christ is teaching here and what he just said here, is what we're to be doing, how we're to be living. And we need to see it as work.

We live in an age where a lot of people don't know how to work. And that's a horrible thing. Young people grow up in a different way than what I grew up today. We have technology the way it is and so forth and I think of since Covid people trying to find... I think of Europe, one family over there that had

three restaurants, I believe it was, and couldn't find people to work all the time. They had to close one down. And then another one I think they kept—if I have my story right; I may have this wrong—one of them they only had to open three or four days a week because that's the only time they could find people to come in and work. And you think, what's going on? Where are they getting their...people getting their money, and how do they keep going? Well, the government takes care, and different programs or whatever it might be.

And it's different thinking than when I grew up. I hope we understand that and see what I'm talking about. And so, we have a world... And today, you know, if you have to... I think in... Oh, I don't want to pick on Europe. I have to be careful there. But their time of working sometimes over there, they have vacation of things that we don't have over here in the same way. And different areas of the country, and this country as well, is working on having a shorter work week, four days. Which if you can get the same salary you had with forty hours, fine, if you can do that for thirty-two hours or whatever it might be, fine if you can accomplish that and live well, that's between you and your employer.

But the point is, is that it's like, we have to have more vacation time, we have to have more off time. And I understand that in part, you know, but it's hard when you're used to a different kind of thinking, and you have to change with the world and change the way some of those things are. But sometimes there's a fault in that too because then people begin to think in wrong ways, especially if they won't work.

Well, how much more on a spiritual plane? If we don't understand these things on a physical plane, how are we going to deal with them on a spiritual plane?

So again, believing into or unto Christ requires work. It's about the work we're to be engaged if we desire to be part of what God has offered us through Joshua the Christ in a creation that's ongoing. It's about God working in us. But He's not just doing it without our participation. It's actually by our choice and responding, which is the work we have to do to do the works of God.

Mark 13:28—Now, learn a parable of the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see these things happening, know that it is near at the doors. Truly I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away until all these things take place. So, we don't know fully what that is. God hasn't shown us. But we know we're extremely close. So, what generation? Maybe mine; I don't know which one is being spoken of. But there is a generation of people that this will be true one day in that respect. We'll be able to understand it clearly what it was. Have our ideas right now and thought about it.

But God made a promise that when certain things began... Because some of these things began to be taught, about the end and the end-time, and became clearer, that were revealed through Herbert Armstrong. So, something had to begin back in that point in time and then continue on to the very end.

Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. But of that day and hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. It's easier to see that now after we've gone through what we have. But truly believed with all my being that God had revealed something different because we were at the end.

Take heed. More than ever before. So, certainly they had to do this in the different eras of the Church, but so much more toward the end. **Take heed, watch, and pray.** So, we see a period of time where the Church nearly died out. Basically, God told them they were dead spiritually – Sardis. So, all that period of time, hundreds and hundreds of years the Church continued on, and then it finally came to that point. But it wasn't time for that to take place yet. God was going to revive it and reveal more things to the Church at the end. And so, Herbert Armstrong was called and began to do a work, in that respect, that God was doing through him, the Church, and in the world.

So again, all the people who came into the Church that particular time, an incredible work that was done on a spiritual plane. And now we're at the very end. But as these things have taken place, and because of the kind of world we live in, because of technology, the world is far more evil than it ever has been, except for one, and I believe it's gone way past that, but that's at the time when God destroyed the earth with a flood. And we're at that same time period again because of technology and what's happening to the minds and the thinking of mankind.

Take heed, watch, and pray. For you do not know when the time is. Verse 34—It is like a man going into far country who left his house and gave authority to his servants and to each their work. That's us. It's about us. ...**and commanded the doorkeeper (the gatekeeper) to watch.** And so, we're...we understand, already said "take heed, and watch." We're all to watch

Watch, therefore, for you do not know the hour the master of the house is coming, in the evening, at midnight, at the crowing of the rooster, or in the morning, otherwise coming suddenly he find you sleeping. So I think, what a horrible thing at the very end, just right at the very end here now, whatever period of time is left... Compared to the previous six thousand years, this is a blur of time, it's very quick, a blink in time as far as God's plan and God's purpose is concerned. We don't think that way. Ten years can be a long time for us depending on what we're going through or what we're experiencing.

But again, it says, "Watch therefore, for you do not know when the master of the house is coming." So, this fits this, has fit us for a long, long time. But it's fit everyone who's ever been a part of God's Church because you don't know what's going to happen in your life, when your life is going to come to an end, when God allows certain things to happen. We all die. It's a part of life. So, we don't know when those things are going to happen, or God allows something to happen in our lives. So, we should all want to be prepared and ready all the time, watching all the time, to be spiritually alert all the time.

So, there are people who have died in the Church who were very young, after they were baptized, who didn't have enough time. And I've commented on some of those things before. It takes time to grow with

God's spirit, to be able to be born into Elohim. That's God's calling. We're in God's hands. And if for whatever purpose God has a purpose for some to live in this age, as an example, and then to be resurrected later on who had the experience of beginning a growth in this age? It doesn't have to be for the first resurrection. God can do it later on and raise them up and continue with that process. That's the power of Almighty God.

I've mentioned that young man who died two weeks, being nineteen, after he was baptized, in a car wreck. He's not going to be in Elohim. He didn't have time to grow, conquer, and overcome, be tried and tested as to what's really inside of him. But he's going to have that opportunity later. And what kind of an impact is he going to be able to perhaps have, a unique, different experience.

There's all kinds of people with different experiences in the past two thousand years who have been a part of the Church – some who were the first resurrection, some who are intended by God because God is the master designer, God is the one who molds and fashions us, God is the one who has a purpose in what He builds and how He builds it, and we can't tell God how to do it.

So, if someone thinks that God can't do that, that's just nuts, see? So, we have to understand that that's in God's power. What an awesome blessing!

What an awesome blessing to have been called at some stage in two thousand years, before the Millennium, and having lived and started a process that will be completed in the Great White Throne, way ahead of everybody else when that takes place. And I can guarantee you the potential for incredible opportunities, far more opportunities than those who had nothing and those who have incredible things to conquer and overcome. They already started the process, and they already have a foundation within them. And you think, what a beautiful thing! It's beautiful to be called by God Almighty, to have an opportunity to become part of Elohim.

So, sometimes we can get in this thing about God being fair or that just doesn't seem right, or whatever. Whatever God does is right and it's what's best because God is the master builder, so far above and beyond us. Just to be a part of it, whatever time period it is, we're exceedingly blessed. Everyone in the Great White Throne who is called at that time and has opportunity is exceedingly blessed. But there are going to be vast, vast numbers who say no. Choices, choices.

But those who respond? What can be greater than to become Elohim? That's what it's all about. That's what everything is all about. It's what the universe is all about. It's what the creation of angels was all about. That's what the physical creation is all about. It's about God's Family. There is nothing greater. It's the greatest creation of God.

And there is work involved. It's our response and it's our work as to how much we want that, believe in it, believe in Christ, because it's founded on Christ. That's what those verses mean, like we read earlier when it speaks of him in that respect, believing in him. That's a part of the process, believing in the fact

that he is our Passover, believing in the fact that he's our High Priest, and on and on it goes, believing in the fact of what God gave as he is the head of everything in that respect. Chief cornerstone and everything is built upon him. Beautiful!

So, a far country, to watch, watch, therefore, for you don't know when he comes and then finally **verse 36—otherwise, coming suddenly he find you sleeping**. That happened in the end of Laodicea. The entire Church fallen asleep. The entire Church fell asleep. Guilty spiritually. Horrible. Horrible thing to think that could take place, that it happened, but it happened and we're to learn from that in a very powerful way.

...otherwise, coming suddenly he find you sleeping. So, what I say to you I say to all, watch. So, all, everyone who's called now, in the past two thousand years, in the Millennium, in the Great White Throne. You know what, they have to watch. They have to be on guard.

It's not going to be a cakewalk, not even in the Great White Throne. People have to fight this, and they have to fight the pull of others who don't like this. It's going to be around. There are going to be people who talk about other things, who want other things, who are going to do their little blah, blah, blah, you know. It's always going to be there. It's going to be throughout the Millennium, but not as much. But in the Great White Throne it's going to smack hard, it truly is.

And the merchandizing as it was referred to, as Lucifer, what he did and when he became Satan. It's this here and what comes out of the mind in what they're trying to get others to do and join them and follow them or be a part with them. Sick, sick, sick minds when you resist God, don't want God, fight against God.

So, I think of the Great White Throne. People are going to have to be alert, watchful, because you don't know. If you're not on guard spiritually in the Great White Throne, if people aren't on guard in the way we are supposed to live our lives (they're on guard in a different kind of way). We understand we're on guard because of the world around us, well, they are too. They have to be on guard, they have to be careful of what people try to get them to do or be a part of or what others are telling them. They have to judge and choose. And a lot of people are going to choose the wrong thing.

It's just like it is now except it'll be a world governed by God, they'll only be allowed one truth, one religion on the earth. But there are going to be people in the background who are going to be divisive, are going to be talking, and God's going to allow it. Because at the end of the Hundred Years there's a whole smear of them that have to be cleansed from the earth. That's what it's about, the end of mankind and the completion of Elohim when it's all said and done.

So, what I say, I say unto all, as it says here, watch. So, it's not just for our time. It's not just for the time in the past two thousand years for people, because they had to do the same thing. If they wanted God's way of life they had to be on guard because this can slip, this can slide, it can make wrong choices. And

that's up to us. That has to do with our thinking. And we're responsible for our own thinking. And so, that will never be different for all people who have to choose, who are offered to choose God's way of life. And that takes work.

It takes work to be on guard. You have to be alert when someone comes along and has a different idea about something, whatever it might be, whether it be religion or whatever, anything that takes somebody away from the trunk of the tree.

Anyway, going on. Let's turn over to 2 Timothy 1. So again, the work we have to do and must be doing every day is a matter so much of one of seeking God's spirit. We've had sermons about prayer and seeing to be close to God and desiring a heart like David. And to do those things requires work on our part which involves choices and how we go about it and how we go about it and what we see in self. Fighting this! That takes work! And if we're not actively doing it because we're spiritually lazy or getting spiritually lazy or spiritually sleepy that's horribly dangerous. And people leave or have been put out because of that through time. We can't afford that. Choices, choices.

So, believing into or unto Christ is about believing and then letting the process we've been instructed to live. It's simple. To understand that's God's work. It's His creation, to become a part of Elohim, but the work is on our part and by our choice.

2 Timothy 1:1—Paul, an apostle of Joshua the Christ by the will of God, according to the promise of life, which is in Joshua the Christ. So, it's a promise of everlasting life, that we can be a part of the God Family, that we can be part of Elohim. It comes in and through Joshua the Christ. That should mean everything to us to understand what that is. It starts with repentance because he's our Passover, and then on and on it goes.

...to Timothy, a beloved son. Some translations, King James says, **my beloved son.** Asked some time back, have been asked at different times even "Is this literally about his son?" May well be. Nothing definitive on that. We don't know. But scriptures are written in a context that would seem that he is or was, we don't know. There are some things in Corinthians that talk about marriage and so forth and if other disciples were able to have a wife and so forth, isn't he allowed to have one. So again, there are some things that we don't know fully within the Church.

So, it's addressing here, **an apostle of Joshua the Christ, by the will of God, according to the promise of life, which is in Joshua the Christ, to Timothy, beloved son** (my beloved son, a beloved son). Could be on a spiritual plane but may very well be physical here as well. **...grace, mercy, and peace, from God the Father and Joshua the Christ. I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience.**

What an awesome thing to be able to say. Thankful to God and he's able to do something that is on a spiritual plane that he knows came from God through Christ. He knows what he was. He knows what he was like. What an incredible thing to know that you were the one, that you were out to kill people that

were part of the Church, that you were the one who gave approval for Stephen to be stoned, and to live with that, and then to know the process whereby Joshua began to work with you and all that that took place.

So, I thank God, whom I serve with a pure conscience, from my forefathers, as without ceasing I remember you in my prayer's night and day, greatly desiring to see you, being mindful of your tears, that I may be filled with joy, when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you. Now, he's in prison. He's in prison in Rome and so he's saying these things to Timothy, and he knows what Timothy went through because of all this, and he sees this and he's thankful again, as it says here, **when I call to remembrance the genuine faith that is in you which dwelt first in your grandmother Lois and your mother Eunice, and I am persuaded is in you also.** Beautiful.

So, a very close relationship, obviously. Regardless of what it is here, this is extremely close. Very possibly literal in what it said earlier.

Verse 6—Therefore, I am reminding you to stir up the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. Now, this can be twofold in the sense of the fact that he was a minister being sent out and Paul was giving him more to accomplish here and giving him instruction. But perhaps a matter of baptism from the very beginning, especially if it was a close relationship, that this is a baptism he would want to have done and be part of.

And so again here, “to stir up the gift of God.” That's up to us and that takes work. It doesn't just happen because we're in the Church, because we pay tithes, because we go to the Feast of Tabernacles. So much of the Church became like that, especially through Laodicea. That's what the Church fell into. It's like, “Everything is okay and we're living...” and it was just a gradual lulling to sleep and there wasn't the work being done that should have been done and accomplished in the way that it should have been. The fight, the being on guard, the watching, the work, crying out to God, looking to God to help mold and fashion us, to change us, to repent more as we should have been.

Verse 7—For God has not given us a spirit of fear. Now, why would he say this, “a spirit of fear?” It's a word that has to do with “timidity.” It's powerful! God's spirit is powerful and it's to give us the strength to stand up to the things we need to stand up to, to do the things we need to do. Not to be timid about it. Not to be cowardly about it. Not to pull back from it. Not to be afraid to make our stand. On the contrary, to fight and move forward, to do what we're supposed to do regardless of what anybody else thinks about it. Who cares! We care what God thinks. We care what Joshua the Christ thinks. That's what we're to be concerned with.

And if that's what motivates us and moves us, then that's great. But if we're concerned about others and fearful? You know, sometimes people don't do the things they need to do because they're fearful of how someone might react or what someone else might do or how it might be seen or, you know, have to go tell and ask for time off for the Feast or whatever and we're fearful of that.

No, God gives us power and strength to stand up to things like that, to be able to go in boldly and know, "God is with me." We have to go through, and it takes work to do, to set out and do the things we need to accomplish.

...but of power, and of love (agape), and a sound mind. God is the one who gives that through the power of His spirit. And so again, a timidity here, a lack of confidence, a hesitancy sometimes can exist in people's lives, of "feeling of indecision about doing something." That's what the word has to do with. "Fearful to commit." Well, we don't want to hold back or pull back or take it easy or afraid to step out and do what we need to do.

On the contrary, we need to just charge forward. And if the world doesn't like it, well, that's basically that's what we understand we've been called to. We live this way of life; we do what we have to do. If the Sabbath issues come up, we address it. If somebody asks us a question about something we don't need to unload the whole truck on them, just tell them, basically, what they asked, the answer to it and stop. Sometimes we try to be a teacher or whatever or try to give them everything. We all go through that and make that mistake at different times; I think especially at the beginning. And we learn, no, that's not the way to go about it.

We begin to understand how God works. We begin to learn from that, those experiences we have, that you can't give this to anyone so you can't go and try to get someone to do something or try to give them what you have because unless God is working in that it doesn't mean anything. It's just going to go by the wayside. Because if somebody is being called you know what, there is going to be certain things happening that you should be able to see and measure in the sense of...

But anyway, what an incredible thing to go through these things and to think about what we've been given and to understand this is a matter of growth on our part, to be able to stand. Because a lot of this we're talking about here in this case, this power that comes from God, is this thing of standing for what is right, of standing up for God's way of life and not caring about what others think, because we care what God thinks, we want to have a right heart with God. And if we get corrected for it, if we're rebuffed or whatever words you want to use, who cares. We care what God cares. We're going to step out and do a work that God gives us to do, whatever that might be. If it means standing firm before someone, standing up for this way of life and not being ashamed, whatever.

And so, Paul is actually telling Timothy some of these things here because he was imprisoned by the Romans.

So, it goes on to say then, **Therefore**, this is all in the context, **verse 8, Therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner.** So, that's what it come up to first of all here, is never be ashamed, never be afraid to speak out for what we've been given to believe. And it might be as simple as something as standing up to a teacher and saying, "Our children are leaving for this period of time," or "My child is leaving at this period of time," or to an employer, "No, I told you a long time ago

that when it comes sundown on Friday I'm out of here and I'm not staying. So, I have that conviction." And if the fire you? So be it. There's a purpose in it. There is that which you can learn through that process.

I've known a lot of people that that's happened to, and you can learn through that. Or you can be destroyed by it too. But see, that's a matter of our looking to God and keeping focused on God and crying out to God and knowing we're in God's hands and walking out on faith. Doesn't mean things are going to happen immediately but we'll grow spiritually because of it if we do what's right.

So, he says, "don't be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord," which is the truth, which is about Christ being our Passover and our High Priest and the truth that God has given to us. And if we will understand, the world can't understand those things or know those things. But we know them, so we stand up to them, for them.

"...nor of me His prisoner." I can understand that in part because I know what happened when I became convicted and how there are people who couldn't handle that. They went by the wayside because of that, because it was an embarrassment. "Oh, you..." And different ones who harassed, "Oh, you're still with him?!" I can understand that and the things that are said then because of that.

Well, it was the same thing with Paul. He's going to get to a point here where he talks about the Church and that there is an area of the Church that totally turned their back on him, turned away from the truth because of what he went through, because of what happened to him. That's basically the result of it.

So, choices, choices because people have this concept sometimes or this thinking and they don't want to be looked down upon, they don't want others to look down upon them or to associate you with someone that comes across in a negative way, because of how people think and so forth.

Anyway, **therefore, do not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, nor of me His prisoner, but share with me in the sufferings of the gospel.** So, he's saying, "Share with me the sufferings of the gospel," because that's what this is. Because of what we believe things are going to happen, things aren't always going to go well, and people are going to come at you, whatever it might be at different times. And there are going to be times that are going to be harder than others. So, we should be able to understand that very clearly.

But share with me in the sufferings for the gospel. So, that's a good thing! Because if you suffer for righteousness' sake, for doing what is right because God has given us this way of life to live, and we live it regardless of what happens to us, then what an awesome thing.

...according to the power of God, who has saved us and called us with a holy calling. So, it's always keeping God in mind, that God has given us a holy calling, which means we're set apart for holy use and purpose – the creation of God, to become Elohim. I mean, if that's in our head and we see that and we live it and we want it what is going to move us away from that? What is going to shake us? But things

shake people, and a lot of people have left God's Church over time, through time because of things like this.

"Who has saved us." As far as it's concerned, as soon as we've been called, we have it made, saved. So, if we make the choices and the right decisions the pathway is there. It's just a matter of our choices. What could stop us? Only ourselves. No one else has the power to stop you from growing. No one else has the power to take God's spirit away from you. No one has that power unless you let them have it, no one. The pathway and the way, that's why it says it so strong here over and over again through scripture, "You are saved." As far as God's concerned as soon as He's drawn us and called us that's the end result.

But it isn't the end result because of choices people make. The majority eventually choose no.

...who saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works. So, we're not called because of how good we are, because we've been obeying God, because we've known the truth and have been living by it. On the contrary, God brings us to the truth, we go through a process, we have to continue to repent of what's inside here. And that's a part of doing the works of God but it's not because of those works we were called. So, we'll get into that later in the sermon series because this has been confusing to some in time. And it's very confusing and they don't even begin to grasp it in the protestant world. They don't understand grace and what it's about. Works and grace. It's like totally miss the boat on that one because they don't have God's spirit so they can't see the truth.

...not according to our works but according to His own purpose and grace. That doesn't mean works aren't still involved, because they are. Obedience is a matter of work. Prayer is a matter of work. Fighting this is a matter of work. But it's on a spiritual plane that we can't do on our own; it requires the help and strength of God's spirit. So, it's not from us.

So, the kind of works that do not save us are when they originate out of here and we're doing it on our own by our own power and we're keeping, trying to keep some portion of the law. Even within the Church this has happened. People go through the motions. And if you're doing it on your own and not by the power of God's spirit it's lacking God's spirit, and it isn't real. It becomes protestant.

...but according to His own purpose and grace which was given to us in Joshua the Christ before time began. What awesome scriptures! What an awesome thing that we understand that, that before, even before anything was ever created even in the spirit realm it was already purposed how we would be able to have life, how we'd be able to be called, periods of time that people would be called in, on and on it goes.

...but has now been revealed by the appearing of our Savior, Joshua the Christ, who has abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. So, it's saying there is this which is a matter of life that we can have, the beginning of a life in the sense of that which leads to everlasting life,

a spirit life that we're able to have in the respect of God's holy spirit living in us and the truth that we're able to receive.

...to which I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and a teacher of the gentiles. So, Paul understood full well his calling and that he was called to go to the gentiles, that the other apostles were to the tribes, but as primarily to the Jewish people who were there, but to the others. And here, Paul was called, he understood full well he was the apostle to the gentiles. He knew his function, his job, his work.

For this reason... That was a work for the sake of the Church, which was given to him as an apostle, but there is that work that is the most important in order to do that work in whatever we do in our lives within the Church, the example, the way we live, it's a matter of God's spirit, it's a matter of doing the works of God, yielding to this process of Joshua having died for us, that we can repent, that we should repent, that we need to repent, that we actually need to search out the things that are wrong in our minds, in our being, in our actions, and repent of them quickly and have that kind of mindset to fight that kind of fight.

That's work. And sometimes it's not done enough. That's how you stir up God's spirit more, by fighting that fight. And the more we do that and yield to that process the more strength and power we can actually have of God.

For this reason, I also suffer these things, nevertheless, I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him unto that day. So again, whatever we do we do it in mind toward serving God, toward... And whatever effect we can have and live right toward others within the Body, we're to do that. So important that we see one another as God's people, as God's family, and to think right toward them and to want to see them succeed. And on and on it goes. So again, that's a whole other series of sermons.

...and am persuaded that He is able to keep what I have committed to Him until that day. Hold fast... So, here you go, it's work. To hold fast, it doesn't just happen. **Hold fast the form,** or the pattern or the example **of sound words which you have heard from me.** To hold on to the truths that God gives us, has given to us. It doesn't just happen. You have to think about them which takes time. You have to pray about them from time to time, which takes time, which is work. It's a spiritual work. It's about a relationship with God and a desire to hold on to what God has given to us! Awesome!

We go through this from time to time in services, in things brought up that we're reminded of. It takes work to receive what God gives to us because we have to pray about it. We have to pray about the things we hear. We're reminded from time to time – which one individual back in the back of the room here does this quite a bit. Reminds us of the truths, puts them into sermons, comes up with things that were said at different times I wonder, how on earth did you find that? Blows my mind sometimes, some of the quotes and things. And it's like, wow! But we're reminded of them because we're to hold fast to those things that God has given to us.

And so, God through various means, through whatever mode it might be, but especially through even of giving of sermons, we're reminded of things that we need to hold fast. Well, if we were able to hold fast to it all we wouldn't need all that! We wouldn't have to be told Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day to Holy Day. God wants us to hold fast to the truth. He wants us to hold fast to the meaning of Passover so every year He makes sure that we do things in an exact format. He wants us to hold fast to the meaning of the days of Unleavened Bread and the spiritual meaning of those things.

That's why the Church became so weak! Because they weren't being reminded of those things! They weren't holding fast, and they weren't doing the job, people weren't doing the job themselves, holding fast, reminding themselves of what they'd been given. People, even in the ministry during Laodicea, forgot things that Herbert Armstrong gave to them that they were to hold fast! Because that's where it came from.

That's why I get so upset sometimes and get so worked up when I think about some of those ministers and ones that I talked to when they talked about, "Well, he was a good teacher." It's just... If your blood can boil, mine is boiling at that, seriously! You think, what a hideous thing! I think how dumb you are, how stupid such a comment is because you didn't know diddly-you know what except that it came through him, except that God gave it to him and gave it to you. But you didn't hold fast.

People forgot the Church eras! Ministers weren't even preaching it anymore. By the time we got to the end of the period of Laodicea and the Apostasy came people were questioning, "Well, was that Laodicea?" Some wanted to hold on to Philadelphia, but they didn't understand that spiritually.

And anybody that was a part of Worldwide, none of them were Laodicean. They had to be Philadelphian because Laodicean was a dirty word. During Worldwide it really was. It was like you can't get much lower than that, than a Laodicean. So much so that one group, if you had any contact whatsoever as a whole with anyone who was a part of the past—because they're all Laodiceans—if they're not with us, they're all Laodiceans. Think, no, as a whole most of them are just totally cut off from God and Laodicean would be a bit of a compliment, because they're all asleep and don't have God's spirit. And if they could only see that in themselves too, but they can't.

What an awesome thing to be able to have the truth, to know the truth, to have God's spirit, to have the creation taking place within us. And I look forward to the day that so many of those are going to have opportunity to be awakened. The only problem will be as to whether or not they'll be able to receive it.

This takes work. Holding fast takes work. Holding on to what you've been given takes work. And God has given outlines of things to keep that in front of us but, boy, we have to make the choices, and you have to pray about those things. Just because we hear something doesn't mean it solidifies inside here. There are things we should take and pray about that we hear and ask God, "Help me not to forget this. Help me to hold fast to the truths You've given to me."

Hold fast the form, the pattern, the example **of sound words**. Because God is the one who gives us soundness of mind. He gives us sound words. He gives us sound teachings, things that fit together in place and we're able to build upon them. But the only way we can build upon them is by being able to see them spiritually, which requires work again. We know we need God in this process. To do the works of God requires God. It requires God's spirit in our life. Requires work to be continually going and going before God and seeking that help and strength and power and life so that we can hold fast. Because you can't do it on your own. Hold fast means you have to have God's help.

...of sound words which you have heard from me, in faith. Reminding here that it's a matter of what God has given us to believe and then our choice to live it, which is what faith is.

...and love which are in Joshua the Christ. As our Passover and as our High Priest in which we can receive then by utilizing that process of salvation in our life.

That good thing which was committed to you keep. Keep what was given to you. What's been given to you? What's been given to me? We have to ask that question. What's been given to me? We've been given a lot. "That good thing which was committed to you." God commits truth to us. He commits a calling to us; to have opportunity to be in His Family and the process whereby we can attain to that. But it's up to us to make the choices to receive it.

So, **that good thing which was committed to you keep by the holy spirit that dwells in us**. That's the only way. And that takes work, doesn't it? It's doing the works of God, what He's laid out before us, that you can do this to attain to everlasting life. But you have to make the choices and then you have to do the work.

Verse 15—This you know that all those in Asia have turned away from me. That is big! "Everyone in Asia that was called into the Church," Paul said, "They have turned away from me," which means they have turned away from God. There were a lot of people who left during this period.

Among whom are Phygelus and Hermogenes. Believed to be ministers, teachers who turned against Paul, who turned against even the truth in time because they turned against God, they cut themselves off from God and were no longer a part of the Church.

Scriptures like this is what gave me some strength and confidence after the Apostasy to be able to say, "The man of sin was Joe Tkach Sr.," because there were others who were like, "Hush! Hush! You can't say something like that about someone else who is a part of the church. You can't talk, you can't mention other people's names."

Well, bull! You know, if there are ministers out there doing the wrong thing, teaching the wrong thing then yes, I can name them and should name them for the sake of the Church, for those who will listen to be on guard against those people. Anyone who is teaching that which is false to God's people they need to be shut up or at least told by others don't listen to them, they're false, they've turned away from the

truth, they have left the Church, or they have been put out of the Church as these had, separated from God, separated from the Church.

The Lord grant mercy to the household of Onesiphorus, for he often refreshed me and was not ashamed of my chain. His bonds, of being bound. It's about being bound or imprisoned or whatever. But when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously. Even though he was, in time there, not literally in chains but had to stay in a house, in a particular place and had guards there to make sure he never left. But house arrest type of thing. But nevertheless, in bondage. So, that's what this is about.

...and was not ashamed of my bondage, but when he arrived in Rome, he sought me out very zealously and found me. That had to have been a task to try to go find somebody that... Where is he? How do you find them? Well, first of all, he would have to have the mindset he didn't care what anyone else thought, in that respect, about looking for someone like this and what he taught and whatever it might be.

The Lord grant to him that he may find mercy from the Lord in that day. And you know very well how many ways he ministered to me at Ephesus. So, what an incredible thing here. He helped, he served, he tried to do what he could. He sought Paul out and would try to help in continuing with a message going to the gentiles in whatever way he could. So, he's letting Timothy know he's there, he's on the right track, this is his support, this is my desire toward him, and he's doing the right things, and basically, you can trust him. Work with him.

2 Timothy 2:1—You therefore, my son, be strong in the grace that is in Joshua the Christ. And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also. So, this was a part of Timothy being given a great responsibility now in serving the Church, in working with the Church, and working with and bringing in others who will be able to do the same thing. Always a matter of looking to God and seeking God's guidance and direction in those things but sometimes there are also things that are done.... Which I don't want to get into, but some things are not always for the right reasons, for good reasons, but they're for learning.

But again here, "who may be able to teach others also." So, that's the desire of those who have that ability, and you see God working with them. So, keep your eye, commit the truth to them to go out and to teach.

You, therefore, must endure hardship as a good soldier of Joshua the Christ. So, enduring hardships, we're all called to that, whatever it might be. On our job... You know, we might think that we don't have a job like Timothy had. Everyone in the Body, everyone in the Church has things to address like this on a spiritual plane. And when family turns against you, when fellow employees or whatever, an employer, whatever it might be, neighbors, whatever it might be, those are hardships when things come your way and people take things out on you or fire you or whatever it might be or judge you because of what you are doing and how you are doing it, and they don't like that, and they turn against you.

So again, whatever hardships come our way, if we're doing things the right way and seeking God and holding up this way of life and holding our heads up in it and not ashamed, not caring what people think about what we believe. Who cares? Maybe one day it'll have an impact on them in that example of what you stood for.

"You, therefore, must endure hardship as a good soldier of Joshua the Christ." So, what does that mean "a good soldier." It's a fight. This way is not easy. It's hard. It's hard for human beings because we live... Especially in this age or in the past six thousand years because we live in a world that doesn't want God, that doesn't want the truth of God, that really doesn't want God anyway, and if they do, they want it in their own making and how they want Him to be. But again, on the spiritual plane?

No one engaged in warfare entangles themselves with the affairs of this life. So, Paul is calling it what it is, and sometimes people have failed within the Church to realize this is a battle. War is a battle. It's hard. It's a battle up here, it's a battle in what you engage in, in what you do and what you fight, and you keep fighting regardless. And you fight this most of all. This is what you have to fight most of all, self, selfishness, the mind, the way we are.

...no one engaged in warfare entangles themselves with the affairs of this life, that they may please him who enlisted him as a soldier. So, what an incredible thing to realize or to see here, that this is the example being given. It's like being a soldier on a spiritual plane. And who has enlisted us? Christ. God.

Also, if anyone competes in athletics, they are not crowned unless they compete according to the rules. So, regardless of what it is, a race, you're racing someone else, there are rules in every kind of engagement. There are rules in soccer. There are rules in football. There are rules in baseball. There are rules. And so, we have rules. There's a way to do what we do, and we are running a race, the different examples that are given in scripture of what we're doing. And we better be running and engaged in it, which takes work. But we have to see that on a spiritual plane, which is different than that which is obviously a physical plane.

So, "they don't entangle themselves in the affairs of this life." In other words, become too entangled in the world. It's just a means to an end. This world, this present world and what we're doing in it, our jobs, our lives, it's just a means to an end. It's here but for a short time, but we have a unique opportunity of a calling, and this is our time. It's not the world's time. And so, we learn those things and it takes work to go through all that, to wade through all that and to keep moving forward.

But most give up, most quit, most pull back. Why? It's horrible. And if we ever fail to see that we're at war there are beings out there who want nothing more than for us to fail. That's what they would love. And so, sometimes it hasn't been strong enough in people's minds to realize that if you begin to fool around with sin, if you begin to have sin dwell up here and then act upon it the power that gives to a spirit world. Because why? Because as soon as you sin you've cut yourself off from God and you have to repent.

That's why it's so important to repent quickly. That's why we have to continually fight and repent of sin. When we've done things wrong, we need to repent quickly because you don't want to give a foothold to that spirit world, you don't want to be cut off from God for any length of time. You want to nip it in the bud. And God gives us the ability to do that. All we have to do, say, "Holy Father, forgive me of what I've done, in and through my Passover, our Passover, Joshua the Christ," and it's gone, and He continues to dwell in you.

What an awesome thing to practice over and over again in your life and that God gives us that, and that we become stronger the more we acknowledge "I'm wrong; God is right." That's growing in character. That's what... It's a process of growth spiritually.

Also, if one competes in athletics, they are not crowned unless they compete according to the rules.

The hardworking farmer must be first to partake of the crops. So again here, a part of a process of what God is offering us if we continue to fight and live by the way of life He's given to us, and we're blessed in it, and He gives us more. We produce. We produce fruit then and we're able to enjoy it.

Verse 7—Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things. Because what an awesome thing here that Paul is telling him. He says, "God is the one who gives you understanding. God is the one who gives you the truth." But you know, knowledge is one thing but that isn't enough. You have to come to the point you understand why God has told us what He has. And then the choice of that is to agree with it. That's becoming at one with God, which is wisdom. It's being at one with God. Awesome.

Verse 8—Remember that Joshua the Christ, of the seed of David, was raised from the dead according to my gospel, to the good news, of what I taught you and what I've taught others and what you are witness of, **for which I suffer trouble as an evildoer.** Who cares what the world says. Who cares what people say, what your family says, what relatives say, what coworkers say, whatever else. Who cares! I wish they didn't but, you know.

So, says here, **if you suffer trouble as an evildoer, even to the point of being chained,** bound, restrained, whatever it might be. **But the word of God is not bound,** is not chained. So, we have the opportunity. In other word, there is no end to what we can receive from God, the strength, the help, the power of God to live in us.

Therefore, I endure. The word also here is "to suffer." **I endure/suffer all things for the sake of the elect, that they also may obtain salvation which is in Joshua the Christ with eternal glory.**

Verse 11—This is a faithful saying: For if we died with him, we shall also live with him. So, what does that mean? What an awesome thing. Again, the things we grasp, the things God blesses us to see. Went under the water – that's the process we go through on a spiritual plane. It's something physical, but it represents something which God acknowledges because we obey it, because we do it the way God says

to do it, and we want to go under the water. We want to bury the old person, and we want to come out of that water to walk and become a new person, to walk in life as a new person, total change in life. We want that change. We want our thinking to be transformed.

So, it's a faithful saying, "for if we die with him, we shall also live with him." So again, we have the opportunity to live with Christ. Christ is able to live with us in our lives day by day. Not only that, but it has to be that way, and we have to want that.

Verse 12—If we endure, suffer in other words, **we shall also reign with him. If we deny him, he also will deny us.** So, what a horrible thing to think about those who have denied Christ to dwell in them.

Because that's the choice. Christ wants to live in us. God the Father wants... Christ died for that purpose. His desire is to dwell with us on a spiritual plane. God's desire is to live and dwell in us through Christ to us on a spiritual plane. It's a beautiful thing.

But what a horrible thing to turn against that. That's what it is to deny him.

If we are faithless, in other words, failing to apply, to live, to work at what God has given us the ability to believe and live by as a matter of faith, it goes on to say, **he remains faithful.** What an incredible thing.

He cannot deny himself. So, if we're in the Body we're never going to be denied, in that respect, we're a part of the Body and He'll continue to live within us, if we continue to do things we should. But so many have turned against this, denied the very reason he died, denied God's spirit to live in them because they wanted something else. Horrible.

So again, what we've been covering here, it's about doing the works of God over and over again. And we're going to keep coming at it in different ways here. Let's turn over to 2 Thessalonians 2 and what Paul wrote about our time, the time of the Apostasy. It's amazing how often we can be reminded of that and learn from it and grow in that and it's going to be one of the greatest lessons ever taught throughout the Millennium and the Great White Throne.

The Apostasy is going to be taught over and over and over again because it all starts with a story that Herbert Armstrong would so often start with at the Feast of Tabernacles. He started with a story of Lucifer, how he became Satan, and that mind. And then mankind that was created and that mind that turns quickly against God. And then to see what happened within the Church of all things. Incredible, the whole process.

Of course, he went into things about going into being in Egypt and being brought out of Egypt and showing the rebellions and the things that took place on a physical plane, but the greatest of all is what we've experienced in the Church, in the sense of the end-time and Laodicea, of an apostasy that took place and what we witnessed, what we... especially those who were a part of that process. And to understand this is one of the greatest lessons to learn, that just because you're impregnated with God's

spirit it's not over; you're not there. You've just started the process. It's just a beginning. And if you want the rest you have to fight for it, you have to work for it, and God shows you how to do it.

2 Thessalonians 2:3—Let no one deceive you by any means. That's for all times. It's going to be taught during the Great White Throne. That's an amazing thing to understand. Don't let anyone deceive you. People are going to have to be reminded that when this is all over with at the end of the Hundred Years there are going to be a lot of people who choose, have chosen to be against God, who are not going to be in God's Family. That's going to be taught.

What an incredible thing you're being taught something... And there is going to be a lot of them, too, that think, well, that's not about them until they get closer and closer, and their minds become more cemented in a wrong thinking and so forth. But what an incredible thing to think that these things will be taught. The Apostasy is going to have to be taught. They're going to have to be reminded, just because you're able to go through the motions here of baptism and go under water and... Whether they receive the impregnation of God's spirit is going to really depend upon whether or not they're being truthful to God, because there are going to be a whole bunch that aren't.

I hope we understand that. That just because someone goes under the water and is baptized does not mean, just because hands are laid upon them by another human being that they have received the impregnation of God's spirit. Because if they haven't been truthful to God that this is what they want, or that their lives don't reflect that from that point on, that's up to them, that's up to each individual whether they're true to God or not and that they want that way of life.

So, **Let no one deceive you by any means**, for that day will not come except there comes a falling away first, an apostasy. So, this one is very specific about the time period. It's about the Apostasy and what had to take place within the Church. So, here Paul was given this long before the Apostasy was to occur. They had no idea that it was going to be hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of years before finally this would actually take place within the Church.

So again here, **and that man of sin is revealed, the son of perdition, who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God or that is worshiped, so that he as God sets, "sits"** as it says here, but it's "set down," it's a word that has to do, literally means "as to infer a kingdom upon," "to be set in place in a position of authority."

So, he set himself in a position of authority. That's what we should gain out of this. He did it; no one else did it. He set himself in a position of authority to be over the Church. **...so that he as God**, took on a role, took on a responsibility, said he was a certain thing and he wasn't, **in the temple of God**, so it doesn't mean he was "in" the temple spiritually but that's where the authority was. That was the authority that he had to exercise over the ministry, over the function of the Church and everything else that was taking place.

...or that is worshipped so that he is God, again **sits in the temple of God, showing himself that he is God**. So again here, doesn't mean that he's taking on a position of God but it's what happens on a spiritual plane when people do things of this nature. That's what's being shown here. There are things that can happen that take place, that we do if people turn against the truth of God and decide for themselves what is right and wrong and don't accept the truth that is given to them. They make themselves God. It's pretty simple. They make themselves God or they have their certain idols that they are going to worship. But it's a matter of themselves making themselves God on a spiritual plane.

Do you not remember that when I was yet with you I told you these things? And so, what were they told? Well, they were told about various things, that there were going to be those who are antiChrist, things that John was talking about and preaching as well. But there had to be this one before the end-time.

So now you know what withholds. It's a word that literally means "holds back." Holds back; it's not going to happen, that time isn't going... Not that it's literally holding back but, in that respect, as far as time is concerned, this has to happen first. And so, looking at it, it's held back until this takes place, the Apostasy.

...so that he might be revealed in his time. For the mystery of iniquity is already working. Well, they had to address this early. What an incredible thing, in the Church this had to be addressed early on, that there is this spirit of antiChrist, of working against Christ, of turning against what God had given to them. Paul had already mentioned here to Timothy about two in the ministry and how all of Asia had turned against him, which means they turned against God, they turned against the teachings of God and went out to build their own thing.

And so again here, it says "this mystery of iniquity is already working." Well, that's what it is. It's a mystery only in the sense of not being able to see and understand and grasp what it is except by the power of God's spirit. God has to give you the ability to see what this is. It's about sin in the Church. It's about sin that can happen within the Church and about those who can turn against God, who can turn against the truth. And the reality is that's the way it's been for two thousand years within the Church. There have always been people who have left. "Many have been called, few have been chosen."

For the mystery of iniquity is already working. And it says, "**only he now**" - that's not even in the Greek, but it says, **He only/alone is now holding back until he is taken out of the way.** So again, in other word it can't happen until it's God's time to take place and there is that position and that place. And so, it was to happen at the end of Laodicea, and he is the one who is going to do this portion, as it says here.

Then shall that wicked be revealed, whom the Lord will consume with the spirit of His mouth and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming. What an incredible thing that it was something revealed to God's people, to God's Church in God's time when his life was taken. What an incredible thing to understand what happened in that period of time. You take those Sabbath's, and you add that forty

“times” on there and you come up to the exact day and time that he was put to death by God. Basically, he was allowed to live to that point in time, proof that he was revealed by God, “by the brightness of God Almighty,” in God’s time that he was the man of sin. God had to do it.

That’s why I mentioned in the book that there was one who took that presumptuousness on himself and declared that, and then later on because he died, the man of sin, he said, “Well, it was his son.” So, he had to change because things weren’t fitting into what he was saying. Hope you all understand what I’m talking about.

Even him who’s coming is after the working of Satan. Deceitful, conniving, and God allowed it to happen, allowed a Church to become lukewarm, allowed people to make bad choices and didn’t intervene to stop it. Not God’s fault. God was just revealing what we’re like. Even with God’s spirit we must have God all the time in our life to be alert and watchful, to be on guard. And if we’re not that’s what happens, Laodicea, slowly but surely falling asleep.

Is that happening now in the Church? Well, there’s evidence, in essence, that things that happened in all seven eras, it’s to the entire Church for the entire time, there are just certain eras that were more fully hallmarked by a specific spirit. Philadelphia was hallmarked by a specific spirit that was unique to them, philia. The next one was Laodicea, lukewarm. But those things can exist within the Church, and there are those things that do exist within the Church to this day. That’s why we have to be alert, on guard, repenting, seeking to conquer and overcome, listening to what’s being given to us, and fight this fight to the end. That’s the choice every one of us has to make.

That’s why I am hoping that if we have a Feast next year that we’re all here, to break this once and for all. Wouldn’t that be an awesome thing? I cringe a little bit because I know that there has to be some strong repenting in certain areas because certain ones are playing games. Certain ones may be too far asleep to even see themselves for what they’ve been doing, sinning in things that they know that they’re doing, that I know that they’re doing. And if they don’t turn that around?

But my hope is, and my prayers are that we can have a year with everybody. The only one I’ll ever have experienced if it happens. Wouldn’t that be an awesome thing, no one leaving the Church, no one cutting... but repenting and seeking to be at one with God. I hope that happens. I pray that happens. But I have to be truthful and sceptical because we’re so human and there are some who have been doing some things for so long that I don’t know if they can break through.

So, it goes on to say, **Even him who’s coming**, speaking of the man of sin, **coming is after the working of Satan with all power, signs, and lying wonders.** On a spiritual plane. If we can really see with all of our being this that took place within God’s Church by the end of Laodicea, an apostasy, and what happened to the Church and one third going back to protestantism? One-third! Mind-boggling that by the end of Laodicea...

This power was at work during Laodicea. Power, that's power. It's on a spiritual plane from him, a perverted, distorted, sick being that was moving people, working with people, causing divisiveness, working in different doctrines and ideas that were going back to protestantism. That's powerful to take place within the environment of God's Church!

And yet it happened because we were falling asleep. "Signs." Things that you think could never happen. "Lying wonders" over and over again. And that's what it's called because it had the power of Satan in it to bring us to that, to the final event of Joe Tkach Sr. doing what he did in giving that sermon in Atlanta.

...and with all deceitfulness of unrighteous. Think, how bad it was. Deceitful? I remember talking to different ministers toward the end in the last couple of years and they were so cunning and deceitful at headquarters when you called them up and talked to those who were in church administration and over the ministry, and you would talk to them and ask a question, they knew by the question you asked where you stood. And they probably, in many cases, already knew anyway because different ones were known for...

And then those who agreed with some of the things that were taking place, those are the ones they latched on to and gave certain favoritism to and started trying to give more to. And after a while more leniency to start teaching certain things in their areas because some of that garbage started being taught a couple of years ahead of time before he even did what he did in Atlanta. And so, these things were being taught by different ones as they got farther and farther.

"Power, signs, and lying wonders." Think, how incredible. "And with all deceitfulness." So, you could call up and ask, "Is this a change that's being made. Are there plans for this?" Because, basically, it is, "If this is," you know, "there is going to be battle!" But anyway, it wasn't time for battle until later on. But again, they knew and so they would lie to you. "Oh no. That's not happening."

...with all deceitfulness of unrighteousness in those who perish, who destroy. They're destroying. They're being destroyed and they're destroying what God gave them. **...because they did not receive—** notice this—**the love (agape) of the truth.** That's why when the time of the Apostasy came the Church was so incredibly weak.

I mean, this is stuff we're not to forget. To where it had even been lost that the temple wasn't a physical temple being spoken of in scripture, it was a spiritual one. God had to give that back to us, to recapture it. And yet that's what Herbert Armstrong was teaching toward the end of his life, that the temple of God is a spiritual one. It's not about a physical one. Incredible! And yet it wasn't being taught.

And then on and on it goes. The eras weren't being taught, and many other things weren't being taught, and after a while Herbert Armstrong was looked upon as being "a good teacher" because after all, they were burning the books and getting rid of the literature that he wrote and replacing it because there

were jealousies and so forth and people were still holding on to that, so they wanted to get rid of, they wanted to erase him away, if they could. Mind-boggling in that that happened!

And we're not to forget it. So, we're being reminded, we had better have a love of the truth. All the truth that God has given to us, exceedingly precious, because it is the mind of God, it is His communication to us of what He's sharing with us of who He is and what He wants, and His plan for us and everything else that's contained in it. And it's awesome.

What an awesome thing! Can you imagine that God allowed the Church to use the word "Jesus" for so long when that had to just irk God? I mean, really! But He allowed it to exist knowing that there would be a time when He would reveal that. And what a beautiful thing then when finally, He said "Now you can know his name is Joshua! And let's get rid of this "Jesus" thing," you know. You think, what a wonder... I mean, you talk about being freed and seeing a separation now finally even within the scattered Body, that this is what God has given to us.

How incredible! I mean, how much do we embrace that and love that" The love of the truth. The love to be able to understand that Yahweh Elohim was not Christ. Because that's what the Church taught! Because we didn't know any better, because God hadn't given it during Philadelphia. He didn't tell us. Not only is the trinity a bunch of... and the holy spirit a bunch of... you know. The holy spirit is not a being, it's God's power. But we weren't given at that time because He was reserving that for another time to be revealed. For us. Awesome!

Because they did not receive the love of the truth. I'll tell you that I'm going to stop there today because that's a powerful, powerful verse. Because within the Church we've gone through a period of time where that wasn't as strong as it should have been, the love of the truth, to realize what we had been given and what we are to speak about, what we were to think about, what we were to pray about in order to hold on to it.

If we have to be reminded of the Passover, the Days of Unleavened Bread, Pentecost, all the Holy Days on a regular... every year, what about all the other truth of God. Do we have to be reminded of that? Absolutely. Do we love it? Well, we have to ask ourselves, how much do we love it? Because that's how you hold on to it – because you love it. Because you love God, you love His mind, His truth, who He is.

This body does not tell you who I am. What's up here is who I am. What's up here is who you are. What you believe, what you hold on to, it's in here. This can die, the rest of it, but what's in here is who you are, and that can be given life again.

What's in God, His word, His mind, His being – love it, love the truth? Look what happened to the Church **because they did not receive the love of the truth that they might be saved.** The work. To do the works of God. Awesome!

We'll continue with *Part 2* next Sabbath.