Doing the Works of God, Pt. 4

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November 30, 2024

Today we will be continuing in the current series entitled *Doing the Works of God*, and this is *Part 4.*

Again, this series is stressing the fact that we can't afford to coast, to be idle, to take it easy to, in short, be of a lukewarm, Laodicean type of spirit and mind. You—we, I should say, all of us, we need to be on guard, we need to make sure that we're doing the things we should be doing to be stirred up because we are down to the wire in some of these things in our lives and we never know. So, we're to be alert and that's what God is giving us, the importance of understanding here when we're talking about doing the works of God and participating in that. We have a large part to do in that obviously.

So, let's pick up from where we left off when we were covering here 1st Corinthians 15 last week. Again, it takes work to do the works of God. I love this really in many ways because it shows that God is working, He's creating, He's creating something within us, but we have to be responding to that in a proper way in order for that work to be successful inside of us. But God's giving us that opportunity and that's what this series has been about. And to me, it's very inspiring and exciting to understand that in a deeper way in that respect and focusing on it in a different way.

But again here in **1 Corinthians 15:53**, a scripture that's generally just looked upon in the respect of that which is physical and understanding that which in time will have the opportunity of becoming a part of God's spirit Family, becoming Elohim. But there is more to it than that where it says here, **For this corruptible must put on incorruption**.

That's an ongoing process. That's not about what happens when in essence a resurrection takes place and we're changed from mortal to immortal or we're resurrected to spirit life, but this is about something we have to do in the meantime once we're begotten of God's holy spirit. And this is the corruption, the carnal, human mind, and we are to put on incorruption. And while we have that opportunity in that time we are to be working at it. It takes a lot of work.

…and this mortal then must put on immortality. That's what it's all about, becoming a part of God's Family, God's creation. **So, when this corruptible has put on incorruption**, when we have done what we needed to do to the point we needed to do it, **and this mortal shall have put on immortality,** so when that comes to pass and that resurrection takes place, **then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, Death is swallowed up in victory.** It's a beautiful thing to understand, to understand God's purpose, God's plan, and what it's all about, the creation of God that's ongoing.

O death, where is your sting? O grave, where is your victory? And so, we understand that as all a matter of sin and the power that's there because of that that's over us and the power of the spirit world and the spirit being that wants us to not become, if you will, a part of God's Family, and wants us to fail.

So again here, **verse 56—The sting of death is sin, and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Joshua the Christ!** So again, we understand the process, it begins with Passover, also our High Priest and that which is active in our life. But the work is not just God's, it's not just Christ's, it's not just through the power of the holy spirit. We have to yield to it and participate in it.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast and unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord. So, it means working a lot. If you're abounding in the work of God, then it's something He wants us to do continually, to put ourselves into it, in that respect, that it be flourishing.

…for as much as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord. And I love it, the way it says there too, in God it's not in vain. That's the only way it can be accomplished.

Let's go on from where we were then last week, on to Philippians 2. **Philippians 2:12—Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not in my presence only but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling**. Incredible here to be told something like this, especially back then understanding what was taking place. Here he's writing to the Philippians and says that "This is something that shouldn't only be done in my presence but also in my absence." In other words, it's up to us.

We don't just do it at a certain time when things are going well for us. And in this particular case here, they didn't have what we have today. We can tune in on TV on YouTube, we can listen, at the worst just to the sound on Mixlr, and we have it week after week after week. They didn't have that. They didn't have a kind of ministry we have today in the sense of the technology we have because this is what has been provided us at this time.

And if you go back to the time of Philadelphia that was quite different because then there had to be a training of ministers to be out in different areas because the technology wasn't there. The only way that people can grow and flourish and begin this process and continue in it in so many ways is because of what that God established in Philadelphia in the ministry.

Then we see what happens when a particular period of time comes along. It gets weaker and all the infighting that was taking place and all the jockeying for position and all the things that take place with carnal human nature, of lessons we had to learn, that have to be taught in the Millennium and the Great White Throne so that people can learn from it. Just because you have the begettal of God's holy spirit doesn't mean it's owed to us to be in God's Family by any measure. We have to do our part, which is work.

So, it says here, "Much more in my absence," again here, "work out your own salvation with fear and trembling." In other words, to grasp and comprehend this is our time. God has called us now. We have an awesome blessing and opportunity of life that is really difficult for us to comprehend. And actually,

you grow in that understanding as well. It's not something we just have, and we have the same measure of it from the moment we're called to later on, it's something you actually grow in in appreciating and understanding and being thankful for, that there is growth in this process, and if we yield our self to it.

So, it says, "Work out your own salvation." It takes a lot of work. It takes a lot of time. It doesn't happen overnight. And it's something you have to be consistent in or strive to be consistent in.

"…with fear and trembling." Fear if we don't do our part, if we don't yield to the process as we're supposed to, if we begin to become, as this series is about, becoming lax and letting down and kind of coasting because this has been a huge problem through time, not just during Laodicea, but through time for God's people because it's a natural proclivity. It's an easy thing to do.

For it is God who works in you. Only if we're in God and in Christ because we have to do our part, but it is God who works in us to bring about change because we can't do it on our own. This is something else we grow in over time, in understanding of this. We need God to make change. We need God for this mind to be transformed. You can't do it on your own.

In Philadelphia, we were very physical in that respect, in the sense of having truth restored to the Church. And generally, that's how we learn anyway. We start out with seeing things in a physical plane. It's just like the Temple of God. Look how long that was in the Church in Philadelphia. It wasn't until toward the end of Herbert Armstrong's life that he began to preach very powerfully that the Church is the Temple of God.

And yet it's right in scripture. But we didn't grasp it to that level, to that degree, because there are things you can't see on a spiritual plane until God gives it to you. There is a building going on; there is construction going on. God does that in our lives as a Body, as a Church, as the Church of God, and so He works with us in that regard. It's a beautiful thing when we understand that.

So, we look back at that period of time and then we came to understand toward the end of Philadelphia we are the Temple. It puts a whole different perspective on all the things in scripture in that regard about our lives and what God is doing. And even though it seems so simple, it wasn't simple back then or we would have been able to see it. Because it's spiritual. If you see it and you understand it in the scheme of things and what God has given to us understand that's an incredible blessing, that God gives us the understanding spiritually we are part of a Temple.

That's why when we talk about the courtyard now it means a lot to us because of people out there playing in the courtyard they seem to be around the presence of the Church, but they're out there in the courtyard and they shouldn't be out there. We have to be in the Temple, which means in Christ, in God the Father, and praying that they be in us. We're doing our part. We want their help. We want God's help. We want the power of the holy spirit working in us to bring about change.

That's why you pray. That's the primary purpose of prayer! To draw close to God, to receive of His strength, His life within us, within you. That's what it's about. It's about a relationship. God wants that relationship with us so that He can dwell in us. It's an awesome thing, a beautiful thing when we grasp it like that.

There is no other way. You can't change on your own.

And going back to Philadelphia, you see, there was too much, too often of people trying to do it on their own. Because that's where we were in the sense of growth, in the sense of development – at a very young stage. So, it's like when we're first called at this period of time. We have so much knowledge that has been given, But it takes time to build upon that. But back then it wasn't all there; we didn't have all that.

And so, it takes time. And yet so much of it was taken in a physical way, and so individuals tried on their own ability. I remember times of sermons being given that you have to pray so much in the morning and so much at noon and so much in the evening, and there is so much study time you should be putting in. It's like by the clock. God doesn't want that. That's not what it's all about.

And the Sabbath, it's like, almost like being the ones with the long hair going down the sides and bobbing around and all the rituals they go through and all day long on the Sabbath because they're on the far, far, far, far, far right of something that's very unbalanced. They think by their deeds and by their doing and what they're doing that they're going to receive favor from God. They don't understand. What a shame to understand all that is in vain, doesn't mean a thing, all that bobbing up and down and all that prayer all day long and opening up scripture and going through it and discussing it back and forth as they do with each other. All day long on the Sabbath. You think God would get pleasure out of that, that that's all we do, we hide in a spot, and we just discuss the Bible all day long?

That's not what balance is about and soundness of life in a relationship with God. He wants us to do things like that in the sense of study or the sense of going over things that He gives to us, if you will, Sabbath by Sabbath, but not to a point where we get into this mindset that we're doing it and somehow by doing more of it that this is how we're able to draw closer to God or to be able to receive more favor from God or to be spiritual or whatever is in the mind. That's the next series we're getting into.

So, there is a lot of work, a lot of work that we have to be involved in. But it should always be with the understanding, "I need God. I need His spirit within me."

That's why I love what God has revealed to us in the Church that God's purpose is to live in Elohim forever, to dwell in Elohim. See, we just experience it to a point in this carnal, physical life, in varying degrees. That's why I like at the Feast of Tabernacles, we have opportunity many a time because of sermons day by day and it's a time to be stirred up more spiritually – and it is a time for that – and God's presence is more powerful, if you will, in us and that relationship we're able to have with God away from

the world because we don't have the pulls and the drama that's coming in from the world toward us, whether it be on the job or whatever it is. It's an awesome time.

So, that's a good example, in that respect. The Sabbath day week by week, we have these opportunities to be together (and some people don't have that even), but of fellowship. But not all the time. Not in the same depth and not in the same way. And if we're letting up in certain areas of our life or we have something we're dealing with that isn't right and we have to be brought to repentance then we get weaker and weaker, we start strangling, quenching the holy spirit, if you will, and that presence is even less.

But what a beautiful thing to understand that once we're spirit the full power, strength, and might of God dwelling in us forever, all the time. It's a beautiful thing.

For it is God who works in you, both to will and do of His good pleasure. And what is His good pleasure? To create Elohim. That's what all this work has been about for so long through time, before anything was created. Again, what an awesome and a beautiful thing to understand, that God first created a spirit realm and then He created spirit beings to be in it, and then a physical realm, a universe because of an expanding and incredible purpose that He had. And the angelic realm, it says, shouted for joy when they saw that.

There is something unique that's different from the spirit realm, that's more. So, God's purpose isn't that we go off up into heaven in a spirit realm and only exist there. It's much, much more than that because it's about that which is dealing with that which is physical that we can see in a unique way that spirit doesn't have the same thing of. It's different. And so, God gives us that opportunity to work with something that is unique in that way. We don't understand that all yet, but we're headed that direction, to being able to receive more of that. That whole universe is out there for the purpose of God's Family.

Because there used to be ideas and thoughts that well, the earth is going to melt, and the heavens are going to melt. That's not God's purpose. That's a demonic, satanic thought, mindset. He would love the Church to believe that. So, I think you know the scriptures I'm talking about. But sometimes in times past some of those things have been spoken of, the heavens are going to melt with a fervent heat. It's like, everything is going to be gone except the spirit realm. No.

The whole universe just all of a sudden just disappearing, melting? And what was the purpose of creating it in the first place? It was just kind of nice to look at at nighttime? And you really couldn't see out there thirteen billion light years away so what's that all about?

Amazing, what God gives to us when it's His time. "Who works in you." If we'll allow it. Because it's all up to us. Everything is there that we need to be in His Family, but the choices, it's ours one hundred percent, strictly ours alone, no one else's.

"Who works in you, both to will," to do His will, and His will has to do with His truth. And so, if we grasp that in order to become a part of His family? "…and His good pleasure." It's beautiful. And if we're a part of it it's inspiring.

Do all things without murmuring and disputing. Well, that's a sermon. We look at ourselves as human beings and all the drama that's in the world, all the disputing and division that's going on out there and people not agreeing, and everybody as a whole having their own opinion, and they are right. The haughtiness sometimes, it just comes across. You watch a news station of some sort or whatever and sometimes that haughtiness is just like it flows out of the TV, you know, out of the screen. It's like, "Give me a break!" It's disgusting, haughtiness and pride and everybody knowing what's best for everybody else.

That's our battle oftentimes, of judging people, of condemning people, of looking down on people. That's not God's way at all. That's not God. It's us! Those are the things we have to conquer and overcome. To turn that around to where in God's Church we're for one another and desire to see each other succeed. Then in time if something has to happen somewhere along the line with some then so be it, whatever it takes to make us stronger, to make us better.

"Do all things without murmuring and disputing." I have seen in my life and things that I have experienced, which is a teacher in itself if God's spirit helps us to see those things, has been one of seeing murmuring and disputing within the environment of God's Church. Through Philadelphia, murmurings and disputing at different times in different places, of people not getting along.

The first one was a real shock to me. I mentioned this before. When I first came in, I thought (how do I put this), the first six months, if you will, in coming into God's Church, in a church area, I moved to a church area that had about six hundred people in it. Generally, that's the maximum before they split up into two congregations. They were right at six hundred people in Wichita. Incredible. The town I grew up in had a hundred, and that's probably stretching it. And so, to be in that environment in one building and all these people, and I thought everybody was perfect. I really did. I thought, in God's Church, everything I've read, everything I've seen, people are perfect. I knew I was far from it, but I wanted to be that way, I wanted to change and conquer and overcome things.

But the first time when I was invited over to someone's house, a husband and a wife, and here they were arguing in the other room, with brethren that were invited there to eat with them. It's like, how can this be in God's Church? I mean, I was shocked. Twenties at the time, I was shocked, because I knew that was wrong. It's like, how could this be?

Well, that was the beginning of me starting to see that we all have a long way to go and it's a long road and it's a long battle and it takes a lot of work. They weren't working too hard at it. You think out of embarrassment alone they would have held off until at least everybody was gone then have their little row or whatever, you know. But anyway, they didn't.

But that was just the beginning of learning those kinds of things. After a time, seeing so many things happen, it's like, we have our work cut out. I have my work cut out. That's what we have to see, each one of us, we have our own work because self is all you can change. You can't change anyone else. You cannot change anyone else. You cannot live their life for them. As a matter of fact, sometimes you have to back away to give them space to live their life the way they choose because there are lessons in that.

If there is a chance and opportunity at different time for some kind of influence or something done because maybe you're asked rather than just going and giving the input. Because usually until somebody is ready they're not really too anxious to hear what you have to say anyway (if it comes to criticism). So, we learn these things slowly.

Do all things without murmuring and disputing. It's a beautiful thing. So, in the Church, what a wonderful thing when there is no murmuring, when it has to do with doctrine, with truth, and yet I have seen so much of that! In many regards, you think the Apostasy shouldn't have been a shock, but it was. Then this was even worse.

So, that's our goal. That's what we should strive to do, get rid of the drama because it's the opposite of God's peace. He wants us to have peace, His peace, and it only happens with His spirit.

…so that you may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God. So that we can become part of Elohim! So we can be in God's Family! So, we have to go through this to get where we're going, and that's down to personal choices, what we choose.

…without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. So, I don't care what generation it is there are problems because we're all human, because we all have carnal, human nature. We're all selfish by nature. And those are things we come to see and come to grasp and come to embrace, that we realize that's what we are, everybody is. We all have our battles. We're in the same boat and we want to survive.

…among whom you shine as lights in the world. So, this is what we're supposed to be doing in our lives, if we live God's way of life and we have God's spirit in us because this is spiritual. To be a light, for us, is a spiritual thing. They may not understand and grasp certain things that come out of our life by our actions, by what we say, by things we do and don't do, and they're able to see those things, those that come in contact with us, but it is to be a light, that one day it's going to have great meaning to them in the time when they're called and drawn.

Holding forth the word of life. What does it mean, "Holding forth the word of life?" Well, you're holding on to the truth you've been given, and you understand there are things to hold on to that we're to live, that we're to change, we're to become something different. And so, by doing that this is something that people can see in us. They can see that we're not going to compromise with the word of life. We're not

going to compromise with the Sabbath. We're not going to compromise with sundown on Friday night to sundown on Sabbath. We're not going to compromise on those things.

"Holding forth the word of life." That's the light, that if people can see something they will see those things in us, they'll see that we're different. The Holy Days, whatever it might be, and then other things, how we talk. How we talk. We're not like the world. We don't talk like the world. It's just getting worse and worse out there. We don't chew people apart. On the job, we're not doing what so many other employees are doing when they're chewing up the boss and spitting him out. This happens a lot. Or the one supervisor over them, or whatever it might be, talking behind their back. We don't engage in that.

And so, when we don't engage in that after a while they just kind of leave you alone because they know you're not going to do that, and maybe you'll say something to them. Incredible. So, we are to be a light.

…among whom you shine as lights in the world, holding forth the word of life so that I may rejoice in the day of Christ. So, for him, for what he was teaching, and for them as well, this should be their desire, "rejoice," every one of us to "rejoice in the day of Christ." Well, we do now. We look forward to it. We rejoice in it. We did at the Feast, looking forward to the Millennium. We rejoiced in what it means. We grasp it in a way the world can't obviously. They're not taught it. Even the scattered Body doesn't grasp it like that.

…that I have not run in vain, neither labored in vain. So again, it was this desire in what Paul had in this respect, and he was telling the Philippians. And if they see that and learn from that they should want to strive to be the same way and respond to that part.

Over to James 1. Things to pray about. Things to work at. Choices to make. Choices, choices, choices. So many choices. God has to be first in those choices always.

James 1:16—Don't be led into error, my beloved brethren. Well, who wants that? We want to be sharp, but we should know what it takes in order to remain spiritually sharp, to stay close to the trunk of the tree, to hold on to it with all of our being, to not deviate. Because again, this has happened so much in God's Church through Philadelphia. Especially through Laodicea, it's like nobody is holding on to a tree.

Every good and every perfect gift is from above. Well, that tells us a lot right there. It all comes from God; everything that's right and good, He is the source of it. God is the source of it and that's how we're going to be able to have those things in our life then. We have to go to God.

…and comes down from the Father of lights, of whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning. God's way, it's consistent. It's always there. That's to be relied upon, to be dependant upon, different from human beings. So, as human beings we don't have those kinds of things in our life as we're supposed to have, obviously, as we grow in a relationship with God. God is to be trusted, God and His Son alone in that regard, full trust with all of our being.

…neither shadow of turning. Of His own will, He brought us forth. In other words, has begotten us. So again, this is something we can't comprehend. Why were we called? Why us and not someone else? It's not a direction you need to worry about, you need to go in. It won't do any good anyway. You won't know in this age and probably not in the one to come. God just has a plan and a purpose, and He sees things, He chooses things, and to be a part of that is mind-boggling, what God has given to us when you look at all humanity over six thousand years. So, it's a matter of His will. Just something to be thankful for, to be grateful for, that it happened now for us.

Of His own will, He brought us forth with the word of truth. He has begotten us with the word of truth. What an incredible thing to understand that when we're begotten of God's holy spirit it has to do with His mind, His being, the word of truth. He is the word. The word, the logos is from God Almighty, and then it talks of Christ being the word of God made flesh. And so then, again, in the God Family, the word of God, the power of God's spirit in what He communicates to us in the mind. To become at one with Him, to be in agreement with Him. Beautiful thing, it really is.

…that we should be a kind of first fruits, that's the purpose of it or this period of time here. He's talking about a period of time in the beginning of the Church and had no comprehension it was going to go on for about another nineteen hundred years plus. And yet here we are, a kind of first fruits. The focus for the early Church all the way up to much of scripture that's written, all the way up to the end-time here until God began to give to Herbert Armstrong then an understanding of things going well beyond and what that was about in a way that they didn't really fully grasp back then. I think of Revelation itself; it hadn't been written yet. So there is much in there that gives a great opening in understanding of things about the Millennium and so forth and Christ's return and what's going to take place. And yet to have those things put together, never had been in that regard, just pieces here and there that God gave to us, little building blocks here and there. It's been a long process.

So that we're to be a kind of first fruits in the sense of those in the first resurrection. We live at a unique time because there are going to be some then who are going to continue on into a new age but the building block, if you will, the beginning of the Church. Awesome to be part of that, whether it be those that God is preparing to be in the first resurrection or those who are going to continue on in the Church having experienced all they did before all these things came to pass.

…that we should be a kind of first fruits of His… It's not the word "creatures." Sometimes this is so frustrating. The more and more we go through scriptures it's so frustrating when things have been mistranslated or translated in ways because they didn't understand. But sometimes they just pick words that don't even mean this. It's not a word that means "**creatures**," it's about **creation.**

And so you think, why? Well, there is a being that's tried to muddle all these things up and done a really good job. And then, what an awesome thing God comes along and helps us to begin to see things here and there and understand things spiritually before we even understand the word sometimes. I mean,

that's the way it's worked in the Church over and over again. Then what an exciting thing when He does finally show us even the words and what they mean. We've had an incredible history of that.

…that we should be a kind of first fruits of His creation. It's the first part of it. So, Christ was the first and then the rest are larger, if you will, the 144,000, the first among mankind. Christ, His Father God Almighty, so unique in itself, but for the rest and the first out of all of mankind at Christ's coming.

That's why I hope – I haven't even mentioned it – but I hope that everything is translated into other languages when some of these things come out, especially when I'm going through scriptures because the reality is there are times that some things are translated by understanding the context of what's being said, and not a word. There are things you can't translate sometimes word for word. And so, to find a specific word that covers a word in the Greek, you can't always do that. Sometimes it takes a phrase to express something. And that really became something that God was showing us even more of when the books were being translated at different times into different languages because you can't do that word by word because then it's not going to have the same meaning if you don't know what's being said spiritually. You don't know how to quote it or translate it properly in a particular language. I hope that makes sense.

Well, how much more for us than too in the Church and all the stuff we have that have come out of Greek and Hebrew that have been translated into English and so much of it so wrong. But sometimes I haven't, I don't go through every time and explain that this is a better translation. I try to oftentimes, but sometimes it's just a word or so here and there, but it gets the more proper context.

Therefore, my beloved brethren, let everyone be swift to hear, slow to speak, and slow to wrath. Another sermon. I know because I've given one on this. Maybe it was a series, I don't even know. But there's a lot here, there really is.

"Let everyone be swift to hear." In the Church, what? What is given to us. What we're fed. That should be our greatest desire, especially Sabbath by Sabbath, Holy Day to Holy Day, swift to hear. It hasn't always been that way. People are swift to find fault and chew things up and spit them back out and why they disagree with certain parts. Disagreeing with Herbert Armstrong. I've heard people in times past in Philadelphia disagreeing with things he had to say. You think, "Who are you? Who can do that? How can you do that?"

"Let everyone be swift to hear, slow to speak." See, there are times you just keep your mouth shut and don't be so quick to respond to something we don't fully know yet and grasp. We might hear something. Well, we better concentrate. And if we don't see it and we don't grasp it fully, to meditate on it, to pray about it so that we can maybe receive it, to ask God to help us to see, to learn rather than finding fault and starting to pick it apart and start talking to other people about it.

I remember trips back and forth to services in Kansas, going from one area to another because it was like a hundred miles to this other area where the Church was. And for a time I was back in this one area, and I remember driving along and a husband and wife up there would be chewing apart things they heard in the sermon. It was like just let me jump out of the car! But it was a long walk so I didn't do that. And I was very young, so I didn't feel I had the right at that particular time to say anything. If I had it to do over again… But anyway. We have to grow and learn how to handle things and deal with things.

Sometimes it's good to just be slow to respond to something we hear. And what is it? It's not just about anything we hear. Even in the world sometimes we should be cautious and careful before we say something back in a way that maybe will cause problems. But this is in context of the truth. This is in the context of what God is giving us in the Church.

"Slow to wrath." No place for that in God's Church. Anger? To wrath? And yet it's happened over and over and over again in God's Church in times past.

…for the wrath of mankind does not work the righteousness of God. It shouldn't even have to be said, but he said it, because sometimes we do need to hear it, and if somebody is not doing something right, then it's better to hear it.

Verse 21—Therefore lay apart all filthiness and superabundance of ill will or malice. So again, it's a matter of trying to take control of the wrong things in our thinking, the wrong things in our mind, and asking God for help to control, to control self, to control what's in the mind. Because this is the place to really get to.

Sometimes we have certain actions in our life when we respond to things quickly and the action is there, but the place to really get to and pray about, it's the mind. It's how we think that determines our actions. And so, we want this mind to think differently, to ask God for help and the mind to be transformed. That's a battle. If you're not fighting that on a constant basis then there are things you don't see that should be so easy to see.

Because I have to do that as an apostle! I have to do those things. I have a long way to go. I don't know when that time comes, it's done, and it's like no matter how long you live you're still going to have those things to do because there's a lot that has to be changed. God has mercy upon us in that respect, for His kind of mercy to us that He can do toward human beings. And indeed, we need that. We need that grace, that favor, that help. There comes a point in time where we're sealed where we are. Because we'll never be perfect in this life. We'll never be perfect, as in a human body you can't. But there's a time when God knows us, "Now, I know you." What an awesome thing for God to say, "Now, I know you."

"Therefore, lay apart" these things. That takes work. You have to work at these things. They don't just happen. Bad things don't just disappear out of our mind by whatever, you know, just having a prayer about it one day. No, it'll take a lot of days, a lot of days, a lot of prayers to change.

…and receive with meekness. Great lesson, teachable spirit when it comes to receiving things from God and thinking about them. Just like what we're talking about here, we have to think a lot about what we are. We hear it a lot and sometimes maybe people get tired of hearing it, but it's the way it is. Our nature is selfish. It stinks. It really stinks. It's hideous, it really is.

…and receive with meekness the engrafted word. A teachable spirit, that which comes from God, that which is a part of the changing of the way we think in our minds and what we receive of God's way of life. **…and receive with meekness the engrafted word which is able to save your lives.** To become a part of Elohim.

But be doers, a word that means "a maker; a producer; to produce something." We have to produce. Laodicea didn't produce much of anything. Bad things. A lot of bad things. Then it got worse and worse and worse as the Church began to drift off more and more asleep, became more and more lukewarm before finally it happened, it was God's time to let it happen.

It was God's timing. It wasn't Joe Tkach Jr's, and it wasn't Satan's. It was God's time. So, it was to happen on a specific day in Atlanta, and God allowed it to happen at that time. He was going to give a different sermon that day but there were circumstances in that day, and he changed it to this, of things they'd been planning for a long time but weren't ready to do yet. But that day spurred it forward. Because there's a world out there and when God allows a demonic world to do various things then they go to it right then and there.

Just like the wars that are coming and the fighting that's coming. All the stuff is in the works, but they're not allowed to do it yet. But when the time comes and God doesn't restrain them anymore, He lets them go off and do what they're going to do. You think, well, why is that? How is that fair? Well, we better understand what God is creating. We better understand what God is going to bring to this earth. We better understand the reasons behind it and the purpose behind it because all of it is righteous. Truly is! And if we don't see those things, those are the things we have to pray about.

Because I've heard of times past of people finding fault with God, fault with teachings, which if they find fault with that they find fault with God in some of the things that are going to come to pass. It's like, God could have prevented that... Yes, and He could have stopped the Apostasy, too, but what good would that have done? We wouldn't have learned from it. We would be gone. Because in time we would have been gone. But God had a purpose in it. I hope we understand what it is. You're here because of that purpose.

But be doers of the word, the word of God, **and not hearers only**. A lot of people through time, a lot of people through Philadelphia, many or more through Laodicea, those out in the courtyard, that's what they are. They hear, but it goes in one ear and out the other. If it can go through, which I think it must. You've got to do it; got to apply it. We receive it, we want to change, we want to grow, we're given instruction, we want to look at self. What can we do? "What can I do? What do I need to focus upon?"

I know what we're supposed to be focusing on right now. That we're not to be lax. We're not to be lazy. We're not to be lukewarm. We're not to drift. Because that can be a temptation in this particular time. On the contrary, we're to be sharp, on guard. That's what God is telling us. I know it's from God. And so, that's what we're being told now.

So, all the more reason these are the kinds of things we need to pray about. Not just to hear a sermon and say, "Well, I've heard about my human nature two months ago, and three months ago, and four…" No, it's constantly in front of us. You know why? Because your human nature is right there smack in your face all the time. Every day you get up, there it is, look at it in the mirror. We're a mess! But God offers us the chance, the opportunity to change, to become something different.

The mind changing. We're still in this body. I look forward. I'm not in a giant hurry but I look forward to being in a different one, to that time being here, for that change to take place.

But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. Because this is what happens when people hear things and maybe go through the motions of certain things. And if they're not doing it?

That's why as many times as I've mentioned it, when I've talked about tithing and so forth and I think that was one of the three truths that was still there after Sardis. At the end of Sardis, at least that was still there. They grasped that. They understood this is something you have to do. And yet I think of PKG, and the same thing happened during Philadelphia and Laodicea because human nature is human nature, but to do something like that, to not be faithful in something of that nature, what words can express the disbelief of such a thing? And yet it happens. Why?

For if any be a hearer of the word and not a doer, they are like a person who looks at their natural face in a mirror… You know, I have no idea what I look like. I mean, we look at a mirror and we see that. The only time I was shocked is when I got my hair totally cut off. It took me three days to kind of get used to that in the mirror. I mean, really, seriously. It's like, okay, and then I got used to it. A month or so ago I let it start to grow back, and I went about four weeks, and I didn't like it. I like it now. That's what I got used to in the mirror.

So, anyway, that's what it's talking about. We look at ourselves in the mirror and we go away. Could you draw yourself? I mean, if you're really a good artist would you be able to? I couldn't do it. Now, I could see you, some of you, and if I was really a good artist I could start sketching some things. But myself, because it's in a mirror? I don't know, there is something unique or different there. I don't know what it is, but I wouldn't be able to do it.

For they are like a person who looks at the natural face in a mirror, for they look at themselves and go their way, and immediately forget what manner of person they are. That's something we should all

understand. It doesn't take long. You know, you look away and it's like, "Do you want to draw that?" No, I couldn't do it. I couldn't do it to save my life, you know.

But whoever looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues – continues. It's like the word "to abide in; to dwell in." The word also means "to continue in." It's like that knowledge that we have that it's something that has to be always there. And if we slack off, if we let down in it, and it's not continuing in it that's when we should have that fear and trembling we read about earlier. So, be fearful to do something like that because then it's easier to sin, it's easier to drift away, and it becomes more of a battle then to repent and get back on track.

We make things harder for ourselves sometimes if we do something of that nature, let down, and then to get back on track, that's a hard thing to do. I remember Herbert Armstrong coming back after his heart attack and his sickness in the late 70s there and talking about some of that, about people. That was a lot of his message there in 78, 79, 80, is getting the Church back on the right track. Because a lot of damage was done during that period of time when he wasn't constantly there.

It shows how much that was needed and what can happen when people begin to fight with each other and people begin to vie for power, "Because he's about to die. He's an old man and somebody is going to take over. And who is it?" And you think, to think that kind of carnality, evil existed in the Church of God at that time, it's mind-boggling. It's like the tithing thing. It's like, "How could this happen?"

How blessed are we that we can look back at those things and learn from it, see what we're capable of as human beings, see the great lessons that are in that, that one day you're going to have the opportunity to teach? You're going to have the ability to work with people and teach.

But whoever looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, they are not being a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work. Work. That's what we need to see it as, work. **This person will be blessed in their doing.** In their working, if you will.

If anyone among you seems to be religious and does not bridle their tongue, but deceives their own heart, that person's religion is vain. What is it? What does it mean, what we believe, and so forth, if we're not living what we're told to do? So, that's what it's showing us, there are things to do that we have to work at that are sometimes very basic.

Pure religion and undefiled before God the Father, is to look after/upon… Some of these words are not right in the sense of what they're about. It's about that which is on a spiritual plane. The word "comfortless" is far more perfect there in what it's talking about. There are times that within the Body there's a comfort that's needed and because of what people are experiencing, what they're going through, to feel that and, if opportunity is there, to give comfort, that that's something that people can do.

We need each other. We are a Body. We are a Family, the Body of Christ, a Family, and there are things sometimes that people have the opportunity to do because of friendships and so forth that can go a long, long way. And so, that's what this is about. It's not about **the fatherless** on a physical plane because things like this in the past have been taken only physically and not understood for what it's about spiritually for the Church.

…and widows. It's more than that. It's more than something physical, it's spiritual. It's a word that has to do with, in essence, if you think about the thing that's there and happens in a life when something like that is taken away in a person's life, it has to do with "those who are deficient in their affliction." That's what it's about, and they need help at that time. So, there are times that individuals need that within the Church as well. It's about the Church and it's not about a physical routine, though there are things on a physical plane that should be easy to see as well, that there are things that can sometimes happen that we can have an effect upon in life.

...and to keep themselves, as it goes on to say here, **unspotted from the world.** It's about us. It's about how we think toward others. It's about a relationship toward others, if we're able to have empathy, if we're able to have love and care and concern for what others are going through. "And to keep ourselves unspotted." Without sin. That's the battle.

James 3, a couple of chapters down. **James 3:5—Even so,** breaking into the context here, **Even so, the tongue is a little member and boasts great things.** So, all we have to do is turn on a TV, the news, boasting all kinds of things out here sometimes it's like, give me a break. You know, when you can see things spiritually of what we're supposed to be like, and then you see things like that it's just frustrating because there is no way to influence that today.

I think of the Millennium when things are going to be geared in a totally different way. So much better. When these things are going to be addressed and there will be Sabbath services every Sabbath, and people are going to learn about things that they have never known or comprehended and learn what this is all about, learn what self is all about. So much that's there.

And so, it speaks of the tongue here, the things that come out of the mouth sometimes that sometimes just make your jaw drop. It's "a little member and it boasts great things."

Behold how great… It's not "**a matter**," it's the word **how great in a forest a little fire kindles.** So, that's what it's about. It's like, a little fire, it doesn't take much to spark here huge fires sometimes. Things in California, electrical line, or whatever it might be, a cigarette that gets thrown out, and some of the stupid things that people do in dry areas. And then all of a sudden, you've got a forest fire. That's what it's talking about here.

So, it's something real small. It gives that kind of an analogy, "Look at the destruction that can happen with a little thing right there, how people can hurt one another." Horrible. Horrible to hurt others, it

really is, by things that are said sometimes that are not thinking and not caring and they just come out of the mouth. And what does that reveal? Well, it reveals something has to be changed in the mind, of why it would come out in the first place, of why it would be said without thought, without thinking of hurt and pain and suffering that things like that can cause.

Because we're very good at that as human beings, of letting things come out of the mouth and hurting someone. And yet it's a thing we should guard against as much as possible. Yet sometimes we do it in little ways that we don't even grasp because we're just carnal human beings. So, this is something that can always, does always take work. Always, as long as you're in this body.

The tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity. Because so often it's the tongue that reveals what's in the mind, and it's not pretty. Selfishness is not pretty. Things can be very cutting sometimes. Like the expression, "Sticks and stones can break my bones, but words will never hurt me," is a giant lie. Sometimes it's better to have the sticks and stones because relationships are what life is about, friendships, relationships, how people treat one another, and so forth. The physical things you can heal from much easier sometimes than what you can from what in the mind.

So is the tongue set among our members so that it defiles the whole body. It's there, and because of our carnality and because of the ability to speak, it reveals what's in the mind and how we think about others. As a whole for human beings, it's not a good thing.

…and sets on fire the course of nature. Drama, drama, drama, drama, drama. That's where it comes from. Blah, blah, blah, something comes out of the mouth. It hurts others. Things that people do to each other without care and concern and then people grow up with all kinds of baggage. I think we all do. We all have rocks of things in our life. "Sets on fire the course of nature." So, this is a powerful thing. But to acknowledge it, to say, "Yeah, that's true," sometimes people can't because they don't see themselves. They don't realize. They might see someone else, and say, "Oh, that person, they do that a lot." But to see ourselves?

…and sets on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of gehenna. That's what we need to see because this has to do with judgment. When it's all said and done, we can change, we can either change when God gives us that opportunity, choose to change, choose to work, choose to be part of what God gives to us, and fight the fight that we have to, or this is the alternative. That's it.

For every kind of beasts, and birds, and serpents, and of all things in the sea are tamed or have been tamed by mankind, but the tongue can no one tame. Not of yourself. That's what we're being shown here. You have to have God's help because the mind has to change. It's not the tongue. It isn't the problem. It's just a part of our body. It's a member in our body and it doesn't have a mind of its own. The mind is what controls that little thing that causes all the problems, all the drama.

No one can tame it. It is an unruly evil. Because we are that way. Because selfishness is evil. **…full of deadly poison.** I love the way it says it there. It just tells it like it is; it's full of deadly poison. It works to destroy.

Therefore, we bless God, even the Father, and therewith, we curse people, who are made after the similitude of God. God's purpose and God's creation, and yet how we can be toward others. Especially within the Church that can happen. Now, again, we're so far along compared to what we used to be like and what we've gone through, so that's an awesome thing. But we're to be learning now and growing in these things even more so.

So again, **Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing.** That's the way we are as human beings. There are times when we're not sharp, we're not on top of something, something all of a sudden happens and we respond how? With our stinking, rotten, selfish, carnal nature. I pretty much do that every day. If you don't, I don't know, you're a unique person. If something doesn't happen at some point in your day you must be hibernating. Where some thought, some thinking, maybe even toward the TV, I don't care what it is, but somewhere your human nature is there, your selfishness is going to come out.

And if you don't believe that just make sure in the next day here, the next 24 hours, carry a pad and a pencil and if you have any kind of wrong thought come into your mind and a wrong response of something be sure to write it down because you're going to have something on there. If you're truthful you're probably going to have quite a bit. It's just that's the way we are.

We're all in this together. We're all fighting self. We're fighting our own nature if we're fighting. Because that's the work. It's understanding what we are and grasping even with one another, we want to see each other succeed in this battle. I don't want to see anyone stop. I don't want to see anyone not succeed in this battle, in this fight against your own human nature. I want this, I want to succeed in this battle, and I want you to succeed in your battle. And candidly, that's what God wants for each one of us. But that's in our choice, and we have to make those choices. It's really just that simple, quite simple.

Verse 10—Out of the same mouth proceeds blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things should not be so.

It goes on to say, **Does a fountain send forth at the same place sweet water and bitter?** See, that's what's hard to understand sometimes then about, like tithing, how can that happen? Or things that come out of us sometimes and how can it happen? And the longer we're in and the more refined we are, there are going to be things that happen, but some things should never happen because they should have been taken care of immediately when we were first called. There are certain things, like being so convicted you would never begin to be tempted to work on the Sabbath. You would never be tempted. It would be the thing farthest from your mind that you would consider.

But again, sometimes things are hard to understand but this here is pretty simple: “Can you out of a fountain have in the same place sweet water and bitter water?” Well, it’s going to be one or the other. You know, you can’t have both. You think of a simple example here of something of how can things come out of us that are both good and bad, but they do. Not at the same time. It’s either going to be bad, what’s coming out, or it’s going to be good. And if it’s good it’s because it comes from God because it’s helped by God’s spirit.

And when the bad comes out, that’s what we have to repent of. Really! When we see certain selfishness of certain things and it’s not right because we’re just being selfish and getting our own way, wanting our own way, and we’re upset about something, something isn’t going right because we’re just not comfortable. Have you ever had that happen to you?

Every week something happens. I shouldn’t even talk about it, getting on the highway the day before Thanksgiving. The traffic! And then Friday, the traffic! It’s like, “You should all go home!” Just kidding. But it’s an absolute nightmare. Then people go nuts. You get that many people out there and they’ve been waiting in line for so long and then people do the stupidest things.

I don’t think I did this week like that. Maybe I did. But anyway, they’ll pull right in front of you. They don’t even have room. Sometimes they’ll just start pulling in and if you don’t hit your brakes, you’re going to have a wreck. In a situation like that it’s like you’re always in 9odefensive driving. You have to be watching out for somebody else. But my carnality comes out. I have to work on self and realize, “There you go again.”

Isn’t that amazing? If we’re not comfortable…? It’s just like a baby. If you’re not comfortable, what do you do? “Wah!” You know, you start screaming and crying and you want attention, and you want whatever, but you want something different than what you’re feeling right then and there. Sometimes it’s just how we are. Amazing.

But when we’re older? Generally, there are things we have to repent of if we see, “Hey, I don’t want to be like that. I don’t want that to happen. I want to fight that.”

Can a fig tree, my brethren, bear olive berries, or a vine, figs? So can no fountain yield both salt water and fresh. Pretty simple.

Who is wise and intelligent among you? That’s a good one. It’s like a trick question. Because if we really understand, it’s like, we’ve got problems. The wisdom, if there is wisdom there in things we do in our life, it comes from God. It’s because of God’s spirit because of God’s help.

Who is wise and intelligent among you? Let them show out of their good conduct their works. So again, it’s by what we do and how we do it reveals whether it’s from God or whether it’s from self. And if it’s from self, as long as self is seeking to be in unity with God and what’s coming through that is because it’s right and good and just, then that’s great.

That's what is awesome about the transformation of the mind, our thinking, because that is something we grow in, that there are those things that we can respond in a way that is supposed to be because it's filled with God's spirit because it's thinking the right way. But it doesn't take too long sometimes for that carnal part to be there without God's spirit because there are things that God won't do through us and in us.

But if you have bitter envying and strife in your hearts… You know, something happened in a relationship, something on the job or whatever it might be, in family, again, no place for certain things in life when it comes to jealousies or envying or whatever. There can be such battles of different things that can cause problems in life, in drama.

…do not glory and lie against the truth. The lying against the truth is if we aren't able to live and do something the way God says it's supposed to be done. Then it reveals whether it comes from God or not because if it's of the truth and we're living a certain thing then it reveals God's spirit. And if we don't do that then we're lying against the truth, against God.

This wisdom does not descend from above. See, in other words "who is wise among us?" It's more than just understanding wisdom, it's what we live because we are in agreement with God and that's what we've chosen. And if we're striving to live by that then we recognize this comes from God, it's of God's spirit and we are thankful. But when something else comes along and it's not from God, it's not so hard to discern from between the two, and we should be able to understand the difference.

So, "who is wise among us?" Well, we all should be striving to have that, but to understand it comes from God. It comes from being in unity and agreement with God. Understanding, yes, understanding the knowledge that has been given to us.

That's why I've been talking about this from the Feast on as a whole in large part. This distinction between knowledge, understanding, and wisdom is a massive process, it truly is in our lives spiritually. God gives us knowledge of so many things, has given the Church through time; people have been able to hear the truth. So much knowledge.

But then it lies in us whether or not it becomes a matter of understanding as to whether or not we're able to pray about those things, whether or not we're able to come into agreement with the things that God reveals to us. We begin to understand why God has given us various truth. In other words, we understand God. As we make the choice then because we understand, and we agree – because that's a matter of agreement – then that's what becomes wisdom. Because that's what we live then. It's an awesome thing. It's an awesome process.

So, that wisdom, it comes from God, and it has to be filled, it has to have God's spirit in it as well because it's living in us. It's a beautiful thing, it really is.

It says, **This wisdom does not descend from above but is earthly, sensual, and devilish.** So, not living, working at what God gives to us. If we're doing it on our own, it's never good. It's worthless. If things aren't of God in our lives, if it's not because of being in agreement with God and we're doing it out of selfishness, out of our own motivations in human life and we're just being selfish in it, then it's not good. The good has to come from God. That's an incredible thing to see in that light.

So, the wisdom that comes out of us, what we think, what we make a decision about, what we know better than in certain things in our life and we go ahead and do things that aren't good spiritually or think things that aren't good spiritually, they work against God's spirit, then that's what it calls it. It says that's earthly, that's just carnal human nature, sensual, devilish because that's the way he is. It's all about self, all about him.

For where envying and strife is there is confusion and every evil work. (Verse 17) But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, comes from God, **then peaceable**, has the peace of God in it because it produces peace. God's way produces peace. When we live it, when we talk it, when we think it, it produces peace.

…gentle and easy to be entreated, full of mercy and good fruits, in other words, that mind toward others that is compassionate, that's thinking about others in that regard. **…and good fruits, without partiality, without hypocrisy.** Not just a matter of favoritism or whatever it might be. "And without hypocrisy." Those things are a tall order.

And the fruit of righteousness. So, we want fruit, and fruit comes from work, producing something. It's the way it is. That's why this thing of agriculture, fruit on the vine, all these things mean so much in the sense of that which is physical that God teaches us, those things that are spiritual.

And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace in those who make or **do peace.** That's where wisdom comes in. If we do it, if we're practicing it, we live it because we agree with it, we reject drama. You come to where you hate drama with a passion. And the more you hate it – it's like any sin – the more you hate the sin, and you see and understand the good and why God says it's to be something different and you embrace that, and you live that, and do it because you hate the other so much, that's where wisdom comes from. If it comes from God, being in unity and agreement with God, and when filled with His spirit because we cry out for it, He blesses us in that kind of growth to produce fruit. "And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace in those who make, in those who do peace." So, we'll stop there today.

I have some news, but I'm not going to bother. It's pretty much the same. It's amazing what's going on out there, it really is. What's going on in Ukraine, what's going on right now with Europe, and back and forth. There is absolute insanity that's going on out there, truly is. I could go through a whole bunch of these, just the headlines.

This world is so close. And you know what? It's only just a matter of God's timing. Because everything is on the plate. It's like it's ready but it'll have to be in God's time. That's why we're to be on guard, to be alert, to realize it can be any time or it could be a long time. But we have to live like it could be any time, truly.