

I'm going to begin where we were and where we left off last week. Again, this is going to be *Part 4* today of *God's Work Through Paul*.

We were in 1 Corinthians going over some of the things that he had written and just picking out a few highlights especially because of the time of the year we're in which corresponds with what I'm going through in the book right now in Chapter 2. Just thought I'd mention that I have Chapter 1 out for editing, for slicing and dicing, and I hope it doesn't get too much slicing and dicing because I'm not sure much can be done with that first chapter because it has to be organized in a certain way.

So anyway, deep into Chapter 2 and going into some of these kinds of things here as well. Not going to give any more information than that, but there are some new things here and there as well, but minor here and there, but it adds more meaning. Just like the Feast of Unleavened Bread and Passover period.

Anyway, Paul was talking about that here in 1 Corinthians 5, going through here and talking about, using the example of leavening. And what's amazing about this is that as a whole traditional Christianity has very little understanding of what in the world he's talking about because they don't understand what unleavened bread is let alone Passover. And yet Paul was telling them this some twenty years after Christ had died and been resurrected.

That's important because these same people that talk about some of these things here or won't talk about this, say that the law basically has been done away in Christ. And the reality is here they don't like to face things like this because it's very clear twenty years afterward why the Church is still observing Passover and the Feast of Unleavened Bread. So, amazing how humans can think, how we as humans can think sometimes.

So, I'll just go back here a little bit, 1 Corinthians 5:8 picking it up there. So, he's addressing some problems there in Corinth about an individual that should have been put out, should have been separated from their fellowship. Then going on here and talking about it, he's even told them they were puffed up, basically, because they allowed it to happen. They were guilty as well because they weren't addressing it.

In verse 8, dropping on down here a little bit after he told them how a little leaven leavens the whole lump and so forth. **1 Corinthians 5:8** he says, **Therefore let us keep the Feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of depravity and wickedness, but with the unleavened of sincerity and truth.** So again, that's about becoming unleavened in our lives on a spiritual plane.

Again, what an incredible thing that the world doesn't grasp the spiritual part of God's plan. They look at things in a physical manner and then talk about a resurrection, but they don't grasp what it's all about. And to be able to know that, to grasp it, is an awesome thing that God has given to us.

So, he went on to say, **I write to you in my epistle not to keep company with sexually immoral people. Yet by not any means with the sexually immoral people of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or idolaters, since then you would need to go out of the world.**

Then **verse 11—But now I have written to you not to keep company with anyone named a brother, who is sexually immoral, or covetous, or an idolater**, in other words, a worshipper basically of anything false, **or a reviler**, you know, abusive, a slanderer, **or a drunkard, or an extortioner—neither eat with such a person.**

And then it goes on in **verse 12**, says, **For what have I to do with judging those who are without?** So, in other words, he's saying as an apostle there is no judging in the world because they're not called, but in the Church, obviously a different matter.

So, he says even here, **Do you not judge those who are within?** We're supposed to be able to tell if we know of something that's sin. Sometimes there are differences between people and people feel like someone is doing something wrong in a way that they feel should be done better. But oftentimes the response to that is, well, where is the sin? Because sometimes it's not a matter of sin. It's just the way that we feel that somebody could do something better and kind of looking down on them or judging them.

But if there is sin involved, that's another matter, and sin is supposed to be addressed even by us. What does it say? "Go to your brother alone." So, that's where it starts. It's not just a wait and let it fester and continue on and then later on the ministry has to get involved at a point in time when it may be too late for the individual because they've gone too far in what they're doing and can't listen anymore. So, those kinds of things happened a lot in times past.

**But those who are without God judges. Therefore, put away**, which is the word for "take away," or "remove" **from yourselves that evil.** So, Paul talked a lot about this and it's again, candidly, something that wasn't practiced very much in the Church during Worldwide. It was when things got really, really, really, really, bad, but they had to be really, really bad before they were ever addressed.

Then sometimes, just like within the ministry, certain sins committed within the ministry, people would be transferred to some other area. And there's a big church that does stuff like that. They do something wrong, and they're just transferred to another area. Well, that isn't the right thing to do. It's a matter that, especially in this case, depending on the sin, in the ministry as an example within the Church, that they would never be in the ministry ever again. They're done. It's over with. They've proven themselves

that that wasn't the place for them. God can forgive sin, but there are some sins that remove people from a place like that or a position like that. Those things weren't enforced that much.

I remember Garner Ted Armstrong and things that he had done. It took a lot before there were times that he was put out. And then some of the evangelists would come along, being on his side or wanting him back in and feeding Mr. Armstrong with different kinds of information, and he would let him come back. Did that several times, I don't remember how many now, two or three at least I kind of recall. But finally, had to be put out for good because of what he was doing. And of course, a huge amount of the Church, several thousand people followed him, started following him at that point.

But if those things had been addressed earlier on and those evangelists hadn't come around not giving a full, true report of what was going on, then Herbert Armstrong could have made some different choices there. But he relied on people out there because you can't know everyone. You can't know everyone in the ministry back then, hundreds of hundreds of people.

So, basic principles here that Paul started addressing within the Church because there were things going on in the Church already twenty years after it started. And here it is, he's having to address things like this and telling them, just like we mentioned earlier in this series, where he said he was rather amazed that some were so soon removed from the truth they'd just been given. Incredible.

**1 Corinthians 11:18—For indeed, first of all when you come together in the Church, I hear that there are divisions among you, and in part I believe it. For there must be also factions,** used in the Greek “dissensions arising from diversity of opinion,” **among you, so that those who are approved, or accepted** as it is here **may be recognized among you.** So, in other words, sometimes when those things happen it brings things to the surface that can be seen, that can be dealt with, and judgments can be made as to where someone is. Sometimes that's not always good and some things then have to be addressed.

So again here, he's addressing something that should never happen in God's Church. There should never be factions, there should never be divisiveness and division and so forth. We are to be at one. We are to be of one mind, striving to be in agreement with God. A lot of that has to do with how we treat one another, how we think toward one another.

He goes on to say, **verse 20—Therefore, when you come together in one place, is it not to eat the Lord's supper.** So again here, some of these translations are not so swift, but it's about the keeping of Passover. We don't know exactly where they were in some of their understanding at this particular point, what God had given to them. But again here, there was a way that they were coming together in that respect to keep the Passover service and Paul is going through again reiterating some of that, how it was to be done. And yet there evidently were some situations where people were mixing together, a coming together with eating a meal.

It seems as though it probably was, it was very hard to make a shift, especially with Judaism, people coming out of Judaism and being called in some of these areas. Because that seemed to be a bit of a plague upon Paul in one respect. He was sent to the gentiles but constantly there were those of Judaism who were being called or who feigned being called and were in their midst and trying to get them to do things in a physical way as it was done in the Old Testament. That's why they had problems, because even amongst the apostles there, about eating with someone who was a gentile, because within Judaism that wasn't allowed.

And so, even that, they had trouble making that change from that which they had lived for so long, or all their lives, to that which God was showing them the way it was to be done within the Church. And so, this continues on into other areas. Like circumcision, that was like a plague upon them that followed Paul around as well. And people had, again, a difficult time making those changes.

We should be able to relate to that and understand that because of when God gives new truth or something to be understood at some point in time, and God was working through him to help do just that, giving truth that they hadn't understood yet. They had been called into the Church, but there was a lot they didn't grasp yet, that this was all new and they were being trained and taught in those things that were brand new.

So again here, it took them some time to go through this, and so it was with some of the physical things here that were done. It took them a while to address them and get them in their minds. And the natural carnal response of human beings is to resist change when you think you're right, and especially if you just know you're right.

It's like Pentecost when Herbert Armstrong changed the day for that in 1974, made the ruling within the Church it was no longer to be observed on a Monday, and here's why it's supposed to have been and should have been on the Sunday. And there were people all over the board on that, condemning him for the fact that he didn't do it sooner, make that change more quickly, others who because he made the change weren't going to go with it. And on it goes. Human nature, it's hard for human beings to change.

So, this tries us oftentimes, which is what Paul is saying in part. It brings things to the surface, and we not only can see where others sometimes stand, people can learn where they stand. They can see things in themselves what they might not be otherwise able to see. So, it doesn't matter how small it is. Something like make-up can bring something like that to the surface and in those instances, people are supposed to address what is inside. What is the thinking in how we're responding?

Just like it was with the shot. How are we responding and why do we think in the way we do? Oftentimes it's about learning about ourselves.

**For in eating, each one takes his own supper beforehand; and indeed, another is hungry and another is drunk.** So, here they were coming together, some eating, some not eating, some were hungry. I don't

know if that means they'd been fasting. They shouldn't have been doing that. Anyway, take the Passover service before Passover. It is to be alert. It is to be sharp in mind and so forth, and it certainly isn't the time to be drinking ahead of time. And that's what it sounds like he was dealing with because again, they were being called out of the world, and they had a horrible lifestyle as they were being called.

So, after a time in the Church we understand a lot of these things, but when we first come along, oftentimes the battles people have because of their life, what they had lived before. And they certainly did here in their environment.

He says in **verse 22—What! Do you not have houses in which to eat and drink?** “Do it at home. Don't bring it to Passover service. Don't bring it with you.” **Or do you have distain for,** the word says “despise” here but it means **distain for or think little of the Church of God and ashamed of those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I praise,** in other words, **commend you for this? I don't praise you,** in essence.

**For I received from the Lord that which also I delivered to you.** In other words, in the past when he had been with them in Corinth. So, he had already given them these things, but he had to remind them of some basic principles concerning the observance of Passover.

**Then the Lord Joshua on the night in which he was betrayed took bread; and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said, Take, eat; this is my body which is broken for you. Do this in remembrance of me.** So, every Passover is to be a memorial, a remembrance in that respect. In the Old Testament, it was different. It was about looking back and remembering their deliverance out of Egypt and how God intervened for them and did that. For us within the Church, it's about Joshua the Christ, remembering what he did and the reasons for the institution of these new symbols that were given before Passover.

**Verse 25—In the same manner also, he took the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new covenant of my blood. This do as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.** So, we do this every year and it's to remind us when we drink of wine, these are the things we're to think about.

**For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you do show** or other words, as the word is here, **proclaim/announce the Lord's death until he comes.** In other words, why he died, and we remember those things. Because it's a very personal thing and something to remember all the time, that we all have sin, and that he suffered for us so that we could be forgiven of it.

**Therefore, whoever eats this bread or drinks this cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner...** So, if they're not doing it in the right way, he said, if you're coming together and you're doing it in an unworthy manner, it says, **will be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord.** In other words, you have sin in your life and this observance is the opposite of what that should be because we should be thinking about the fact that we're able to be forgiven of sin, acknowledging our sin, and repenting.

**Verse 28—But let a person examine,** prove or see the approval, in other words, in their own mind, **to examine themselves** to make sure we're right. Human nature, it's so easy to look at others. But to look inward and acknowledge things, it's a great battle oftentimes with the human mind. Then it says, **and then let them eat of that bread and drink of that cup.**

**For whoever eats and drinks in an unworthy manner eats and drinks judgment to themselves.** Because it's saying here you have sin and you're just drinking judgment to yourself. You are being condemned if you're doing it in a wrong way, if your mind isn't right toward God, if you're not striving to do what is right before God. ...**not discerning,** means "not to make a distinction in," **the Lord's body.** Why he suffered as he did, and also remembering the Body of Christ because that's what we've been given to be part of.

So, it's remembering him, what he suffered through on a physical plane to give us that which is on a spiritual plane, the Body of Christ. That means one another, the Church of God.

**For this reason, many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep.** It's a spiritual condition. That's what happens. This is more than just a physical thing that takes place, it's about a spiritual state of being. And because of sin, and if it gets repeated and continues on and is not repented of, people just get weaker and weaker and weaker. It's just the way it is because God pulls away His spirit, He pulls away His help; we begin to choke off the power of the holy spirit in our lives.

**For if we would judge ourselves, we would not be judged.** So, that's what we're called to do, learning how to judge. And it starts with self, and if we can't do this right we'll not be able to learn how to be able to do it right toward others.

**But when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord, that we may not be condemned with the world.** Because judgment upon self means we're to look for, be on watch continually for wrong thinking, wrong attitudes, for sin, and repenting of it when we see it.

So, that would have concluded last Sabbath's sermon. So, continuing on here with some of this now going back to some of the story flow. Again here, amazing that we're already almost up to Passover this year again, the Feast of Unleavened Bread. It seems like time just moves along very fast.

Paul, from here, some of the first of the books he'd written, 1 and 2 Corinthians, and this area of Acts that were discussed about how Apollos had traveled from Corinth to Ephesus where Aquilla and Pricilla took him aside and explained the way of God more perfectly to him and then he was able to go back to Corinth. What an awesome thing that he was able to go back and serve in the manner that he did, and that's how God works. There are individuals that He molds and fashions. And he was one of them, that his mind was sharp in the Old Testament scriptures and in understanding and retaining things that were given to him even by Pricilla and Aquilla, that he was able to take them back and help and teach others more perfectly of this way.

So, at this point in Acts 19 that we've been going through, Paul went on to Ephesus and taught in the synagogue for three months, reasoning and persuading concerning the things, it says, of the Kingdom of God. Then some in the synagogue began to speak evil of him and this is where it talks about, as we mentioned last Sabbath, he then went on to the school of Tyrannus (which I'm not sure what that was) but anyway, it was a different location within that city and began to teach there because of the things taking on in the synagogue as it was. He stayed here away from Judaism, away from the Jews who might otherwise be around, and found a place where he could teach and work with people. He was there for two years.

Let's pick up the story here now in **Acts 19:11** where the flow continues on, Paul being in Ephesus. **Now, God worked unusual miracles**, common works of power **through the hands of Paul**, which we touched upon last Sabbath as well. Then it goes on to say though in this, **so that even handkerchiefs or aprons**, in other words, it's a linen covering that some wore and it says, **were brought from his body**, something handled personally, in other words, by him **to the sick, and the disease left them, and evil spirits went out from them.**

So again here, this is the beginning of understanding that God was giving in the Church that if someone isn't present or can't be reached locally there because of sickness and can't travel, there are anointed cloths. So, it came to that, where a cloth was anointed with oil and sent to an individual, and it's a matter of their faith then. Sometimes we get in a situation where some feel like they have to wait for the cloth and if the cloth doesn't make it because of the mail (because that happens too often) the fact that you asked and the fact that it was done, it's a matter of faith and doing what you are supposed to do. It's not a matter of the cloth. It has no mysterious power. It's a matter of our obedience and doing things the way God says to do it. So again here, this is some of the first example about a piece of cloth that could be anointed and sent out.

What an incredible thing here, evil spirits went out of them. What a crazy thing in the world that those things exist in the world, they try to influence people and try to enter people in life. Insanity. But they've been allowed to do some of those kinds of things.

**Then some of the itinerant Jewish exorcists**, kind of wandering around, vagabond types (that's what the word means here), **took it upon themselves to call on the name of the Lord Joshua**. So, they saw something working, what Paul was doing, so they decided they were going to start doing this, "We'll use the name of Joshua." This is how a lot of false religions got started and a lot of false ministers got started in the beginning there in different ideas about Christianity. They used the names and so forth because they saw something that was taking place or they heard of something and they started using it in their own way and molding and fashioning it in their own way, not anything to do with God.

It says here, **they called upon the name of the Lord Joshua over those who had evil spirits, saying, We charge you by Joshua whom Paul preaches**. So, it's kind of funny. Here they saw Paul was doing this and

so someone else that had an evil spirit they said, “We adjure you, we command you by this same Joshua whom Paul preaches,” so they were trying to get everything in there. **There were also seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, who did so.**

**Then an evil spirit answered and said...** So, here is one that’s going to respond to him. **Joshua I know, and Paul I know; but who are you?** Incredible! **Then the man in whom the evil spirit was leaped on them, overpowered them, and prevailed against them so that they fled out of the house naked and wounded.** So, I don’t think they ever tried to pull that one again, trying to use the name of Joshua.

**This became known both to all the Jews and the gentiles dwelling in Ephesus.** So, it’s this kind of thing, unusual. That’s why it calls it what it did in the beginning here, “unusual miracles.” Not normally done, not common as you might have heard among others of the apostles but here was something that was being done through Paul.

So again here, **This was all known by the Jews and the gentiles dwelling in Ephesus, and fear fell on them all, and the name of the Lord Joshua was magnified.** So again here, it’s the beginning of the Church in these gentile regions, strengthening them, and this is how God chose to do it, through this process. A little at a time and by different things that they were able to witness and see and hear of that moved people whom He would call and draw into the Church.

**Now, many who had believed came confessing and telling their deeds. Also, many of those who had practiced magic brought their books together and burned them in the sight of all.** Now, this is an incredible story. The kind of way that people lived at that time, the mysticism that was involved, the kind of magic they tried to involve themselves in, and then it came to this in this particular area of Ephesus.

**Then they counted the value of them,** the value of these books. Things were expensive and documents like this were very expensive for someone to be able to produce it and then sell it, **and it totaled fifty thousand pieces of silver.** Today worth 5.5 million dollars. So, they brought them together and burned them. **So the word of the Lord grew mightily and prevailed.**

So again here, incredible story of some of these things that took place. But this was how moved they were that they wanted to stop that and do something different obviously.

**Verse 21—When these things were accomplished, Paul purposed in the spirit, when he had passed through Macedonia and Achaia...** So again here, this is talking about the area of Athens, Corinth, and so forth where they are, **to go to Jerusalem, saying, After I have been there, I must also see Rome.** So, he had this desire to go to Jerusalem. He had this desire to be in Rome. Again, it says, “purposed in spirit” to do this before God and his conviction toward God believing that he was being given some of these things to follow by God. But he didn’t know the timing of it or how some of this was going to work out because these areas he did go to eventually, not in the manner he always wanted to or planned out, but he went with the kind of knowing that that’s what was to take place.

**After I have been there, I must also see Rome. So, he sent into Macedonia two of those who ministered to him, Timothy and Erastus, but he himself stayed in Asia for a time. Now, about that time there arose a great commotion about the way.** Amazing here how often this pops up in Acts about “the way.” It’s about this new way. It’s in the Church in that respect and people hearing about it, and that’s just basically what they called it, about “the way” or “that way” or “this way.”

**For a certain man named Demetrius, a silversmith, who made silver shrines of Diana, brought no small profit to the craftsmen.** So again here, it’s their business, it was very profitable in other words, and this comes up then in the sense of what Paul was teaching and preaching and interfering then with them they felt. And it did, it affected their livelihood.

So, it says, **He called them together with the workers of similar occupation.** So, here it is Demetrius getting these people together who were attached to this same type of thing in the sense of profiting from these things that they had made concerning Diana or the worship of Diana. He gathered them together **and said, Men, you know that we have our wealth by this trade. Moreover, you see and hear that not only at Ephesus but throughout almost all Asia this Paul has persuaded and turned away many people, saying that they are not gods which are made with hands.**

So again, they took offense to it. And it was more about money, it was more about profitability and so forth of what they were making, and so they wanted to keep that going among the people, that they would use these shrines, which is easier for human nature to do, to look at something physical. You think even in things that God said don’t do, the second commandment, people do it, religious objects and so forth that people think they have to have.

I think of that crazy statue in Rome, that it’s been kissed so many times on the toe that there is a dent. It’s rock! I think it’s marble. But there’s this huge statue. I don’t know, it’s fifteen feet in height, might be much higher than that even. But this tall statue and then there’s this at the bottom here, the foot, and you can see the dented in place because it’s been rubbed with lips so much. How long would it take to rub down a piece of stone like that that much? Hundreds of years. Incredible.

**So not only is this trade of ours in danger of becoming of no value but also the temple of the great goddess Diana may be thought of as nothing to be entered and her magnificence taken down, taken away, whom all Asia and the world worship.** So, it’s like this can have a large, sweeping effect here, even in the temple and everything associated with it and the beliefs and so forth associated with it because of what Paul is saying.

**Now, when they heard this, they were full of anger and cried out, saying, Great is Diana of the Ephesians! So, the whole city was filled with disturbances and rushed into the theater with one accord, having seized Gaius and Aristarchus, Macedonians, Paul’s travel companions. So, when Paul wanted to go into the people, the disciples would not allow him.** So again here, all this disturbance that was going on, and they knew it was a dangerous thing that was taking place here in the area there.

**Then some of the officials of Asia, who were his friends, sent to him pleading that he would not venture into the theater.** Because as so often happened there were people who wanted to hurt him. They'd taken him out and stoned him already one time and so it's a common thing he was going through, beat him, whipped him, and so forth, some of the things that he had to experience. And so, they were saying, urging him "Don't go in there. That's going to be it!"

**Some therefore cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused.** So, this was happening within the area there of the assembly. **And most of them did not know why they had come together.** Now, this is interesting because they were worked up and they didn't know why. They just knew they were worked up over all this, and that's a power of a demonic world. There are demons that work, especially in an environment like this around anyone within the Church. There are times they come at people. There are times they try to affect people around us because they're not able to affect us. They can't have an effect upon us unless we allow it through sin. But if we remain close to God, there is nothing they can do. But they can affect, in that respect, the world around us, affect them, infect them (maybe that's a better word).

Anyway, they had this powerful effect upon them, and they can come at God's people then, and this has happened over and over again over the past two thousand years. It's happening right now in the Church. There are people that go through trials. We're getting closer to Passover. These beings get riled up any time of year that's getting close to Holy Days. When you get close to the Feast of Tabernacles, before Atonement, before Trumpets, there are things that happen oftentimes within the Church in people's lives and also probably even more so at this time of year when we're approaching Passover and Unleavened Bread. They get riled up.

So, if things are coming at you, don't be surprised, it's just kind of to be expected. And those are times really that help us because it helps to stir up within us a realization we need God all the time. We need His help. We need His protection. And so, it can stir us up and have a positive effect in our lives if we respond properly to it.

It goes on to say here in **verse 32—Some, therefore, cried one thing and some another, for the assembly was confused, and most of them didn't know why they had come together. Then they persuaded Alexander out of the multitude, the Jews putting him forward. Then Alexander motioned with his hand and wanted to make his defense to the people. But when they found out that he was a Jew, all with one voice, it says here, cried out for about two hours.** They just kind of went nuts. ...**cried out for two hours, Great is Diana of the Ephesians!**

You think sometimes at some sporting events you hear people crying out about certain things and they go on and on repeating something and it might go on for quite a while. Other kinds of functions as well where they just keep repeating maybe the same thing. But this here, you've got to see the power that was behind all this. Two whole hours saying some of the same things.

**Now, when the city scribe had quieted the people, he said, Men of Ephesus, what man is there who does not know that the city of the Ephesians is temple guardian of the great goddess Diana, and of that which fell down from Zeus?** So, they have all these ideas, the different gods, the family of gods that they have, their “elohims,” because it’s the same kind of word that’s used in scripture, god families.

**Therefore, since these things cannot be denied, you ought to be quiet and do nothing rashly. For you have brought these men here who are neither robbers of temples nor blasphemers of your goddess.** So, he’s trying to put some soundness in their mind a little bit to help calm things down and reason with them in saying, “What have they done? They haven’t done any of these things so why are you so worked up?”

**Therefore, if Demetrius and his fellow craftsmen have a case against anyone, the courts are open and there are proconsuls. Let them bring charges against one another. But if you have any other inquiry to make, it should be determined in the lawful assembly.** Again, this is something to learn from as well. There are things that God so often does even in the midst of the world around us to give some soundness of mind to some to speak out. This happens from time to time, which ended up being in favor of God’s people. So, there are times like that as well where God will intervene and help in a case like this, to help calm things down and take people out of danger, as some of them were in danger.

**But if you have any inquiry to make, it should be determined in the lawful assembly. For we are in danger of being called in question for today’s uproar.** Now, what he meant by this was they were to keep things calm in their cities. But being under the Roman government, the Roman government didn’t take kindly to uprisings of any kind and then they would come in with soldiers or whatever and squelch, put down something, and take care of people in a rather harsh way. So, they were more afraid of that happening.

And so, because of that being said as well they were willing to pull back because they didn’t want this to be the outcome. They were supposed to take care of it themselves.

**For we are in danger of being called in question for today’s uproar, there being no reason which we may give to account for this disorderly gathering.** “What are we going to say? There is no reason for it.” **Now, when he had said these things, he dismissed the assembly.**

Going on into **Acts 20:1—After the uproar had ceased, Paul called the disciples, and bidding farewell...** So, when it says “disciples” it’s a word for pupils. He’s a teacher, he’s teaching them, and so it’s kind of like them being students. Not disciples in the sense of those who followed Christ (because that’s what they were, they were being taught by him and so forth), but just a part of the Church. **...bidding farewell even to depart to go to Macedonia. Now, when he had gone over the region and encouraged them with many words, he came to Greece and stayed three months.** So again here, going back across, this time over to Greece.

Then it says here, **The Jews plotted against him as he was about to sail to Syria**, to the area of Antioch. So again, if you're following this on your maps there this is where he went first here. Then it says, **He decided to return through Macedonia**. So again, quite a journey. Rather than going by ship it's quite a journey by land, but Paul oftentimes chose that particular route.

It's here in Greece that Paul wrote, again, the epistles to the Romans, while he was in that area, once he got there, in the spring of 58 AD. So again, things continue to move on. We were down around 52-53 AD; now we're up about five years later jumping ahead in the sense here from when he started around Ephesus and then finally came up through here.

And as with some of the other epistles, we're going to take a little bit of a look here through some of these in a moment, things in Romans, but it's interesting that when Romans was written Paul hadn't even been there yet. So he's writing to those over there who had been brought into the Church or had traveled there, that things had started there as well, but he hadn't been there yet and yet he's writing to them.

So again here, some of the things that took place, Churches received their start as a result of what really began after Pentecost because all these people from these different regions. So, he knew there were people there that had been there from the beginning, and they were over in the area of Rome.

We can be reminded of that, but I'm not going to go through all that that was in Acts 2 because it talks about all the people who were from the different regions, the different languages, because they spoke in their tongues and it mentions all these different areas where Jews had come from in order to keep that period of time of Pentecost, and it says in there also in part of that, because this is where some of this got started, it says "and visitors from Rome." So again here, making it clear that there were those who were visitors from Rome who were called into the Church early on and they went back to that area then.

**Romans 1:1**, take a look at that. **Paul, a bondservant of Joshua the Christ, called to be an apostle**. So, in other words, this is his calling. He's called to be a servant, to serve him. He knew to go to the gentiles, and bond to that, if you will, just as someone who gives their life to work in this capacity.

As it says here, **separated to the gospel of God which He promised before through God's prophets in the holy scriptures, concerning His Son Joshua the Christ our Lord, who was born of the seed of David according to the flesh**. So, he goes back to the beginning and brings everything up and says this is the lineage, this is the lineage of Joshua; he is the Christ.

And then goes on to build upon that, **and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the spirit of holiness, by the resurrection of the dead**. So again here, just reminding them of basic things. These things that don't happen happened to him, and all the things that he went through, all the things that he taught, and he was the Messiah, and he was raised from the dead.

**Through him we have received grace and apostleship for obedience to the faith among all nations for his name, among whom you also are the called of Joshua the Christ.** So again, God does the calling, we're given to Christ because everything has been given to Christ within everything that God's planned and going to accomplish and fulfill from that time forward when he was resurrected. **To all who are in Rome, beloved of God, called saints.** So again here, there was plenty of evidence here, plenty of communication back and forth with whomever, but Paul is making it clear here there was a Church there, there are people there, and he's sending this to them.

**Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Joshua the Christ. First, I thank my God through Joshua the Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.** So, there you go, news travels around – slowly, much slower than what we're accustomed to, but it traveled around the world. And these things here he was writing to them about things he had heard and so forth and he was inspired to give to them what is recorded obviously in the book of Romans because each time he wrote an epistle more was given to the Church that was very foundational to everything the Church was going to follow through all the rest of the eras. Some of those things, if they weren't written there, where would we be? You think of the people who have gone before us and the truth that God has given through them, and it really is inspiring.

Romans 4 now, jumping ahead a little bit. **Romans 4:1—Then what shall we say that Abraham our father has found according to the flesh? For if Abraham was justified by works...** So, it hasn't been that long ago we went through some series talking about these matters, about works and the world has so misused this. Traditional Christianity so misuses all of this that sometimes it's messed up people's minds and their understanding of some of these thing or some of that baggage can still be in there from the past. And it's good to get, just wipe it all out and have this replace it, truly, to understand the process and how it works in our lives. The stronger that becomes in us, obviously the better off we are spiritually.

So again, he's going back to them and talking to them about Abraham, because especially back then in Judaism before these individuals have been called, because they came to Jerusalem for a purpose, they were of Judaism, and then went back to Rome and the Church began through them. And evidently then there were others being drawn and called who were not of Judaism, they were gentiles. Because this is who Paul was sent to and so the Church had to have been growing then in that region, as he addresses some of this in the book or in the epistle.

**So, if Abraham is justified by works he has something to boast about, but not before God.** So again here, he's making it very clear that just by going through works of the law on a physical plane is not that advantage to anyone. You can't save yourself. It becomes a matter of pride and haughtiness actually is what happens in human's minds, where people become self-righteous because they're doing it on their own ability and raised up by their own ability.

It's good to have more prayer, it's good to have more fasting in our lives, in that respect, but sometimes we can go too far with that kind of thinking to where we begin to be lifted up by how much we can do of that. That's not what it's about. If that's the purpose, if that's the reason behind it then we're missing the mark. This has happened a lot in the Church so there's a fine balance in there. It's great to have more prayer. If we can improve upon it, make it better, whatever, that's great. But to think that by so much that we do day by day and we're so regimented in that, it's easy to start being lifted up by it.

**For what do the scriptures say? Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.**

That's the basis of it all. If we believe what God has given to us and we have that mindset we believe it, we're confident of it, and it's because of that that we do the things we do then God says that's accounted to us for righteousness. Not by how well we, how much we do individually on our own.

Because the reality is we have to have God's spirit to do what is right. We need to be motivated by God's spirit to do right. That's why we pray. We cry out to God for help because we want to draw closer to Him. And on and on it goes. Not to be lifted up by it but to be of a humble spirit when we do it. Because if you know you really need God and that's your motivation then you're not trying to lift yourself up by how well you can do things. You're looking to God; you're relying on God. And that's a whole different kettle of fish. They're totally different from each other.

So, this is what is accounted to us for righteousness. To me, that's a beautiful thing. Because we have problems, every one of us. Not a one of us is perfect before God. We have hangups. We have weaknesses. We grow. We're to be growing, meaning we're doing better, but in that process of growing, we will never grow to a point where we are righteous without God. He had to attribute it to us because of a belief and because of striving to live this. Because we still have selfishness up that will be in this human mind until we're dead or changed from mortal to immortal. That's the way we are as a physical creation. We have sin in our lives.

Even the previous chapter, I'm just going to quote this quickly. You don't have to write it down or turn to it. **Romans 3:10—As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one.** So, nobody is righteous. There is only one who was and that was Joshua, and that's because his Father was God and the mind that he had. But he had to fight in his own life and his own mind, but he did it with great conviction and it was instantaneous.

Romans 4:4. Some of these translations sometimes, I marvel at how often these things are so badly translated, and so much of it is because that protestant mind and those who translated were of that mindset and they didn't understand. They weren't in the Church. You don't read translations of the Bible that were done by people in God's Church. They're not out there. So, there is a basic amount that has been given and then God calls us and He helps us to wade through it and begin to see things that are there that otherwise couldn't be seen except by the power of His holy spirit that He reveals, and that's how we're able to see it. But so often things are so messed up.

I think of writing this second chapter and going through some of the things that the world doesn't comprehend and understand about the Passover and its origin and all the things that are associated with it and the timing. And because they don't understand those things there is nothing there. Well, they can't have it anyway until God calls them. You'd think just on a physical plane some things could have been better in that respect. But God allowed that for that very purpose, so they would be hidden until it was His time to reveal them.

**Romans 4:4—But “to him who.”** That's not even there. It's **“But of works,”** is the right translation. **But of works the wages are not accounted as grace but as debt.** So, if it's a matter of works then if a person is saved by that then the wages of that is a matter of something that is owed to them. And that's the problem – can't be that way with human beings.

Then another part of it here it says, **“But to him who does not work but believes on Him who”** – all that is not even in scripture! Isn't that amazing? It's not even there! But it goes on to say, **But it is not works but believing that justifies the ungodly.** Amazing! It's the right translation. “But it is not works but believing.” So, God gives us the ability to believe the truth, and because we choose then to live it, we understand the definition then is a matter of faith on our part. That's how God attributes faith to us and accounts righteousness to us – because we believe it, we become more deeply convicted of it, we know it's from God, it's given to the mind to see, and we make the choice to do it, to live it. Then that's what God accounts to us for righteousness because we made that choice.

Just because He gives us the ability to believe something and to know the truth isn't enough. I've known of tons and tons of people whom God had been calling, and we visited whose minds were opened and they could see it, but they didn't live it. They didn't choose to live what God gave them to believe. And then others who have come into the Church who were given the ability to believe and even baptized and didn't do it.

So again here, it says, reading **verse 4** again, **But of works, the wages are not counted of grace but of debt.** If that were the case, in other words, it would be owed. **But it is not works but believing that justifies the ungodly. One's faith is accounted for righteousness.** Awesome! It's beautiful when the words are right, when we know how to use them. It's because we choose to live what we have been given to believe that's attributed to us. It's called faith. That's what faith is. Then that's attributed to us for righteousness.

Because that's what God looks at. We believe, we choose to live it, we make the choice. He counts that to us for righteousness. Not that we are, because we're not. We have problems. We have to repent regularly of sins. That's why we repent, because we believe God, so that's attributed to us. We live by faith. We need God's spirit; we want God's spirit. That's living by faith. That's why we do those things, that's the motivation, so God attributes that to us for righteousness.

**Even as David also describes how blessed is the one to whom God imputes righteousness separate from works.** So, Paul was able to explain things that can seem difficult. But when you understand the definitions and what's being said, it's really quite beautiful, and making a separation then of things that we're not to do on our own and look to ourselves and having that great ability. Pride becomes the issue then. But if we're of a humble spirit and we know what we are that's where we have to be, that's how we have to live.

**Blessed are those whose sins are forgiven.** It means we repent. That's the only way to have them forgiven. It's because we believe and we ask God to forgive us of our sins when we see them, when we are aware of them, when we know we've done something wrong and we want help to change, we don't want to continue doing it.

**...even whose sins are covered over.** It's a word that literally means "passed over." Isn't that amazing? "Whose sins are forgiven, even whose sins are covered over," passed over because of Christ, because of what he did for us. **Blessed are they to whom the Eternal does not account sin.** Not "impute," it's "account sin."

Then it goes on to explain how Abraham was justified before circumcision was ever given. So again, these things were used to help the Jews understand their faulty reasoning because of something they were going to hold on to physically in that sense, and then he takes them back further because they go from (in that stuff), they go from Moses on because that's when it began. And he takes them back to Abraham and says, "Abraham didn't have this and yet look who he was." So, drives the point home.

Romans 6. So again here, Paul was given so much, and making a very strong foundation for God's Church, truly. We're just focusing on a few of those things.

**Romans 6:15—What then? Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace?** Isn't it amazing how the protestant world misuses that? And they were misusing it here at this time and it wasn't a protestant world. He was working with Judaism which still had the same kind of carnality in that respect in some of their thinking, but more, a lot of those who are in the Church at this particular point, and those who can be affected by that as well who are being called out as the gentiles. And if they get that wrong stuff put into their mind coming from others who think wrong then it's going to hurt them. So, another motivation, reason Paul wrote this.

He says, **Shall we sin because we are not under the law but under grace? Certainly not! Do you not know that to whom you present yourselves servants to obey, you are the one's servants whom you obey, whether of sin unto death.** So, it says we can serve sin. We can live ever how we want to, ignoring God, not living God's way of life, but this is going to be the end result. "Whether of sin unto death." So, we want to serve sin? In other words, do we want to be servants of self, of our own nature toward sin and do whatever we want to do, or do we want to serve God?

**...or of obedience unto righteousness?** Showing here that we have to strive to learn how to obey. Yes, that's a part of it. And because we believe God, that His way is right, and so we strive to live that way, we want to live that way.

**But God be thanked that though you were servants of sin, you obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine which was delivered to you.** So, in other words here, awesome here, again, thanking God for what He gave, and although you in serving sin, in serving yourself God gave you a means to escape that, to come out of spiritual Egypt if you will.

**Now having been set free from sin, you became servants of righteousness.** So again, it's just a process we go through, and Paul had a different way of explaining some of these things. Some of these may help some people. Some of it doesn't. Some of it may seem like gobbledygook because of how it's stated. But once we understand the definitions and the way that they're being used here then it all comes together.

Then it says in **verse 19—I speak in the manner of men**, in other words, as the New King James said (that's the King James), but in New King James it says, "in human terms," in other words, because we're carnal by nature we think physically first.

**I speak in the manner of men because of the weakness of your flesh**, your physical nature. **For just as you presented your members as servants of uncleanness and of lawlessness unto lawlessness...** In other words, just living the way you wanted to in the world, which is how it's done in the world of human beings. People do whatever they want to do. What restrains them or constrains them? If it doesn't come up from here then it doesn't happen, people do whatever they want to do.

Isn't that amazing? People believe whatever they want to believe. That's why today on the Internet it can be such a dangerous tool for people to use it for research into different things, whatever it might be, because there are both sides out there, and oftentimes there is more of a side that's bad than there is about a side that's good. So, I've seen some huge changes in the last several years. It's getting horrible.

Just like going in and putting in various words. I'm trying to think of some of the terms that are used there. Anyway, I've started using Bing more because it actually brings up some things that are a little more sound because the others are trying to spoon-feed you into thinking a certain way oftentimes, where some of them are a little bit better when you're trying to find information on something.

But again, it's still going to boil down to how people think and what people want to believe. If people are researching and looking into something oftentimes they have a certain proclivity, whatever that might be, and are drawn to one argument over another. Why is that? Well, a lot of times it's just about our own nature, what we're like, and what it is we really want it to say. Well, it's out there. If you want something to say something in a certain way you can find it. That's where especially in God's Church we have to be careful of that kind of thing, we truly do, of how we judge things and how we determine various things.

So, it goes on to say here, **For just as you presented your members as servants of uncleanness and of lawlessness unto lawlessness...** In other words, just leads to that which is worse and worse. **...so now present your members as servants of righteousness unto holiness. For when you were servants of sin, you were free in regard to righteousness.** In other words, didn't care about it in the first place, weren't trying to live by it.

**What fruit did you have then in the things of which you are now ashamed? For the end of those things is death.** Isn't that an amazing thing when you think about the world and what they think? They don't think the penalty for sin is death. The penalty for sin, it's not in their mindset in traditional Christianity. It may be to go to a place to be tormented if it's really bad, what you do if you don't repent at the last minute, I guess. I don't know how that all works.

Or somebody comes along and just sprinkles a bit of water across you while you're in your bed dying and somehow they can pray you to wherever you need to get because you didn't do anything to get there. Somebody else can pray for you and pay a little bit of money to the church and have the priest pray about it and try to get you out of this place in the middle if you get stuck. I mean, isn't that crazy some of the crazy ideas out there? You get stuck in this place in the middle, in purgatory. It's in the middle and they're trying to get you so that you don't go back down in this really bad place, and you can get up to that really nice place. And it's like, well, where is death in all this? Why even speak of a resurrection in the Bible? What does all that mean?

And yet the human mind can't think that way in the way that's of God until God gives them the ability to see through all this garbage that's out there. You'd think surely on a physical plane somehow you could break through on some of that. But people can't. They're in bondage to it. It's what happens in the mind.

**But now having been set free from sin, and having become servants of God, you have your fruit to holiness.** In other words, now you can produce things that are right and good before God. **...and the end, everlasting life.** So, not death but everlasting life. But that's not how the world thinks. As a whole, they think they're going to have everlasting life in a good place or a bad place.

**For the wages of sin is death.** I remember Herbert Armstrong using this so often because of the world and traditional Christianity. Because they don't live by this; they don't really believe this, "the wages of sin," what you get paid for sinning. Well, what's sinning? Well, it's the transgression of God's law. John goes on to talk about that, this transgression of God's law. But they don't talk about that, they don't focus on that. They don't think that way.

**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God...** But we need to see it. And over the last couple of years, we've been seeing that even more clearly, that if we reject God's way of life, if we turn against Christ and become anti, by doing so become anti, working against Christ, there are things that happen in the mind. And whether or not we can ever come out of that, that will be between that individual and God. But that's an incredibly dangerous place to be because it's very easy to stay in that state and to

refuse things that come along because of the refusal to see self, the refusal to want to live a different way or in a way that God commands that we should live.

Human nature can then, obviously, fight against that. The reality is this is where it's going to end up if we don't change. That's why I think about that one hundred years and the end of it. We did not used to have a sound belief in that. We felt that most all mankind would be saved in that hundred years, and that is so far from the truth because it makes it very clear "as the sand of the sea." There are going to be so many who do not, will not want God's way of life.

I was watching a program on the news here the other day about this one senator going on and talking about the rights everyone has and the right you have to be of a different gender, the right you have to do this and do that. And you think, to believe that way, to think in your mind that you have all these rights, whatever it is you want to do, whatever way you want to be, that you have the right to choose that?

And you think, if you really think that way you wonder about a mind like that, if God could even work with it ever. Because they're so set in the way they think, and they believe these things so deeply and they so much do not want God and God's way of life if you come to a time that you're dead and you are resurrected does that mean that the mind is changed? No. But it has the opportunity to see oneself. But that doesn't mean that a person is going to automatically begin making those choices.

There are going to be a lot of people who still want what they wanted before, and it isn't God. It's all the things that are evil in life that they want to participate in because they don't want to change. That's a scary thing that the human mind can be that harsh and that hard, but it is.

**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Joshua the Christ.** It has to be in the Body of Christ, the Church of God, and God in us.

**Romans 7:21.** It's talking about here, he says, breaking in the thought, **I find then a law.** Now, the following is a correct translation of this because some of it's messed up **...that when I will do good evil is present with me. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward self.** So again, there is this battle and this is something we all have to come to, an ability to see even more deeply in our lives, that there is this battle of the human mind; our carnality because it's selfish, that's what we have to fight against. And it's a continual fight. In how we think about others, how we treat others, what we say to others. Then so often we as human beings put ourselves first in that.

"For I delight in the law of God according to the inward self." It's a beautiful thing. We see God's way of life, we agree with it, we want that, and that is our delight.

**But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind.** So, do you ever have that take place in your life where you see something going on in the mind and you realize that the thinking isn't what it should be and/or the response to something isn't what it should be, and then you realize where that came from? The self. Deep inside self. Everything is modded deep inside self, and that's

where the battle is. That's why we have to ask God for help to fight it and to see it and to be on guard against it.

**But I see another law in my members warring against the law of my mind and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members.** That's what selfishness does if we let it have its way.

**O wretched man that I am, who will deliver me from the body of this death.** To me, these are beautiful verses here, to where everyone has to come to this ability to be able to say that about themselves. My nature, "O wretched man/woman that I am, who will deliver me?" And then we thank God that we know how. That's what he's saying here.

**I thank God through Joshua the Christ our Lord.** That's how! **So then with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.** So, it's whatever you yield to. That's what he's saying here. If you follow self, which is what the flesh is about, if you follow what self wants above what is right in a decision, in a choice, in something of that nature, that's where the problem lies and that's where the battle is. But we can make the choice to serve the law of God. Then we have to cry out for help to be able to accomplish that, to live that.

I'll tell you what, going through some of this stuff, just like this morning, I have this three-hour time change, and I don't know what it is. Sometimes it's a little harder in that to get adjusted than it is going overseas, because at least in a day or two you can pretty well get through the days of it all, especially going that direction. Coming this way I don't think is as hard because you can leave in the morning over there and you get here in the afternoon. If you try to stay up, finish out that day then you can kind of get adjusted a little bit easier. But going that way to me is always harder and it messes you up because you go through the night.

Anyway, coming this way, just about a three-hour difference like that, it's like waking up at four o'clock in the morning and so wide awake it's not even funny, and then not wanting to get up quite that early, and yet realize I could be writing. So, eventually, got to it. But then I get that in my mind and then I have this I'm going to be giving on the Sabbath and probably wasn't the smartest thing to do this morning when I should have been more on this.

But anyway, again, all the incredible things that God revealed to Paul in Romans here. We went through the things in Corinthians that we did. And to see what was given to the Church as a foundation and to be thankful to God that he went before, that everything that was given to him was very powerful and very strong as being foundation. That's why it talks about certain areas where everything is built upon, in that respect, from Christ, the apostles, and prophets because this is what was given to Paul, and he wrote so much. All the books that he wrote, more than any other of the apostles, a lot more. And from one person to have so much written on a spiritual plane it really is incredible.

And so, sometimes for us just to see that and to be thankful for everything that God has given to us because He's given us the ability to understand these things and we talk about the protestant world around us, the world of traditional Christianity, and they can't see through these things. It would seem like surely in some places they could, but they can't. It requires God's spirit to begin drawing someone, to begin opening up the mind, to begin combatting some of that garbage of the past that's there if we're being called, and then to begin making choices to change. It's a beautiful thing, it truly is.

So, we'll continue on next Sabbath somewhere in Acts.