

## Truth About Grace, Pt. 1

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The very first sermon of the year was entitled *The Bond of Works to Grace*, and that was actually *Part 3*. It was the end of the series. We had two at the end of December, obviously same title, *Part 1* and *2*, and we're going to go back and revisit some of the subject here of grace.

I think in writing the book, writing some things in there, I see a need to make sure that we understand it fully, what it is, because it's a very confusing thing for the world when they start talking about grace and what it is, because they don't comprehend it at all and there's a lot of doublespeak in what is taught out there in the protestant world, if you will.

And candidly, we in the Church need to be prepared to be able to help people, because those are going to be some of the kinds of questions that are going to come up because of what you believe, having to do with the Sabbath, the Holy Days, and so forth, just as a beginning. Because they believe, they have this concept in the mind that that's a matter of trying to be saved by works. They use scriptures in a distorted sort of way, not knowing that they're doing that. But that's what they're taught.

And if you can take them through the process, help them, it's going to help people a lot. So, we need to realize that a part of our being prepared for what's coming is also to help people, to be able to answer questions, and to know how to do some of that. I think there'll be some exercises in here as we get to it, that you'll understand more of what I'm talking about.

But again here, there are different concepts out here that sometimes cause people confusion, and they don't understand the simplicity of what they're saying. But again, that's because of what has been taught. So, we're going to go back through and revisit some of these things as far as some of the scriptures that were covered, but the subject matter primarily. This series is entitled *Truth About Grace, Part 1*.

Today, however, we're going to primarily focus on the subject of works. We're going to split it up a little differently and address this differently than what we did back then at the end of December and the beginning of January. So, we're going to start, though, with the scripture that we started that series with, and that's in Hebrews 13.

Some of our training, some of the things we go through and are preparing for, we need to realize that it's going to be able, on our part, to handle situations like that when they do arise. We of all people should be able to do that.

**Hebrews 13:20—Now the God of peace...** I love that. You know? "The God of peace." Right away, Paul is addressing something to the Hebrews in this verse here, that this is what it's all about. It's about getting away from drama. Mankind has done nothing but stir up drama over the past six thousand years. It's just

the way of our nature. It's the way we are as human beings. They don't know the way to peace, because candidly, that comes from God.

Because He created us, He gave us the kind of minds we have in the sense of carnal human nature for a purpose, and we're automatically, as it were, creatures of drama. It's just a part of our thinking; it's what's produced. That's the opposite of peace, and a lot of scriptures talk about that. "The way of peace, they don't know," because it comes from God and people aren't following God and learning from God how to have peace, what you have to do to have it.

We should know. In relationships, there are things you have to do. We are to be, Christ said, peacemakers. The city of Jerusalem it's about peace, the City of Peace. Because this is what God desires in His Family. You go back and look at what happened. We are to learn from that. The angelic realm, a third of the angels rebelled with Lucifer, who became Satan, and that's where the drama began in the spirit world.

Then, when mankind was created, that same kind of thinking that's in human beings that tends to be selfish, obviously, motivated, same thing – drama, drama, drama, the opposite of peace.

And so, God is the only one who can teach us how to achieve, how to have unity and oneness. It's about peace. It's about how we get along. It's how we think. Incredible.

**Now the God of peace that brought again from the dead our Lord Joshua, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work.** So, right away, it's good work. There's bad work and there's good work.

**...make you perfect.** So it's a matter of growing in perfection, in the sense of growing closer to God, becoming more at one with God, and having a mind that's being transformed as it talks about in Romans 12, and what we've produced then in our life that's only accomplished through the power of God's spirit. We can't have good work because that comes from God, unless God is in it and working with us. And so, we want that. We want Him to perfect us in good work, to do His will. Self-explanatory. It's beautiful in what it says.

**...working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight.** God wants to see that. He wants to see us working toward peace, if you will, unity, oneness, agreement with Him, being at one with Him, desiring that. Because that's what it means about doing His will. We're not seeking our own. Because that's the natural inclination of human beings. We're selfish; we want things done our way. That's why "the carnal mind is enmity against God," as it says. It fights against God. It resists God.

The world doesn't think they do, but they do. And they believe, in many cases here, obviously, in the world of traditional Christianity, that they're seeking to do what is right before God. But when something true does come along in the sense of the Sabbath, the Holy Days, and so many other things, there's an

incredible resistance then, because they want it their way. That's why there are so many different ideas and denominations, and you think, "Massive confusion." I mean, it's really massive confusion.

Look what happened after the Apostasy and look what happened to the scattered groups. Massive confusion. If God's not in it, if it doesn't come from God, and you look at what it produces, splinter after splinter after splinter, people not getting along. There's not unity and so forth. It's impossible without God to have that, to be able to do His will, to become at one with Him.

**...working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight.** So, we want to be well-pleasing in God's sight. That means we have to seek, we have to cry out for help to be able to be focused on what His will is. We have to know what it is.

**...through Joshua, the Christ.** So again, whenever that's in there, why is that there? We're going to get to this in a moment here, but I guess I could get to part of it now.

One of the greatest things I ever learned within the ministry, from a minister, which I also learned a lot of things not to do, but there were two highlights of things that I did learn. One of them was how to ask questions, how to think when you're reading scripture, when you're studying the Bible, and it's not to rely on what we used to call our inspired margins. Used to be that, still is, you know. Nowadays, it's not a Bible, but you have it on an iPad or whatever. But on the sides, on the margins, I used to always have, and that was kind of the tradition of a lot of people, you had the wide margin Bibles where you had about an inch of columns all the way around the scriptures. That's so you could write in there things that might be said in the sermon, things you wanted to remember.

We used to have what's called Spokesman's Club—I've talked about this—and Graduate Club. Spokesman's Club, there were twelve speeches to be given, and you would join that, and there'd be a maximum of thirty people allowed in the club of men at that time. There'd be different portions of it where people got up. I think there were four or five speeches in that evening, a seven-minute maximum speech. Then someone would get up and give their comments about it, what was good and what was positive. Good exercises because a lot of people could find a lot of bad sometimes, but they couldn't find anything good. It's like, you need to start thinking what was good about it.

Then there was a section before, at the very beginning of the club, called Table Topics. An individual would get up and ask various kinds of questions, and within that, there was to always be a question in the Bible (they call it 'difficult scripture') so that people could get up, they'd put up their hand, and the individual up there, the topics master, would ask someone who had their hand up to go ahead and make comment. They would stand up and tell what they thought it was about, what the answer was to a difficult scripture.

The minister of that particular area, Cincinnati, would ask them different questions, and it would stymie them, because they would get up and read their inspired margin. That's what was in the mind. But not understand sometimes, oftentimes, what was really at issue. I hope that makes sense.

You can have something that is an explanation of a scripture, and you can understand perhaps that explanation of a scripture, but when you start tearing apart the verse in the sense of looking at various aspects of it, they didn't really know how that answer came about, how the answer was actually there, what it really meant. Therein is the flaw sometimes. It's not a matter of just memorizing things and knowing what something says, it's understanding it. Where does it come from? Why does that answer exist?

That's kind of a type of thinking that I began to see, that I thought, "Man, that is unique to ask various kinds of questions to get people to look specifically at a portion of scripture and tear it apart." Think about it. What is it really saying? So, how did you come up with that answer? Not just because a minister got up and told you, "This is what it means," but because you understand it, you know where it came from. Anyway, that was one of the greatest things that, in the sense, that helped me to begin to dig more deeply into things and see things more clearly with God's spirit. And powerful tool, if we can learn how to do it.

Even here, going through some of these things, asking different questions as you go along. Why does it say, "through Joshua the Christ"? What does that really mean, in essence, "through Joshua the Christ"? It's always reminding you of something. What is it? Our need to repent of sins. That's the beginning of it, and it never changes as long as we're human beings. As long as we're in this flesh, the ability to do God's will and that which is working in us then that's pleasing in God's sight. It's only accomplished if God's spirit is there working with us. And the only way that it's working there in us, it has to be through Joshua the Christ, in the sense of continually repenting of sin, continually desiring to be at one with God, asking God for help of His holy spirit to dwell within us more.

And this is the process. To understand as well how Christ works then within the Church through the ministry.

It says **...to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.**

So, it should not be a hard concept to grasp that, again, that there are good works and there are bad works. That's the distinction when you talk about grace. Because what I really hate about some of the concepts that have been taught in the protestant world when it comes to grace, and works is that they don't think about the fact that they have works. They believe certain things; that's why they do what they do. That's why they go to church on Sunday. That's why they keep Easter. That's why they have Christmas. That is their works. It just means you're doing what you believe. You're responding to and doing.

We do the same thing. We believe in the Sabbath. We believe in the Holy Days. We believe in certain things because God has placed that in our mind and given us the ability to see it, and then we do it. But some like to put that down and say, "Oh, you're trying to be saved by works." Well, what are you doing? Why do you go to church early that particular morning? Or even go out for the sunrise to watch the sun come up? I mean, what does all that mean? Oh, he's resurrected then." And you think, no, he wasn't. But here we go, that's what they believe.

And so, everybody has works when it comes to things you believe, as far as religion is concerned. Some are good, and some are bad, and we understand the difference. It can only be good if God is in it. If the truth is in it, then it can be good; it could be well pleasing to God. Because the other isn't well pleasing to God. Very simple.

So, in Hebrews 13, it says that our desire should be to God to be able to, again, be perfect in that respect, in that work, whatever it is that God gives us to do, to believe, to see. That's through Joshua the Christ as well, because God has given us the ability to see things that we otherwise wouldn't be able to see. And look how fast people lose what they had when they're no longer apart. It goes away. It isn't able to be sustained and kept in the mind in the same way. People lose it. Mind-boggling.

I think of a minister that their family used to raise Christmas trees as a business. And when you leave, it's not so hard to go back to that again. It's mind-boggling. How can you, how could you do something like that if you had a belief? And you know where it came from, and you know the emptiness of it, and it has no meaning in scripture whatsoever? Christ wasn't born around that time of year, and on and on it goes. Why do it? "Oh, it's harmless. It's okay to give gifts that time of year to people."

Romans 12. So doing good works is something that is, again, well pleasing, acceptable, if you will, that's what it means here. Acceptable, that's what the word is. Well pleasing, yes. Acceptable to God; He will accept that. He won't accept it if we're not obedient to Him, if we're not obeying Him. But if we seek to obey and live the way of life He's revealed to us, the truth He's given to us, then this is what's acceptable to God, and it's well pleasing in His sight.

**Romans 12:1**, I already referenced this. **I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice.** Well, first and foremost, we have to learn what that's all about. A living sacrifice – something that, again, is pleasing to God. It means we deny self. We seek to place God first in our life, and we're willing to sacrifice what we want.

This is well pleasing to God because we're willing to sacrifice what we want. Because this is not a small thing for a human mind to be called by God to receive truth and then to make the decision that you have to deny this. Because this is where the battle is. It's in self, in the mind. And if we're willing to do that, that's the kind of sacrifice, again, that's pleasing to God.

Alive, because we're alive, we're living, we have access to God's spirit, which gives another level to that and what it means. Alive through the power of God's spirit because Joshua and God the Father can live and dwell within us, and we can dwell in them. We can be in the Church and dwell in the Church and have that relationship then with God of fellowship that's unique to us.

**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy...** So again, God sanctified the Sabbath, set it apart for holy use and purpose. Then He tells us we're supposed to do the same thing. You have to set it apart for holy use and purpose.

That's what we do when we come into the Church. We become convicted to the fact that God is right, that this is the Sabbath that God has set before us forever, a reminder that He's the great creator, that on the seventh day He rested. All the other things that He has given to us, telling us that it's a sign, in essence, between Him and His people. That if that isn't there, then we're not off the first base yet. We didn't make it to first base.

So, we have to have that as a part of our life. Again here, holy. We have to set it apart. How do you do that? Well, we go to Sabbath services. Or if we have to, we're at home and we turn on the TV and we tune in at a proper time because we want to be in fellowship with God. We want to receive what God has planned and prepared for us. And so again, we set it apart for holy use and purpose. We don't work on that day anymore in our occupations or whatever, different things that we can do on other days of the week.

And so, we too, then, we respond to God, and that's acceptable to God. That's what the next word says, **living sacrifice, holy, acceptable, or well pleasing**, that same word. Because what is acceptable to God is what He desires His children to do. A lot of sacrifice, a lot of work.

You know, sometimes it's good for us just to stop and think about some of that at times. It's hard for us to comprehend all the work that has gone into preparing us for whenever our time is, to be able to receive the truth. Long before mankind was ever created, all the work that went into preparing for God's Family and the work that was going to take place over 7,100 years. Incredible. All the sacrifice in that. The hard work within the angelic realm. Things that God went through and the time span of those things. And then finally, mankind created. All the suffering that people went through from Abel all the way through.

Now, we know what that's like in part, to live God's way of life in a world that doesn't like it, doesn't like the Sabbath. Chapter 5 is going to be out there probably in a couple of weeks. We have a couple more editors now that are ready to go through it, the last two. And so, whenever it comes out, it goes into some of these things even more deeply. And, to me, it's astounding to see what the world did, how it did it.

Something that I really haven't addressed in full part within there yet - be referred to later on – but Satan is the one that's worked with mankind to cover, to destroy everything he could about anything that has any resemblance of truth and has changed it to something else. To think of that process, how it happened, all that's involved in it, it's really quite mind-boggling. But he's a powerful being. He really is. Satan is, and what he's done. And now to begin changing that.

Do you realize we are so close to him being put away? I just pre-recorded that sermon the other day, Last Great Day, and I get into that. Because I so look forward to that time when he cannot deceive this world anymore. He's not going to be here to deceive mankind anymore. That's why it says he's going to be bound for a thousand years, and then after that, let loose for a little season, for a little while. What an awesome thing because him and the demonic world that's with him, all the angelic beings, a third of all the angels that rebelled with him and the power that they've had on the earth for the past six thousand years to influence human beings, to use that selfishness that's already in us, to stir it up at different times with the broadcasting that they have power of, incredible.

But to realize we're almost there. We're almost to the point where the world can begin to be cleaned up. God's called us. He's called people in the last, well, six thousand years, but especially in the last two thousand years within the Church, who have been blessed to come out of that kind of a bondage, to that being in his broadcasting, and to be blessed to have our minds cleansed and to begin to be transformed and to be changed.

But we've had to fight. We have to fight self, which people in the Millennium are going to have to do, but they no longer have to fight against that being, that power that comes at them, that hits us in the mind because it broadcasts, and it wants to broadcast to you more than anyone else on earth. And every once in a while, people tune into it. Have a weakness, whatever that weakness is, and then thoughts begin to come into the mind. Sometimes not of your own. They're there, you have certain proclivities and thinking, but if you don't resist that power that sometimes hits you at different times... Because it happens.

That's why we have to be close to God. That's why we have to cry out to God continually for help and repentance and strength of His holy spirit, and for protection from that spirit world, because it's real, that it not be able to have that kind of power to sway us. And so you have to fight against your proclivities, whatever your weaknesses are, your ones, twos, and threes, especially. And the more you're convicted of how you need to fight against them, and you cry out to God for help to do that, He'll give you the help, and that being will not be able to have the same kind of influence.

They can't stand to be around a mind that's in tune with God. They can't stand to be in that environment, truly. The closer we draw to God, the more that they cannot influence you, they can't broadcast to you, they have no effect upon you whatsoever. But if you have a weakness and you're not

repenting of it like you should be, and you're not fighting it like you should be, you're going to be easy prey. And it happens constantly, constantly in God's Church when people are weak.

God has to be first. How convicted are we of that? How much do we hate evil, the bad works, the evil works? You know, the only reason sometimes that people will sin, it starts in the mind, but if you actually do it physically, whatever that might be, whew, you're cut off. You don't have help. And it's not a good thing to have that kind of a being know that, because they know it just like that. They know your weakness, and they'll start broadcasting. Then for you to fight against that, phew, it's stronger than what it would normally be in your mind. Hope we understand that.

I hope we understand as God's people that if you start to let down in a particular area, the more you let down and the more you begin to dwell upon and think about it and allow it to even be thought about, if you allow evil to be thought about, you're just making yourself prey. There is a roaring lion that seeks whom he can devour. And that's where it starts, it starts up here in the weaknesses in the human mind. And so, when a person begins to act upon various aspects of it, they're there intensifying it, making it more difficult for you, stirring it up because they don't want you to have a relationship with God. They don't want you to be able to come back to God either. They want you to be able to be taken away totally.

He wants to destroy everything. That's a kind of a mind he has. Incredible. He tried to kill Christ as soon as he was born. You think, "How can such a mind be so perverted?"

**I beseech you therefore, brother, by the mercies of God, that you present your body as a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service.** That's just the way it should be. Our reasonable service as a servant, serving God, serving God's way, wanting to be a part of God's plan, wanting to be a part of God's Family.

**So do not be conformed to this world.** Sometimes people have that battle to be like others, to be like the world, to act like the world, and not in good works. Because where are they? What are the good works out there? Well, they only come from God and the truth and thinking right and living right towards others, toward one another.

**So do not be conformed to the world, to be like it, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** To me, this is one of the most incredible miracles that God has given to human beings to know and to understand – that we don't have to remain the same as what we were when we were called, before we were called. Our minds can actually be changed. That's why we were made physical in the first place. There's that which is very unique because of the physical human brain. Unlike spirit.

That's why when the angelic realm made their first choice, when Lucifer made his first choice to disagree with God because he felt something should be done differently, his mind changed instantly. Because he's composed of spirit, and when spirit does that, an angelic being does that, it's permanent because of the composition of what they are.

God made us different with an essence that gives us the ability to think and reason as human beings like we do, but it's physical, but it has a spirit essence with it that gives us that ability. Incredible to understand what God gave to Herbert Armstrong because that was one of the most incredible things ever given. And then to understand that process there, that with God's holy spirit connected to that, when your mind is opened up to the truth and you make the choice and the decision, "This is the way of life I want! I choose, I want the truth, what God has revealed to me is the truth." All of a sudden, we can see the Sabbath, we can see the Holy Days.

It's not because of our genius, and we figured it out. Sometimes people have felt like that, that they've done enough studying and they figured this out, and they figured that out. Bull. If it's in your mind, then God gives you the ability to see something on a spirit plane. And then if we choose it, that's the beginning for us. Awesome, awesome, awesome. This mind can be changed by that power. It's God's holy spirit that can work with this carnal mind then to change the way and the patterns of how we think.

My mind has changed drastically from when I was called! Night and day. I have a lot farther I want to go. Because we want to be more at one with God in greater unity and oneness with Him, to be in agreement, because He is the source of all truth and all that's right and all that produces peace and fullness of life. So, we'd be insane not to want that, you know? And God's placed that before us.

So, to think this mind can be changed, don't sell yourself short. When God gives you His holy spirit, it's for the purpose of changing the way you think, the patterns. Awesome! And it's done through repentance. We have to become convicted that what we're doing is wrong. We have to see it in the mind because God's holy spirit helps us to see it, and then to make the choice. What is our choice? And if it's your choice, that's where it starts. Then God will give more help of His holy spirit to continue to grow, to see other things that we don't yet see. Awesome! It's a refining process.

This thing we talked about being perfected, as is mentioned in Hebrews, in essence. **...holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service, so do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind.** I love that word too, to transform, because of metamorphoo. It's like metamorphosis, the changing of a butterfly. You see the different stages and to see what it becomes. What a beautiful word to use, that this is what can happen in the mind. Totally different creation, literally. A different creation.

That's what God is doing through the power of His holy spirit because creation wasn't over in those six days of creation week. Seventh, He rested. So in those six days of things that were done, and you think about that was just the beginning, and now it's happening in our minds. God is creating and molding and fashioning things within us through the power of His holy spirit because you can't do it without that. It takes His holy spirit to change the way we are. Awesome! Beautiful!

**...be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what is that good...** We're to prove it. What does that mean? Well, it's like we've talked about so many times. How do you prove something?

There used to be the wrong concept in the Church that you could get out your Bible and you could get out your Strong's Concordance and you could prove things to yourself. Doesn't work that way. That's a bunch of baloney. It takes God's spirit.

And what he's telling us to do is like the example of oxen and a farmer. Let's say a combine, or you buy a brand new tractor and it's upgraded mightily, and you can't wait to get out there and prove it. That's what it's talking about. Put it to the test. That's what God tells us to do in His word, His truth, His way of life. He wants us to prove it, that His way works. The more we seek to live it, the more we have proven it, we will end up proving it to ourselves, God's way works. It produces right fruit. It produces right results in friendships, fellowship, and everything else. And with God. Awesome!

"So that you may prove what is that good." So, if we don't do it, we're not going to be able to prove it. Because as we prove it, we become more convicted. That's what God is allowing us to have take place in the mind. We're becoming more convicted about His way. The more convicted you are of God's ways, the less likely you are to go in a different direction, the less likely you are to make dumb choices and dumb decisions that are going to bring immeasurable pain and suffering to your life that can take you away from God forever, potentially. Those are extremely dangerous for those kinds of things to happen.

That's why each one of us can only change this with God's help. You can't change anyone else, no matter how much you love them and want them to do it. We can want it with all of our being for others, but it always comes down to this. Self is the only thing you have power over. And it may be ripping you apart sometimes in life to see other choices that people make, but the reality is that's their choice, as much as it hurts, and it rips you apart inside.

But to be in God's Family, we have to do what's right and pleasing in God's sight. We have to learn to do His will and be convicted of His will. We have to want it with all of our being, and you have to fight for it because you have to fight against self, first of all, and the world that's around that pulls at human beings in the way that it does.

It wasn't meant to be easy. That's what tests us. That's what tries us. It's not easy. It is a battle until you're through it, and you're not through it until it's over with, and that means you're dead and then changed, or you happen to be one of a few who at the end of an age is changed like that from mortal to immortal, because you've been sealed, part of the 144,000. Incredible.

Of course, there's going to be a lot more of that later on after the thousand years. But anyway, for the first resurrection, there are only going to be a few, because there are only a few alive that are a part of it right now. All the rest are just waiting to be resurrected.

So, it's a matter of learning, do we really love God with all of our being? Do we really love this way of life? You know, the more truth a person learns, the more we should learn to love God, because that's God. That, to me, is one of the most beautiful things to come to understand, is that the more truth we're

given, the more we're able to see God. It reveals who God is, the Word. Awesome. The things that Christ taught. The word made flesh. Those words that are there, it reveals God the Father.

**...so that you may prove what is that good, acceptable, well-pleasing, and perfect will of God.** The perfect will of God. We have to be deeply convicted of that with all of our being. And the more you are, the less likely you're going to go off course, the more likely you are to be able to see the damage wrong choices can make.

**Ephesians 5:1—Therefore, be followers of God as dear children.** We are the children of God. We've been blessed with a begetting of God's holy spirit, and we should desire with all of our being to be well-pleasing to God and to do those things that are acceptable in His sight, that are in unity and oneness with Him, and so to follow the ways He's revealed to us, recognizing what we are. We're children. Actually, a little less because, again, using that example that was given to Herbert Armstrong, it's like being in the womb. We're not yet born into a spirit world. We're not yet born into the God Family. We're begotten into it. And so, as children, because as human beings begotten of God's spirit, we are in that form.

**...and walk in agape,** God's love. Again, how do you do that? Well, by living God's way, by being obedient to God, by crying out to God for help of His holy spirit. Because it comes from God. You can't work it up. You can't work up that kind of love. You can work up philia, like in Philadelphia, the Philadelphia era, era of brotherly love. Philia is a fraternal kind of love because you're all in the same thing, doing the same things, and are a part. And it's a beautiful thing when it's right, as it was in Worldwide during that period of Philadelphia.

Incredible experience to have people who were striving to live this way of life and doing it together. There was a bond, a uniqueness there that was unique just with the expression of philia. But God also gave extra help because of His spirit, and so we were able to experience agape, God's love because that was the environment He brought us into in order to grow in that. And so with God's spirit, we're able to love others and not be just selfish as human beings in our love. Because philia is still selfish. It's inward. It's what benefits self.

God's love is not like that. It's outgoing in every respect. That's an awesome thing to strive for in life, to cry out to God for help to be able to live that more toward one another, especially within the Body, within the Church. To be careful how we judge and how we think. To get rid of carnal judgment and judging. Because it has to be done. A right way of judging is necessary, by being at one with God in the way we judge.

That's why I love what Christ had to say in different ways to make people think about what he was saying when he talked about judgment. We're not to judge one another, and he talked about himself, but if he does judge, there's a certain way he judges. That's what we have to follow.

**...and walk in agape as Christ also loved us.** This one here, I love it. Awesome what he's saying. How did He love us? Willing to sacrifice himself for it. So, God's kind of love is a sacrificing kind of love, if we understand it as human beings. That's what we read earlier here about a living sacrifice presented to God because it's self we're saying no to. We're not letting self have its way.

This is where change begins to come in, because as human beings we're exceedingly selfish, selfishly motivated. That's extremely hard for people, when they come into Church, to begin seeing and break through that and realize, "Yeah, we are. Yes, I am." Because that's what we have to repent of, being selfish by nature – when we exercise it, when we do it. We are what we are. But we have the impregnation of God's spirit now, and so we have the ability to fight against that kind of thing. Awesome!

**...as Christ also has loved us and has given himself for us.** So, we learn how to give ourselves to one another. Giving, not taking. Not doing something that just benefits us, to what we can get out of it. **...an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling aroma.** So, it's just like when the spices and so forth are thrown on the fire, and that smoke that came up from the fire and the smell of it. That's why they did it. That's why it's used as an analogy to prayer. Sweet smelling sacrifice, or the aroma that came up from offering that on a fire. Again here, prayer. So important in our lives, day by day, that we're doing that. That we know we need God's help, we ask for it day by day.

**But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, let it not even be named among you.** Not to happen. So, we have to fight against the normal ways of the human mind and fight the things that are carnal, that produce wrong fruit.

So he says, **these things, fornication, all uncleanness or covetousness.** What is it we want? What is it we covet? What is it? Is there something we covet? Because we have to learn to fight against those things. Of someone else, that belongs to someone else, whatever it is, or have the same as someone else, or receive something, even within the Church, of something that God gives in His time to whomever He will?

He puts us in a Body where He wants. Awesome! We should strive then to live accordingly, in happiness and fullness of life. Not wanting something different that we consider to be more, and maybe more prestigious or whatever we think as human beings because this has permeated God's Church ever since I've been in it. It's like we don't want to do those things. Look to the time that God lifts us up because it's about His Family that's so far above and beyond anything as human beings. Yield to that, and we're going to be awesomely, exceedingly blessed more than we can comprehend.

**...let it not be named among you, as is fitting for saints.** So, "saints" being those who are God's people, who have the impregnation of God's spirit.

Think about what the protestant world's done with that one. Different saints out there and what they supposedly mean, and different things you can do, and different things you can wear around your neck

or whatever, because you look to this one saint or whatever it might be. And you think, they so minimize what is true and what is right and what God says. No, it's just God's people, anyone in the Church.

**...neither filthiness, as obscenity, dishonorable behavior.** It says don't let those things be named. Don't let it be in your life. Don't let it come into the Church because we are to be clean. We're to strive to become clean in the mind and in our thinking, and fight against the carnal, selfish human nature.

**...nor foolish talking.** I'm just going to say it. Someone recently in another church area, because they had the guts to say it in front of others, I'm going to make comment about it. And you know who you are, and others, you know who said it. And you need to have patience and mercy on them in that respect, as far as the way of God's thinking toward them, graciousness, if you will. A better expression, perhaps.

Someone made comment that they don't believe that there was a Jewish holocaust during World War II. That should never have been mentioned in God's Church, and I don't know where the mind is to say such a disgusting, hideous thing. Truly. And you need to make it right with the ones you said that to, or it's bye-bye, sayonara. That does not belong in God's Church.

There is so much history out there, absolute proof and history that yes, it did take place. And to say that you don't believe it, where are you plugged in? What have you read? What kind of garbage and filth and stupidity have you allowed to enter into your mind that you would say millions were not killed hideously and in the sick manner as they were by a grotesque government that sought to take over the world?

That to me is so appalling, so disgusting. To even think that it could be mentioned within God's Church is appalling in my mind. I'd like to know (I don't want to even want to know), where did that come from? It's just sick.

So, you had the guts to say it in front of somebody else in God's Church to God's people, and you're in God's Church, and you would say that? Sorry, but you deserve a bit of a scolding. Because that should never have ever come out of anyone's mind or mouth within the Church of God. We believe, we know there was a Holocaust. We know that millions died in hideous, perverted, sick ways. To deny something like that, I don't get it. I just don't get it. Every one of us should feel as appalled as what I feel right now, and if we don't, something's wrong in our minds and we read something that is so sick and twisted and distorted, what can I say? Anyway.

**...nor foolish talking.** To me, that's worse than foolish talking. It's stupid talking, ignorant talking, sick talking. Now, you might not be able to take what I've just said. I'm sorry, but what you did is so far over the hill, out of bounds, that it deserves this so that everyone can hear it. Not necessarily who it was. But such are things that are so appalling that human beings in God's Church could ever come up with. How can this happen? Well, we're not on guard like we should be, not praying like we should be, not close to God like we should be. Something entered into the mind that should never have entered in.

**...nor coarse jesting.** Bad-tasting humor. We have to be careful of things we might say in those areas. I don't know that those kinds of things happen, but hopefully they're not happening within the Body. ... **which are not fitting**, as it says here. They're not fitting, they're not good, they're not right, so why do it?

**...but rather giving of thanks.** It's a different mindset. Giving of thanks. Thanking God, being thankful to one another. But a mind that thinks thankfulness. Why? Because we see and we hold onto the things that are important, that are meaningful, that are uplifting. And being thankful for God's spirit, that we're able to have those kinds of things in our life. Right relationships, right thinking, and understanding the source comes from God. Good works.

**...which are not fitting but rather giving of thanks. Verse 5—For this you know that no fornicator, no illicit sex,** and yet it happens within the Church from time to time, **unclean person, nor one who is covetous, or who is an idolater...** Putting other things before God. Now, we have to realize here, especially in this one here, on a spiritual plane, this catches us. Because there are times when we put other things before God. If there's something that you've repented of, you also have a double thing to repent of. Not the thing itself, or the thought in the mind, but the fact that you were an idolater because you put something else before God.

That's why I've made comment. It's a small thing, you think. I mean, in the scheme of things, you think, how could that stand before God? I've talked about cigarette smoking and how times past in Worldwide, and so many people had a hard time getting rid of it. Others didn't. It was like, if convicted of God's way of life God gave help, and it was gone. But if you monkey around with it and you want it and you desire it and you go back to it, and you don't fight that fight and you're not convicted to the degree you should be, that's going to come back.

So that's why I made comments of just going out in the backyard and making this great big thing that looks like a cigarette. You might as well just start bowing down to it and get the red going up. Let's get that flame going. Let's get that little bit up top so it really looks like a cigarette and bow down to my god. Because you think, why make a cigarette? And yet you start adding that up then to everything we do in life, what is it that we would place before God? What?

To be cut off from God? To be cut off from the Church? That should just scare the you-know-what out of us, for something like that to potentially happen in our lives. And if it does, then that's healthy, because then we'll run from it and we'll fight against it and we'll cry out to God for more help to fight and conquer and overcome it, whatever it is.

**...who is an idolater?** So, it's saying here, **for you know**, and basically listing these, then, **has any inheritance in the Kingdom of Christ and God.** No inheritance. In other words, no part in the Family.

So, here is where we have to nip it in the bud in the Church, as we're begotten of God's spirit. Here is where our battle takes place to determine what is the outcome and whether or not we're going to be in God's Family and receive that inheritance.

**Let no one deceive you with empty words.** And yet, that's been the history of problems within the Church, listening to empty words of something that comes along and teaches something different. It's been an ongoing battle forever. It didn't stop with the Apostasy. That one there should have shocked people into such reality, but it didn't, and battles continued on, and people listened to different things – 14/15<sup>th</sup> Passover, things about Pentecost. I read some things in the beginning, I thought, "Where in the world do you get..." Some of these things. Right when you think you've heard it all, something else would come along.

Thankfully, we're way past that now, and we're in the Church. But you know what? I mean, as far as the Church has been reestablished and the growth within the Church, but we have to keep fighting because every once in a while someone may come along, get lifted up about something, and start saying something to others that's not true, that are nothing but empty words, but absolutely meaningless and harmful, damaging.

**Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things, the wrath of God comes upon the children of disobedience.** That word, I've tried to express this so many times, it's not because God is looking for fault. He doesn't have to. We're filled with it. He has patience and love and wants us to come out of that kind of thing.

It's like Christ is milder, and he came to show us the way of love, and then there's this wrathful God that's looking to punish people. No, that's not what it's about. But it is warning people that there is judgment. That's what this wrath is about, because if we don't repent of sin, then there's judgment, and there comes a time for the execution of judgment. That's what this is about in the context of the word and how it's used and the truth that God has given to us.

**Because of these things, the execution of judgment of God comes upon the children of disobedience.** It's going to happen. We either obey or not, either desire God's way of life or not, either choose God's way of life or reject it. Those who don't want it, and those who reject it, this is what's going to inevitably happen.

**Therefore, do not be partakers with them, for you were once darkness.** I remember well what I was like. I remember the world I lived in. I remembered my lifestyle and the thinking. All of us should be able to remember what we were like when God drew us, called us into the Church. Now, some growing up in the Church didn't experience the same things to the same level, thankfully. So, nevertheless, we have those things in our carnal human nature that we have to fight against and seek to conquer and overcome. And until we're impregnated with God's spirit in that respect, as a whole, from being called

out of the world, we were out there in the world in darkness without God, without Christ, without the truth.

I'll never forget the night I first started seeing the truth. It's an awesome thing. Light goes on. First time I ever saw light. Because it was all darkness, and then God shows you some light, the Sabbath, the Holy Days, things about His plan. It's like, "This is incredible!"

**But now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light.** It's what we're to walk in, the light, which means in the truth and God's way of life, wanting to live it, wanting to live it towards others.

**Verse 9—For the fruit of the spirit is in all goodness.** So, it's about good fruit. It's what God's spirit produces. Wherever God's spirit goes, if it's going, it will produce fruit, right fruit. It's the way it works. But it has to come from God because God's spirit produces fruit, spiritual fruit.

**...in all goodness, righteousness, and truth.** He blesses us with more truth, the ability to see more clearly, His plan and purpose more clearly. I marvel at that, how it never ceases. It just becomes stronger and stronger in the mind, the ability to see and appreciate and be thankful for, and to be joyful for, happy for what God gives to us. Awesome.

**...proving.** Finding out, if you will, or learning for oneself. We already talked about this, what it means to prove. Put it into practice, live it, live God's way, asking for His spirit to do so, it produces fruit. **...proving what is acceptable to the Lord**, what is well pleasing to God. He wants us to do that. He wants us, He wants to see us live His way of life because we're being blessed by doing so. Who doesn't want their children to live right, to not make mistakes, to not do things that are going to hurt, and so forth? How much more God Almighty, for His children?

**Even have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness.** And so, if we sin, if we begin to go in a particular direction, that's what we're doing, we're choosing fellowship with something that God wants us to come out of and worked to bring us out of, that Joshua died to bring us out of, to give us the ability to come out of it and taking those things, then, lightly.

**Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather—I love this word—expose.** It means “to reprove; find fault with; to convict,” like being convicted, but to convict in, hopefully, one's own mind, to be convicted, to expose what is not right and with God, to be able to see it. That's what growing is about, that's what conquering and overcoming is about, and being (maybe a better word) refined is all about, being perfected is about. It's about being able to dig deeper and deeper into this, into our own minds, and having things exposed. We become convicted that they need to be gotten rid of in order to be more at one with God. So, it's a process we live.

**For it's shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret.** So, if secrecy has to be involved, why? What is it we're hiding? What is it we don't want others to see and to know? Well, if we can think that way, above all we should know that God sees us all the time. Joshua sees us all the

time. And not only that, they see exactly what's in our mind all the time. They know. They know. They know what we're thinking. They know how we think. They know us in ways we can't even begin to comprehend.

Thankfully, they're very patient, loving, caring, filled with grace, if you will, graciousness toward us. Sometimes we should marvel that God has had such patience with us – with me, with you. That's an awesome thing to understand. Thank God He gave us time to fight and conquer and overcome.

**Verse 13—But all things that are exposed** (reproved, found fault with, convicted) **are made manifest by the light.** So, that's the only way to see the things that are wrong, is God's spirit, is the truth, is the light. And the more that that's in our minds, and we want it, the more we're going to see and be able to fight against the things that are wrong. **And whatever makes manifest as light.**

**Verse 14—Therefore,** he says, **awake, you who sleep.** Sometimes people drift off to sleep. It's a horrible state to be in. I know because I've been there, done that, in a big way, Laodicea. It happened to us all in the Church, that were a part of Worldwide. It's a horrible thing to take place. Truly is.

**...awake, you who sleep; arise from the dead.** If there's no growth, God's spirit is not working there. What did He do? He spewed us all out. To me, that's a mind-boggling, astounding thing that took place within God's own Church. That God had to separate the entirety of the Church for Himself for a time, and then to begin waking people up, shaking them up, and begin to work with bringing some back together. Incredible.

**Arise from the dead, and Christ will give you light.** That's where it comes from, comes from Joshua. All things have been given to him. All power has been given to him in the Church, for the Church, the Body of Christ.

**See then that you walk circumspectly.** Go look it up in the dictionary. A lot of work goes into that if we do it this way. "Exacting way," if you will.

**...not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time.** So, we really don't have a whole lot of time. Sometimes we think things go on for a long, long time, and yet you get to a certain point in life, like your age, and you realize, "Where did it go?" It goes by so quickly. And anyway, it's a part of what we learn through the process of living in this temporary body, this temporary dwelling.

"Redeeming the time." It means buy up the time you have. Whatever time it is, use it wisely. Make the most of it, whatever is left. We don't know. You don't know when it's going to end. You don't know when an accident that God will allow happen, whatever, on a freeway, or an illness, or a heart attack, or whatever it is, and your life is, it's over, you had your time. Where are you? Sealed?

**...redeeming the time, because the days are evil.** Especially if you think of this world, the way it is, and because of technology. The power of evil is so much greater than it ever has been, and sadly, it's

captured a lot of people, even in God's Church. Technology. Because it's so easy to misuse, so easy to mishandle. We have many people, not a few, who have had to fight those battles.

**Therefore, do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is.** It's up to us. **Now, do not be drunk with wine, in which is excess, but be filled with the spirit.** So, yes, it should go without saying that no one should become drunk by drinking. But the analogy is here, is that you can have too much wine and become drunk, but you can't have too much of God's holy spirit. There is no such thing. That's what this is about.

"But be filled with the spirit." Don't be filled with wine where you get drunk. In other words, how we think, what's more important to us? Well, the spiritual. So, yes, I want to be filled with the spirit. That's why you have to ask every day for God's holy spirit. "I need Your help. Give me today my daily bread, please. I need it."

Not just physical food. You know, people get all hung up about having a prayer in front of every meal, a physical thing. Well, it's good to be thankful for everything you have. But the important lesson out of all that, that Christ gave, is that which we're able to have that's of the spirit, that that's far more valuable if we grasp it. Our desire then to pray about those things that have meaning, and not to get into repetitious things that, after a while, hardly have any meaning.

That's why we've addressed some of these things in times past. Hopefully, to get us focused more on what it really means and what it's about and what's important that we should strive for with all of our being, and truly be deeply, deeply thankful for God's holy spirit every day. I need help every day. You need help every day. You shouldn't go out into this world without seeking that help. And yet we do at times. Till something happens and then you think, "You fool!"

That's why I love that one prayer. "I woke up early this morning, rushed right into the day. Had so much to accomplish, I didn't take time to pray." I'm surprised that even came to me like that. I usually have to look it up. Then it talks about it later on, that a person had so much to accomplish that day that they had to take time to pray. That's the whole point of it all. That's what we have to do. We have to realize, "I need help every day." "But be filled with the spirit."

1<sup>st</sup> John 3. I tell you; I love things that John wrote that God gave to him to write. You go through the book of John, especially John 14, and in through there, some of the most awesome things ever revealed to mankind. That God's desire, once we're called, once we have the impregnation of His holy spirit within us, is that God dwell in us, that Joshua the Christ can dwell in us, and we can dwell in God on a spirit plane. It's a spiritual matter of the mind, and the ability then to have the mind become transformed and changed.

And then you read 1<sup>st</sup> John and it's like by the time he got to that part there and started writing the books of 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> John, that he'd been given so much more about understanding of certain things,

about God's love, about how those things work in our life. Very powerful, what was given to him in that regard. Here's a good example.

**1 John 3:18—My little children, let us not love in word or in tongue.** We can talk a talk, we can say things, and yet that's not what it's all about. It's about what we're doing. So, we can talk the right thing sometimes and say the right things at times, but it's really what we're doing in our life and how we're doing it that's the bottom line.

**...but indeed**, or in other words, **in working good works**. It's what we're actually doing. **...and in truth**. So it has to be in the truth, has to be in belief of the truth, and what God has given to us, and this is what we're striving to live and practice and do.

**And by this we know that we are of the truth and shall assure our hearts before Him.** So there shouldn't be any doubting, in other words. If we're doing the things that God says, and we know that we are in the manner that He says to do them, there should be a confidence and a boldness and a strength of relationship there toward God that makes us stronger. How could you express those things except to live them? It's a thinking toward God. And you know that God is there, and you desire God to be there, and all that God has given to us.

**Verse 20—For if our heart condemns us...** So, that's when sin comes along. When sin is there, and that should bring us to repentance if we know something is wrong and if we're not fighting it, how do these fit together? Well, they can't. You've got to repent, got to strive to ask God for strength and help and power to fight and conquer or whatever it is. **For if our heart condemns us, God is greater than our heart and knows all things.** Like I mentioned earlier. That's what's in the mind.

**Beloved, if our heart does not condemn us, we have confidence toward God.** That's the way we should be. Because if you're free from sin, if you're free from wrong thinking, and if you know with all of your being, and you have the confidence to know that when you ask for forgiveness of sin and it's heartfelt, and you cried out to God for help, it's gone.

That's an incredible thing that God has given to us as His people, to know that when sin is there, when something has happened and you let down or whatever your thinking or whatever it might be, and you cry out to God for forgiveness of whatever, you get up and you know it's gone. It's kept away from us. He doesn't remember it in the sense of bringing it back up or putting it in front of us or whatever, or judging us accordingly, that, "Well, you did this last time." It's gone. Absolutely. That's an awesome freedom, it really is, when you know that with all of your being and you can have that kind of confidence in your heart and mind toward God.

**Now whatever we ask, we receive of Him.** I hope we know the definition of this and what's true about all this that's being said, because it's about a relationship with God, and it's not a matter of just asking for anything our heart desires. You see that sign out there that says, I don't know what it says now, but

“40 billion!” The lottery. I don't know what it gets up to, but you know, you go down a highway sometimes and you think, “Oh, twenty bucks on that baby?” And it's like, you wouldn't know what to do with it anyway.

But what an incredible thing. “Whatever we ask,” it's not about things like that. That my life would be so much better off if I just had this and was able to take care of that, and so I'm going to ask God for this and that. No, it's about how you're living your life. It's about the battle you're in. It's about what is according to God's will. The primary thing is what? Asking for God's spirit to dwell in you. Repenting of sin, making sure you're clean in that regard, and asking then for God's spirit to dwell. There's nothing more powerful that we could ask for, to fight, to do, to accomplish whatever in our lives spiritually, to draw closer to become more at one with God, to do this daily.

Those are the things we've been told to ask for. That's why Christ told us various things earlier on in various parables and so forth. The primary thing obviously always is seeking God and seeking God's way, seeking peace, being a peacemaker, all the things of producing what is good, good fruit, doing God's will. So, if it's according to His will?

That's why it says it **For whatever we ask, we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing, right and acceptable in His sight.** It's that kind of a mind, of wanting to draw closer to God, becoming more at one with God. He will give us the help to accomplish it because it's His will.

I want to come back to this in a moment here in 1<sup>st</sup> John, but I just want to read this in John 14, something that He stated earlier that I just referenced. Again, incredible the things he said on Passover night, his last night. **John 14:13—Now whatever you will ask in my name, that I will do that the Father may be glorified in His Son.** So, it's always understanding what it is we're to ask for in the first place, that it's a matter of understanding and knowledge that God has given to us in order to have a right relationship, in order to conquer and overcome.

**If you ask anything...** Again, within the right context, because sometimes there are people who have had wrong thinking about what this is about in the Church. **If you ask anything in my name, I will do it. If you love me, keep my commandments.** We have to have help to do that. It's God's will that we do that, that we live according to those, but we can't do it on our own. That's the greatest, one of the greatest convictions we should have: “I need help every day.”

**If you love me, keep my commandments. And I will pray the Father and He will give you another helper.** Paracletes, the holy spirit, referring to here. John later on refers to Christ as being our paracletes, you know, helper. **And I will give you another helper so that it may abide with you forever.** But we've got to ask for it constantly, daily. The holy spirit: It's there, it's available, but we have to want it in order to accomplish the right things, and we have to ask for it constantly.

...even the spirit of truth which the world cannot receive. But we can. We have received the spirit of truth. What an awesome thing.

Now, back here to **1 John 3:22—Now whatsoever you ask or whatever we ask, we receive of Him because we keep His commandments and do those things that are pleasing, right, and acceptable in His sight. Now this is His commandment that we should believe the name of His Son.** It says “into,” but again, here, sometimes this is so misused. It's believing who he is – first and foremost, our Passover. Absolutely believing that with all of our being—we know that—and that we're able to be forgiven of sin because he's our Passover. Now he's our High Priest. That means even more so than the ability to receive that help on a continuing basis, the power of the holy spirit. He intercedes for us; we ask, it's given. Awesome. So that the Father be glorified.

...the name of His Son Joshua the Christ, and love one another. It all boils down to how we think, and especially in our relationships, especially in fellowship within the Body of Christ, within the Church, and the world, to understand we have this hope.

I so look forward to what's coming when Satan and the demonic world won't be around anymore, when finally there's going to be one government over all the earth. We're so close now. One government, one Church. To get rid of all this massive confusion out there. Incredible what's going to be available to mankind, what we're going to be able to witness, what we're going to be able to see take place.

"And love one another." So, we should love that time that's coming and those who are able to go on into that world and that age, and look forward to with all of our being **as he gave us commandment**, as it says here.

This is the commandment. I'm going back and forth here, so I'll just give you the scriptures. **John 15:12—This is my commandment that you love one another as I have loved you.** I love it because it's, again, as I mentioned earlier on, it's that sacrificing, a willing to sacrifice self even for the benefit of others within the Body, our way, our time, whatever it is.

**Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.** So, that's a lot. That's a lot. How much are we willing to lay down our way for someone else? Sometimes, maybe impatience, just extending patience. Because God's extended a lot of patience to us, to me. I should be willing to do that toward others. Judgment, same sort of thing. A willingness to be forgiving. On and on it goes.

**You are my friends if you do whatever I command you.** Incredible. We can have that kind of relationship with Joshua the Christ, the kind of relationship of family with God the Father, the Almighty God of the universe. It's hard for us to comprehend that sometimes.

Anyway, I'm going to finish here in this next verse. I'm going back here to 1<sup>st</sup> John that we were in. **1 John 3:24—Now he who keeps His commandments abides in Him, and He in him. Now by this we know that He abides in us, by the spirit which He has given us.** So, there's a confidence we should have of God's

spirit dwelling in us, of us being able to dwell in God the Father and Joshua the Christ, to know what that means, to have a peace of mind because of that, and a confidence and a boldness in the way of life that God has shown us.