



Back
to
the
Basics

As spoken extemporaneously
from village to village

Back to the Basics

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As always, if we can help you in any way, please contact the church here at
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Below is the list of titles in a 10-part series of books about Foundational Issues of the Kingdom of God and the Bride of Christ.
www.JesusLifeTogether.com/Foundations/

THE HAMMER—*Breaking Down Misconceptions*
“Is not my word like fire,” declares the LORD, “and like a hammer that breaks a rock in pieces?” Jeremiah 23:29

THE PLOW—*Planting Hope & Vision*
“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when the reaper will be overtaken by the plowman and the planter by the one treading grapes. New wine will drip from the mountains and flow from all the hills.” Amos 9:13

THE SCALES—*Holding to God’s Standards*
“The LORD abhors dishonest scales, but accurate weights are his delight.” Proverbs 11:1

THE CRUCIBLE—*Refining and Melding Relationships*
“The crucible for silver and the furnace for gold, but the LORD tests the heart.” Proverbs 17:3

THE SICKLE—*Clearing the Land and Harvesting Change*
“As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.” Mark 4:29

THE TROWEL—*It Matters How We Build!*
“This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle: ‘See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you on the mountain.’” Hebrews 8:5

THE SWORD—*Cutting Through the Fog*
“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword.” Matthew 10:34

THE CHISEL—*“I Will Build My Church ... ”*
“In building the temple, only blocks dressed at the quarry were used, and no hammer, chisel or any other iron tool was heard at the temple site while it was being built.” 1 Kings 6:7

THE ANVIL—*Forging Out a Life*
“See, it is I who created the blacksmith who fans the coals into flame and forges a weapon fit for its work.” Isaiah 54:16

THE PLUMB LINE—*True Foundations*
“Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the Lord Almighty...Then he will bring out the capstone to shouts of ‘God Bless it!’...Who despises the day of small things? Men will rejoice when they see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.” Zechariah 4

The Bride Made Ready

September 1996, Komba, Africa

Before very long, Jesus will come back for His Bride made ready (Rev. 19:7). And, the will of the Father for us is not to *attend* a bride, but to *be* a Bride...not to *attend* a house, but to *be* a House. We can only do this as we love each other and exchange our lives with each other *every* day.

We help each other to know Jesus better by helping each other put away sin, love one another more, and care for others' needs more than we care for our own. These are the teachings of Jesus. This is how He lived His life for us, and now He has called us to live this way for one another. This is how the Bride is made ready for the return of her Groom, Jesus.

The will of the Father is that we would become more and more beautiful as we learn how to truly love each other more. As we put away our selfishness and pride that keep us separate from each other, and as we willingly open our hearts to be vulnerable with each other, then the Spirit of God, the Grace of God and the Love of God pour out on us...and we become a beautiful Bride *READY* for the return of our Groom, Jesus.

This is a Church—to live this way *every* day, not *attending* the house of God, but *being* the place where God Lives. Then our homes, our workplace and our Church all become one. There are no more barriers from my heart to yours and no more barriers between my home and yours. I put away selfishness and pride, I put away laziness and unbelief, and I love others as Jesus has loved me. When everyone does that, from the least to the greatest, Jesus pours out His healing oil and we are a Church and a beautiful Bride.

Invitation of God to the World

The Invitation of God to all of the world is to be a Home together for the Father, Son and Holy Ghost—to be a Bride that has made herself ready for the return of her beautiful Groom, Jesus (John 13-15, Eph. 2-5, Rev. 19:7). Jesus said, “this is how all men will know you are My disciples,”—not by how loud you sing on Sunday morning, not by how well you preach, not by your meetings—but “by how you love one another daily.” This is how all men will know that this is from Heaven. The world **MUST** see us loving each other. They cannot see through the walls of a room once a week. It is very hard to love one another in a room anyway. They see us loving each other when they see us carrying each other’s loads, when we take care of each other when we are sick, when they see us give each other the *best* things we have. This is how all men will know that we are His disciples—not just by what we believe, but by how they *see* us loving each other. This is the call of God for His People today.

Build on the Rock

Build on the rock of putting into practice His Word. If you ever hear *anything* that Jesus is saying, do something about it today. Take action, today, to change for Jesus. Don’t just *think* about it. Act on it. Jesus said this is building on the Rock—putting it into practice and not hearing it only. Disciples of Jesus do this! So, brothers and sisters, *be* the Church to the Glory of God. Be a Family together every day. Make Jesus very proud of you.

Get Rid of the Walls

Mzuzu, Africa 1996

In the world that we live in, in almost every country, the body of Jesus is broken into many parts. There are many reasons why the Body of Jesus is so badly broken. Sometimes it's because of the pride and ambition of certain men. Sometimes it's because teachings are very different, and people divide over teachings. Many times the body of Jesus divides because of personality problems, where people bang against each other and then go apart.

It is our obligation and duty to Jesus to get rid of the walls and the barriers. Jesus wants the Body of Christ to be ONE all around the world. There are some things that need to change in order for this to happen, though. Our selfishness and pride must be put away. We must come together in order to understand Jesus' teachings—*together*, not apart. We must all be soft and humble to learn from each other.

One of the things that divide Jesus' body into many parts is the desire of men to put names on churches. When we look at the Bible only, we actually see that the true Church never had any name, really. There is no "Baptist church" in the Bible, neither "Apostolic" nor "Nazarene church" there either. There is no "Mennonite" or "Charismatic." There is *only* the Body of Jesus.

When you read about the Churches in the Bible, they are known by many names. But these are descriptions, not titles. A church might be called "the church of God in Corinth." It might be called "the firstborn ones." It is the same thing. It might be called the "elect ones," or the "chosen ones." It is the same as church of God in Corinth. **All of these names are descriptions of who they were, not a title that they wore.** For example, if I were to say, "Brother Henry," that could be a title. If I were to say "Henry, my dear brother," that is a

description, and not a title. The churches in the Bible are called by many *descriptions*. But they are never called by a title. Not once in the Bible is the Church called by a title. “Baptist Church” is a title of a denomination; “brothers in Christ” is a description. “Baptist” is a title. This is one of the things that divide us into pieces. Because if you have a title that is different from my title, that makes us different.

Is there still power in the Blood? Do we have to divide over names? Do you need a name other than Jesus’ name? There is no other name in heaven or on earth by which men can be saved. We don’t need to be “Baptists” nor “Mennonites”, neither “Apostolic” nor “Seventh Day Adventist.” *We need to be lovers of Jesus and lovers of each other.* That’s all. There IS power in the Blood, and nothing should divide us from one another. If there is a division between you and me, it should only be because one of us doesn’t want to love and obey Jesus. That would make us separate. But that’s the *only thing* that should make us separate from our brothers. If you have a title of “Baptist” and I’m a “Seventh Day Adventist,” then we have a division between us that makes Jesus sad. If we live our lives together and care for each other without any titles of “Baptist” or “Seventh Day Adventist,” then we can together learn to love and obey Jesus. But if we have different titles, we can’t be TOGETHER.

What is the Name of Your Church?

For our dear Jesus’ sake, we must not have barriers. The way Paul said it was, “*A curse be on everyone that does not love the Lord.*” There should be no other curses. We must get rid of the walls, the barriers, and the titles. So if there is a church in your town, and there is power in the Blood, then we can be Christians together without having a name. The church we are a part of has been there for over ten years and we have never had a name, truly. When someone asks us, “What is the name of your church?”, we say, “We love Jesus.” If they are a Baptist, then there are no walls. They don’t think of me as the competition, and I invite them to just love Jesus too, with no titles. When someone

asks one of our children, “What ‘church’ do you go to?”, they don’t know how to answer that except perhaps with, “Everyone I know loves Jesus.” If someone asks, “What ‘church’ do you attend?”, our children just say, “What do you mean?” They are part of Church every day. They don’t attend “church.” We are the church. And the children know this in their hearts, even when they are very young.

It is very important that we not have titles in our lives. It needs to begin with you and the lives that you reach out to in the religious world. Beg them to please not have walls or barriers. If there is still power in the Blood, we must not have walls. Having a name that is not in the Bible creates walls. Some people say, “But our name is in the Bible. Our ‘church’ is called the ‘Church of God’, and the Bible says that the Church in Corinth is called the ‘Church of God.’ So, we have a name that is in the Bible.” That’s not good thinking because Paul did not call the Church by a title. What he said was, “This is the Church that belongs to God.” It was not “The Church of God in Corinth” but rather God’s people who live in the city of Corinth. It was a *description* and not a title, and he also called that same group of people by two or three other names. Because it’s a description, there are many names for the Church. But when we make for ourselves one name and become that name, we have trampled on the blood of Christ because we have made walls between us and other people that love Jesus. If you are willing, the best answer when someone asks you, “What is the name of your ‘church,’” is to say, “I love Jesus. Do you?” That is the best answer. Then there are no barriers except whether or not they love Jesus. This is God’s way and the way of the Bible. We are not separated by names. As the apostle said, “Little children, love one another.” This is the thing that we do. We take pride not in our “church,” but in our husband, Jesus. Amen?

Someone I know was talking to a “pastor.” The pastor was very shocked when this person told him that they were the Church. The pastor had only thought of “church” as something that you go to on Sunday morning in a building. So when someone asks you what

“church” you are a part of, you can ask God to give you wisdom for how to answer the question. There are hundreds of different answers. As you read the New Testament, you see that the believers could have answered that question hundreds of different ways too, because they had no title. If you ask God for wisdom for how to answer the question, God can show you what to say. But if you have a title and they ask you, “What ‘church’ are you a part of?” you only have one answer—the title. Now if you have no title, you can help draw them closer to Jesus by explaining to them that Jesus is alive and His Body is the Church. It’s not something you go to, it’s something you are. It’s a Family, not an organization. You can say all of these things when someone asks what “church” you are a part of—unless you have a title, because then they won’t believe you. They will think you are just like everyone else that goes to a building, except that maybe you believe different things than they do. But if you have no name, as the Churches in the Bible had no one particular name, then when they ask the name of your “church,” you can tell them about the wonderful Family and Body of Jesus, and His Life living in His people.

“Statements of Faith” —Another Barrier

One reason there are denominations is men’s pride. Another reason is different creeds, different “statements of faith”. When the “pastor” and the other person I told you about earlier began to speak together, the “pastor” did not know that person’s “statement of faith”. If that person and some other brothers got to know that man better, they would begin to talk about different things, out of their relationship. They might talk about the virgin birth of Jesus, about the death and resurrection of Jesus, about the fact that He is coming again for His People. They would begin to talk about what it means to be a Christian—that unless you lose your life for Jesus you cannot find it, and unless you take up your cross you cannot be His disciple. Out of their relationship, they would begin to work out what their “statement of faith” is.

Do you have a wife and children? What is your “statement of faith” for your family? There are things that are important to your family, but you don’t have a statement of faith for your family. In a sense you do, but not really; you would not put it up on the wall, but it’s in your heart, and it’s in your children’s hearts because you have taught them. If I came and lived in your home, you would not have to tell me your “statement of faith.” I would see it on your face. I would see it in how you treat your wife and children. I would see it in how hard you work, and at your dinner table, and when I find you on your knees in prayer in the corner. You wouldn’t put it on your wall, but you do have it.

When the Church is a Family, it is the same as that. We don’t have a creed that we put on the wall, but when you get to know us, you see it in our hearts. If someone came to be with our Family, our Church (which has hundreds of people), and they did not believe that Jesus was born of a virgin, that He is the Son of God and that the blood of Christ is what saves us from our sins, we would not hand them a statement of faith, because we are a *Family* and don’t have one. Just like your family doesn’t have one. But because we really do have one *in our hearts*, just as your family does, it wouldn’t be very long before we were talking about important things.

The problem with making out a “statement of faith” and putting it on the wall is the same as having a name for a church. It builds walls and barriers between people. If a person comes to me and says, “Are you a Baptist?” and I say, “Yes, I’m a Baptist,” he thinks he knows me. But he really doesn’t; all he knows are things *about Baptists*, and now he assumes that he knows *me*. However, if I’m just a Christian with no title, then he is not afraid of me since he doesn’t think that he knows me yet. Now he has to *talk* to me to find out who I really am. Because I’m not hiding behind the title of “Baptist,” he can talk to me or ask me about specific things, like the Blood of Jesus, and I can tell him what I believe about it. If I’m wrong, maybe he can help me change. But if I’m a Baptist, he has already said, “Goodbye.”

When we don't have barriers, then we can have relationships where we can help each other.

Loving People, but Hating Mixture

While the Church in the Bible doesn't have a dividing name to distinguish it from other Christians in a city, there *is* such a thing as a local Church. I say that because it *is important* that we have close relationships with each other. In the United States there are perhaps three kinds of situations within the Christian world. One is the kind that's a part of the denominations with the titles. There are good people in those denominations as well as not so good people. Then there are people who have come out of denominations but haven't given their lives away to other believers, so they are separate. They love Jesus and believe in truth, but they need people every day in their lives. The scriptures say to encourage one another daily, as long as it called today. And, if we won't encourage each other daily, then we become hard in heart and self-deceived (Heb. 3:12-13).

Then there are others who are joined together every day in life. They are not part of the denominations, but they love the people in the denominations. They are devoted to each other every day, and they are a Church. They are not wandering around aimlessly. They are what the Bible calls "joined and knit together by every supporting ligament." When one part suffers, they all suffer. When one part is blessed, they all rejoice. They rise up and sit down and walk along together. It is a Church, but without a name and building, nor anything to attend. Its members are inside of each other's lives, loving each other every day.

So, there are those three kinds of situations. Most people go through the first situation at some point. Most of us became exposed to Jesus by the denominations, and so some good things have come from them. Some people, because their consciences are soft, see things that they can't live with in the denominations. Jesus said that He vomits lukewarmness out of His mouth. In some denominations

there are some hot people and some cold people. When you mix hot and cold, what do you get? You get lukewarm. So, because Jesus gets sick with lukewarm, a person who thinks like Jesus is going to have a hard time with a situation where there is mixture. We can only be comfortable with mixture if we are not connected to Jesus, because He does not love mixture. So that leaves us with a great problem. We love the people, we want to help and serve, and we need them too. But there is mixture, and we don't know what to do. Some people have had to leave that situation. They were either kicked out, or they sadly left and are now by themselves. We would encourage them to quickly get involved every day with other good believers and to not stay separate very long. We do need to pray very much for the denominations and some of the very special people that are there, but the walls must come down and the lukewarmness must stop. The scriptures say to get the leaven out of the batch. This is our goal—to help get the leaven out of the batch.

One Aspect of What it Means to be a Priest

Doing Things Jesus' Way

Mzuzu, Africa, 1996

No Special Titles—We are All Priests

The book of Revelation says Jesus purchased us and made us a Kingdom and priests to serve our God (Rev. 5). If we are all going to be priests, we need to know what it means to be a priest. If we are going to experience God's power in our lives, we must agree with God's thought for our lives. Jesus said, "Go...and I'll be with you." He taught us, "Do my will...and I will give you Life and Power."

False christendom has for many years pushed people down. It has taken a few people and pushed them up making some "leaders" rich and famous and powerful, while pushing most people down. In the United States, India, Poland, Romania, Brazil, and all around the world, there are "hero" Christians and "low" Christians. This is very wrong. Jesus said to the twelve apostles in Matthew 23 to "Call no man teacher, call no man father, call no man leader, call no man master, call no man 'rabbi,' call no man 'pastor,' call no man 'reverend'—for you are all brothers with one Father!" There are no "heroes" in True Christianity except for Jesus. There must be no official bosses who control the decisions, the money, and the people—except Jesus in and through His People together by His Spirit.

A Living Sacrifice

When God wants us to be priests, He has a thought in His mind. A priest offers spiritual sacrifices to God. You can do that. God

wants you to do that. That's not for "heroes." That's for all of us. A spiritual sacrifice—there are many parts to that. One part of a spiritual sacrifice, as Paul said, is to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice. God wants you to be a priest by offering your body as a living sacrifice. Jesus wants your tongue, your eyes, and your ears. He also wants your mind, hands, and feet. You can offer the parts of your body as instruments of righteousness only. Or you can give in to sin, selfishness, pride, lust, and fear. But Jesus wants us to give all the parts of our bodies to Him as a sacrifice everyday, and we will be priests. Most people know about this first part of being a priest—offering your body as a sacrifice. *Not many people will do that, but most people know that.* Will you all **do** that?

Serve the People and Help Each Other be More Like Jesus

Another function or part of a priest's duties in the Old Testament that not many people know about was to *serve* the people—not just to offer sacrifices, but also to serve the people. A priest in the Old Covenant would bring God to the people. Now, in the New Covenant, we are *all* priests. If you are truly a follower of Jesus, you are a priest. We don't sit and watch the priest do God's thing. *We are priests.* Do you believe in your heart that you are a priest? Then bring God to the people. There are two ways you can bring God to the people. One way is to tell others about Jesus in your neighborhoods. We are all priests, so we all bring Jesus to our neighbors and friends and families. Amen?

A priest also brings Jesus to the family of God. We do tell others about Jesus and His ways, but there is another way we bring Jesus to the people. Let me be very practical here. If you are a priest, *you will help others become more like Jesus.* If we look at a picture of Jesus in our heart and see Who He is, then look at our brothers and sisters and see a difference between them and Jesus, *as priests, we live to make them the same.* Is Jesus selfish? Are any brothers and sisters selfish? You are

a priest; help them. Is Jesus afraid? If you ever see a brother or sister that lives in fear, help them. Does Jesus care for the little children? Did He say, “Bring the little children to me.”? If you ever see a brother or sister that doesn’t love the little children and care for them, then help them change. That’s what a priest does. You help everyone become more like Jesus. If Jesus had been married, would Jesus have ever been angry with his wife and yelled at her? If Jesus were a wife, would He ever be angry or selfish with His spouse? You know the answers to these questions. Jesus is Wonderful in ALL things!

You are priests. You must help your brothers and sisters become more like Jesus. This is very risky. This is dangerous. Why? Because someone might think that you are being prideful or judgmental. But no, you are being a priest as God has called you to be. We don’t want to have pride or be judgmental. We want to have deep, deep love in our hearts for everyone. But we must beg them to change, to become more like Jesus—because we are priests of God. Every one of us is a priest of God. But we each have our own problems, too. There are things about each of us that are not exactly like Jesus. If I believe that you are a priest, then I must listen to you if you see things in my life that are not like Jesus. I must welcome you as a priest to see into my life and to help me. So we have courage and love to help others. We have courage and humility to have others help us and to speak into *our* lives. Church is NOT a place that you come to. *Church is people being priests together.* You become the Church when everyone helps each other *everyday* become more like Jesus. You are not a Church because you come somewhere and listen. You are a Church because you care deeply for each other every day. The Church is called the Body of Christ. If we are not helping each other become more like Christ, then we are not part of His Body. We must help each other.

Holy Father, Lord God Almighty, it’s our prayer together that You would open our eyes and those of all your children everywhere. Holy God, show us how to be priests. We beg You for the courage, the help and the wisdom to be able to touch each other’s lives. We beg You for

the humility and the courage to welcome other people speaking into our lives. We need You so much. We want to be Your Church. We want to kick down the gates of hell and love each other into greatness. Holy Spirit, help us. Teach us Your ways. Help us to change fast. We do love You very much. Give us Your wisdom. We know that Your House is built with wisdom, and we desperately need that. Amen

Solving Problems

“If your brother sins against you, go and show him his fault, just between the two of you. If he listens to you, you have won your brother over. But if he will not listen, take one or two others along, so that every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the Church. If he refuses to listen even to the Church, treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector. I tell you the truth, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:15-20).

Most people that hear verse 20 think that this means when the Church is together and we are happy worshipping then Jesus is there. We sing praises to Jesus, we feel good and we feel His presence. While this is all true, this is not what verse 20 is about. This verse does talk about people being together and Jesus coming to be with them, but He is not talking about worship here. He is talking about solving problems. He is saying that as we are all priests and we help each other be more like Jesus, there are times when we will need to come and speak about things in each other's lives. If you see me being selfish, you need to come to me and tell me this. If you sisters hear another sister gossip, you must talk to her about this. Gossip is sin. Gossip breaks Jesus' heart. Gossip is slander and hurts Jesus. So if we see that these things are sin and wound Jesus in the side, as priests and as the body of Christ, we must help each other.

Jesus said that if there is sin you must “go to him and him alone” (v. 15). We never want to embarrass anyone or shame them. In love, we just want them to become more like Jesus. If they are selfish or if they gossip, they can’t hear God. Since we want them to hear God, we must help. If they are selfish or prideful or slanderous, then they can’t love God or love people very well. So as priests, we must go to them and help them become more like Jesus. But we must be very humble. We are not wagging a finger and pointing; we are grabbing their legs and begging them to give their lives to Jesus. We want so much for them to have a friendship with God, and they can’t have a friendship with God if there is sin in their hearts. So our master and teacher Jesus says to go to them and to them alone. Do not shame them nor embarrass them. Love them. But go to them and help them. You are a priest—you must go to them.

If Two or Three Others Come...

Jesus Comes, Too!

Jesus gives us solutions to problems if things are difficult. If we go to a brother or sister in humility to try to help and they say, “Go away, I don’t want to listen,” or “Don’t judge me. Get the log out of your own eye.” Jesus gives us a solution to this problem. There is a chance that you might be wrong, but you still must go if you think you are right. You must try. If you are afraid to try, then you can’t be a priest. You can’t make Jesus happy unless you try. Sometimes you will be wrong, though, and that’s okay, because then you will learn from that too. Jesus said that if you go to this brother or sister and they won’t listen, then bring two or three others to try to help. This is not a teaching about “church discipline”. This is a teaching about how to help each other.

“For where two or three are gathered together in My name, there am I with them” (Matthew 18:20).

Do you see how beautiful this is?!! If you need to bring two or three others to talk to this brother or sister, Jesus comes too. Where two

or three are gathered to do His work, Jesus comes. This scripture is not about a worship service. This is about working together to help each other become like Jesus. If we go to a brother or sister, and they won't hear us because they don't understand or they don't like it, then we bring two or three others with us. This is a command of Jesus. He didn't say if they won't listen to you, just forget it or just pray about it. He said if they won't listen to you, bring two or three other good brothers and sisters, and Jesus will come, too. If we come in His name to do His work, He will come to help. He goes on to say that if that person still won't hear two or three witnesses, then tell it to the whole Church. Again, this is not "church discipline." This is about bringing all the priests together to try to help solve a problem. That is very, very good.

Our Jesus is wise beyond measure. He's a Wonderful Counselor, isn't He? Jesus said that if we have problems being priests trying to help each other, we can bring in more people to help. If I come to you and I think that there's sin in your life and you don't agree, maybe it's because *I'm wrong*—maybe I don't see things correctly. When we bring two or three witnesses, maybe they'll tell me that *I'm wrong*. So Jesus wins, and everyone grows! This is a very special thing that you must understand if you're priests. Things don't always go smoothly, but we must have courage and love. We *must* obey Jesus in what He said to do when things don't work well. If things don't work well, we must involve other people and listen to Jesus together. Sometimes one person is right. Sometimes the other person is right. And sometimes they're both right and we just don't understand. Sometimes they're both wrong. But when we obey Jesus' command to bring in two or three others—if we are all listening to Jesus and really caring—then Jesus will solve our problems and help us.

A Wonderful Tool

The Great High Priest will help all of His priests. But we must do it His way and not be lazy by not talking to each other. We must not be

afraid to bring in others and talk about it. And if someone has come to speak with us, we must be willing to invite two or three others to come and talk with us. Because I love Jesus, love the truth, and am willing to be wrong, inviting others to help is a very wonderful display of God's wisdom. I know if two or three others come, Jesus comes, too.

As priests, we must think about these things and put them into practice. This is not a game. We are not trying to hurt each other by going back and forth talking to each other all the time. It's not about being a policeman. But it is about *loving each other enough to try to help*. Where there is sin, the ears are closed up to hear God. Where there is sin, the eyes are blind to see God. So as priests we must help each other to hear and see God by helping to remove the sin.

Jesus gave us these tools in the toolbox. If we can't solve the problem one-on-one, then He gives us as priests this tool of bringing in others to help solve the problem. This is even true in marriage. If my wife has a problem with me and I won't listen, I expect her to obey Jesus and bring in two or three others. Jesus didn't say all of this is true except in a marriage. He said these things are true for *all* believers. These things are true for all priests. If my wife sees sin in me and I won't listen, she must bring in two or three others. I want her to do that because I love Jesus. Is that what everyone wants? This is challenging, isn't it?

Welcome the Knife...for Healing

Each time, the knife will hurt. But Jesus is the Great Physician, and He cuts out the cancer to make us whole and strong. These things we are talking about will hurt a little bit sometimes. But if you will listen to Jesus' way and be humble and loving, then He will make you very strong and wise and whole. He will heal all of your diseases of the heart and the body. He will put deep love in your heart and give you Life. You will have Rivers of Living Water gushing from within you and Peace that passes all understanding. You will have a

Joy that can't be expressed, full of Glory. You will have the Power of an Indestructible Life. If you will do things Jesus' way and be priests, you will no longer be just "normal" people. You will be Full of the Holy Spirit and Wisdom. But you have to welcome the knife to cut out the sin. You must be glad for the help, even when it hurts. This is the mind of a disciple of Jesus.

Anyone can sit in a building and listen to words. But Jesus has called us to be priests and kings. Paul rebuked the Corinthian believers when he said, "You are acting like mere men, like normal humans." But God has called us to judge even the angels. He has called us to be Full of Life and Glory and Power like His Son, Jesus. But we must welcome the knife to cut out the sin. We must help each other in order to experience these things for ourselves and for the Church. These things are very, very real. God said, "Try me, test me and see." Obey the ways of Jesus and be priests everyday. Be priests in your neighborhoods. Offer your bodies as living sacrifices and help each other be more like Jesus, and God will pour out blessing upon blessing into your hearts.

Come to Give!!

There is another part of being a priest you must understand. This is small compared to the other things we just talked about. You must offer yourself as a living sacrifice and bring Jesus to the people, helping them to become more like Him. But there is part of being a priest that also has to do with meetings or gatherings. If you're not offering your body as a living sacrifice loving people in your neighborhoods, and helping each other become more like Jesus every day, then the meetings don't matter. But if you *are* doing those things as priests, then this is another part of being a priest.

If Jesus were physically in this room right now, He might be totally quiet sometimes. But most times Jesus would have something important to say. Jesus is here right now. If you really believe that you are a priest because God said so by the Blood of Jesus (not because

you feel worthy, wise or strong), then you must be a priest in the times when the saints are all together, too. If Jesus lives inside of you and if you have been baptized into Him, into His Life and into His Spirit, then you too can hear God. As a priest, Jesus can speak through you also. You will never come to just listen or just sing. You will never come to just pray with everyone. If you are a priest, *you will come to give*. The book of Hebrews speaks of this.

“And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching” (Hebrews 10:24-25).

This is speaking of when the saints are together. In the first part it says to consider how to help each other grow. *“Consider how to spur each other on to love and good works.”* So as a priest, I come together with the saints thinking of how I can give and how you can give. You must have the courage to say what Jesus wants you to say. Don't be afraid of being wrong. If you are wrong, you can grow. Then it goes on to say, *“don't forsake being together.”* You need to be together often *“...and all the more as you see the Day of the Lord coming,”* as you see Jesus getting closer and closer.

No Pretending, OK?

Jesus got very, very angry at only a very few things. Jesus got very angry at hypocrites. He got very angry at people who pretended to be a certain way when really in their heart they were a different way. Jesus got very angry about that, and He still does. We must not pretend to be one way, when really, in our hearts, we are a different way. We must talk about it with our brothers and try to solve the problems openly and honestly. God said, *“Confess your sins to one another.”* Confess and pray that you can be healed. Many people are very sick inside, spiritually or physically, because they won't open up their hearts and confess their sins to one another. They are afraid to do that. But in God's House we must not be afraid, because we love

each other and we want to help. We will not gossip. We will not reject each other. We will help each other. So we can confess our sins freely. We will be sorrowful, but not afraid. Jesus will help us and clean us. But if we pretend there is no sin, then we are hypocrites and Jesus is angry. Jesus was and still is angry if we are hypocrites. We don't want Jesus to be angry with us, do we? So we must open our hearts.

Don't Bury Your Talent

Jesus was also angry at another kind of person. He was angry at the man who buried his talent. Jesus called that man a wicked servant. He cast him into outer darkness. What I am saying to you is, as a priest, you must not bury your talent. God has given each of you something special in your life. If you are a priest, use that thing that God has given you. The man in the parable that buried his money was afraid. Jesus was very unhappy with him for burying his talent. When all the saints are together, Jesus does not want you to come to just sit and listen. He doesn't want you to bury what He has put inside of you. You are a priest. Have the courage, strength, and faith in God to be able to speak out with the gift He has given you, every one of you. And don't be afraid like the man in the parable.

Consider how you might spur others on. If you are a priest with your neighborhood, with the believers, and with your body, then you can also be a priest when the saints are together. You need to be willing to bring a song that is special to you. Teach others a song that you learned when you were praying with Jesus in the morning. Perhaps you will be reading in one of the Psalms and you will ask Jesus to give you a melody for that song. And then as a priest, come and bring all the saints together, and teach them the song that Jesus gave you. That is being a priest. You must be willing to do that as a priest. Don't bury your talent.

Perhaps a brother will come and talk to you about a sin in your life. You listen to him, and it brings tears to your eyes, like the time Nathan spoke to David and David had a broken heart. God sends

a Nathan—a brother—to you and he tells you about a sin and it breaks your heart. You talk to Jesus about it and consider different scriptures concerning it. Then you bring all the saints together in one place and perhaps tell them about what Jesus taught you. You show them the scriptures that you learned that changed your life, tell them about how you fell into sin and teach them how not to fall into it. You show them the things that God has shown you. That is a priest. You are priests. You can take the things that God is doing inside of you and open them up to your brothers and sisters. God wants all of us to do that. ALL of us. Are you willing?

So we come together in Jesus' name and we listen. But Jesus usually isn't quiet for very long. If things are quiet for a long, long time, it's probably because someone is not being a very good priest. Perhaps Jesus wants you to share a song and you are afraid. Perhaps Jesus wants me to read a scripture that was special to me in the morning, but I think, "Oh, I'm not good enough. I can't do that." And then it's quiet, because Jesus wanted to use me, but I wouldn't let him. I decided to bury my talent. If Jesus were here physically, it would not be quiet for a very long time because there is so much that Jesus would want to do in each of our lives. If we are good priests, we will listen to Jesus. Jesus will use each of you. He will speak to all of us through all of His priests, if we are willing. Is everyone willing? Let Jesus use you.

He Wants to Do Wonderful Things

Remember when Jesus went to a particular town. He wanted to do miracles there, but He could not because they did not believe. God wants to do miracles through each of your lives, but He cannot unless you believe. You must believe in your heart that God wants to use you. You must talk to Jesus about these things. Tell Him, "I believe. Help my unbelief." Ask Jesus to make you soft and humble. Ask Jesus to help you have courage to use your gifts. Ask Jesus to get rid of your pride, because sometimes you will be wrong. But it's okay

to be wrong. We can help each other. It's better to be wrong than to bury your talent. If you are wrong, we can all grow together, but if you bury your talent, Jesus is angry. So ask Jesus to help you be a better priest.

This is not about having a strong will or being a good speaker. This is about asking Jesus to help you. He is alive. He wants to work wonderful things *in* our hearts and *through* our hearts to others. But for Him to do a miracle, we must believe. So talk to Jesus about these things. Don't just think them in your head and agree with them. Instead, talk to the living Jesus about these things, and He will help us all, to His Glory.

Ask Them to Live as Priests

As you are priests to your neighbors, you can help them to learn about Jesus too. If they are part of a religious group somewhere else, beg them to be priests where they are. Beg them to use their gifts with the people around them. Don't let them go to their assembly just to listen. Ask them to look at the lives around them and help them become more like Jesus. If everyone everywhere does these things, the world will change. This is very powerful—because *we are releasing Jesus to be Jesus*. If we won't be priests, Jesus stays in a bottle or in a book. If we *will* be priests and ask everyone else who wears Jesus' name to be a priest, Jesus will be released to be Jesus EVERYWHERE! Our villages will change. Our cities will change. Our countries and our continents will all change. Jesus can be Jesus if we will be priests. Amen?

As we have come to know Jesus in the last ten years, we have learned more and more about what a Church and what a priest really are, and also how to be a priest. When we learn these things, it brings us to a situation of having to understand what to do about the denominations. The people in the denominations are not enemies. Some people are there because that's all they've ever known. If they knew more about Jesus, they would gladly follow. So it is very

important that we love people, even in the denominations. We are very careful to not be proud. When God gives beggars like us a little bit of food, we should share the food and not judge others for not having food. This is Jesus' way to share all the food that he gives us—not to separate because of food, but to offer food.

These things are very, very important to have right in our hearts and minds. We will not accept lukewarmness or compromise. But we do believe Jesus will build His Church. So when we find people who really do love Jesus in the denominations, perhaps we shouldn't say, "Come out, come out," but instead, "Obey Jesus with the people that you know." We teach them the ways of Jesus as He has taught us. We ask them to teach everyone that they know the ways of Jesus. If they do this, in many denominations they will be thrown out. In many denominations people don't want to obey God. Some people do. Some people don't.

In the true Church that Jesus is building, EVERYONE wants to obey God and EVERYONE loves Jesus. Because we are all priests, we help each other. If someone doesn't love Jesus, they run away.

The prophecy in Jeremiah 31 of the New Testament Church is "*they will all know me, from the least to the greatest.*" In the true Church, they all know Jesus. In *most* denominations this is not true, and there is much lukewarmness. People love the world and live in sin and don't change. This is terrible and sad. But there are also some very good people in the denominations. Our job is not to make people come out. *Our job is to help them be priests where they are.* If they become priests where they are, many people will change, or they will be thrown out.

Where Jesus Is...Sin Cannot Stay

If a brother or sister becomes more like Jesus in the denomination, either the denomination will change, or the denomination will kill them or throw them out (just like they did with Jesus). We are not

afraid of the denominations. They're like a big fishing net that gathers in all kinds of fish. There are some very good fish in the net and others that are not so good. Our job as priests is to call all the good fish to be priests where they are. And things can change there.

Did Nineveh change? Jonah got spit out of the mouth of the fish and he went into that terrible city. Sin abounded there, but the whole city changed for God—even the king. We must believe God can do this in the denominations. We must believe He can do this in Mzuzu. So when we have friends or people that we know in denominations, we don't ask them to come out. We ask them to be like Jesus with all their heart, to speak the Word of God to everyone they see there, to lay down their life, to love the people, and to not compromise or accept compromise. The people in Nineveh could have killed Jonah; he was all alone. But they repented and changed. And that's our heart for all the denominations—that we will be priests and try to help everyone change. We will try to help the good people we know in the denominations and ask them to be priests where they are so that they may help the people around them to change.

We will beg God with many tears for the denominations to change. Jesus wept. He shed tears over Jerusalem. He said, "*I would have gathered you like a hen gathers her chicks.*" But Jerusalem didn't want it and rejected Him—they killed Him. If we are faithful priests, they may kill us. Or perhaps the whole city will change. But we must be faithful priests. We must ask everyone we know to be faithful priests where they are. If they try to help the people that they know, they will become strong, and they might get thrown out. But then they can be with other believers that have a common heart, having first tried with the people around them. That's what a priest does. We must love those in the denominations. That's what Jesus does. But we don't accept compromise. We must live for Truth and ask everyone we know in the denominations to live for Truth too. If everyone does that, then Jesus will build his Church.

This is the Good News of Jesus. We must live this way for other people in the community. No compromise, no lukewarmness...*but we must love them and try to help them.* There must not be separation because of names and denominations. The separation should only come as a result of a person not wanting to obey Jesus. We don't know that until we try. The denomination name does not mean the person in the denomination is a bad person and does not want to obey Jesus. We don't know that until we try. This is how we must live with the denominations. We must lay down our life for them and do everything we can to give them the Bread of Life and ask them to do the same thing with the people they know. Then we watch and see what Jesus does with that. Jesus said that if we do our part, He will build his Church and the walls of hell cannot withstand the attack. We are attacking satan's city, scaling the walls and knocking down the doors. We are loving people and bringing them from darkness to Light. We are not separating over names, but loving people—even to the death. We do the work of a priest, and the Lord will build His Church.

Jesus is the Only “Boss”

Mulowe, Africa 1996

What Makes a Leader?

There are two kinds of leaders. One is a leader from the heart, out of a current relationship with God. Another is a leader by position who may have a title and may be the official “head person,” the official boss. Jesus said that a leader by position *must not be so*. The leaders of the Church are those who are walking most closely with God TODAY. If a brother or sister is not walking closely with God today, he may not be considered very much of a leader. If a person last week perhaps was not so close to God but has repented of the sin in his life and now is better able to hear God, he is more of a leader this week than he was last week. “Being a leader” comes out of relationship with God and God’s people. It is not out of an office or a title. We have many leaders in the city where I live, but we have no “officers.” A leader this week may not be a leader next week. Jesus said all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to HIM. This is still true. So, as much as we can hear Jesus, who has all authority, that’s how much authority a man has—only as much as he can hear Jesus. That’s all. “ALL authority in Heaven and on earth” belongs to Jesus, He said. A person who does not know or obey Jesus can only be a “figurehead.” Such a person may need to be obeyed as far as conscience allows, if they have a “position,” but they are only a “leader” in as far as they know, love, and obey the Head, Jesus.

Birthed Out of Laziness

There is a basic streak of laziness in us that makes us want to hide in the background and let someone else fight our battles for us; that’s where clergy and laity came from. Very early in the history of the church, all the way back in the second century, 1800 years ago,

people began to want a king to rule over them. They wanted to have a “holy man” to be in charge of the church.

Perhaps this man was very close to God, but instead of wanting everyone to be a priest, God’s people wanted to have a “holy man” to fight their battles. They wanted to take one man and make him king of the church. And perhaps this man *was* a very good man. The problem is not that this man had a relationship with God; it’s good for *every* man to have a relationship with God. Perhaps this man had a strong and valid gift, but when he is set apart as being special and is called “the boss of the church,” then there’s a problem. That place is for Jesus alone. Jesus is the **only** boss of any True Church. A “pastor” must not be the boss of a church. There are no bosses but Jesus.

There is actually an example in the Bible of these two very different kinds of leaders. Samuel and Saul were both leaders of God’s people, Israel. Samuel was a man of God who had influence in the nation because he knew God. Samuel had many of the qualities of a king in Israel—but Samuel wasn’t a king! However, Saul was called a king. Israel wanted to have a king—they wanted to have one man be the boss. They wanted someone to replace Samuel, and they wanted a “king” like the nations around them. In some ways the leadership might look similar, but Samuel did not have a “position” of authority. Samuel functioned out of his relationship with God, and Saul functioned out of his position/office. Samuel had no office, secretary, nor salary. He was not in a “staff position” as king. Samuel was just a man of God who was respected as much as a king, but he had no office or position. He was not a king. He was not a “pastor.” He just loved God with all his heart. And because he could hear God, he had influence. *He had no position...he had influence.* If a man truly knows God, he will help God’s people. If he is called by God, he will be helping people. I will say it again: a true man of God has no position... he has influence. Job, chapter 29, is a description of a man respected by God and men, and feared and hated by satan. Such

a man needs no office or title or salary. If you are like Jesus, you will need no “power.”

As an example, if I am a carpenter, I build things with wood. I make a chair, a table, or a door out of wood if I’m a carpenter. If I’m a mason, then I make things with bricks. Something I made out of bricks is the proof that I’m a mason. Something I made out of wood is the proof that I am a carpenter. Well, in the Bible this word “pastor” (a poor translation, actually) refers to a gift of *shepherd*, functioning daily amongst God’s people alongside of other gifts—not a boss or “talking head” at a meeting. Where is the proof that I’m a pastor/shepherd? The proof is that I love God’s people! I help them day and night. I don’t need an office to do that. I don’t need a title. I don’t need to be boss. I just love people with the gift that I have, and I help them. The proof that I’m a carpenter is the chair I’ve made. The proof that I’m a pastor/shepherd is that I feed God’s people every day, and they are closer to Jesus because of me. If I see that one of God’s people is hungry, it breaks my heart. If I see that one of God’s people is in trouble or in danger, the shepherd’s heart inside of me runs after them to protect them. That’s the proof that I’m anointed of God to be a pastor. I don’t need a name tag. I don’t need a certificate on the wall and a diploma from a bible college. I need a heart to love and to do God’s work, and will therefore bear supernatural fruit in any area in which He may have gifted me.

So, you’re a carpenter? Then make chairs. You have the gift of shepherd? Then love people—feeding them, protecting them, and helping them. This is true for any gift! The proof of any gift is in the fruit that it bears.

The opposite of all this is also true, of course. It’s an amazing fact that pagans in science and medicine and industry actually demand that those with opinions and critiques and self-proclaimed “expertise” have something to show, some fruit in their own lives, to demonstrate that they have a right to pontificate or lecture or condemn others. In the religious world, amazingly, there is far less integrity than even the

pagans demonstrate. In religion, however, people are often far more blind and prejudiced. Criticism, expertise, judgments, and even relationship sabotage and slander flow easily from those with terrible fruit in their lives, families, and assemblies. Utterly amazing, but true, if you watch man's religion carefully and honestly. A person who does such things as lie or slander or act like an expert in engineering, or medicine, or business can actually be imprisoned. But, in religion they easily can gather an audience amongst the fearful or naive or those who can be coerced, blackmailed, or flattered into submission to the unfruitful machine and "experts." Weird, but true. It happens all the time, because that's how faulty empires keep their numbers. Fear and flattery, gossip, innuendo, slander, or emotional blackmail. No wonder Jesus didn't do well in the accepted religious world of His day. But, we can learn from Him and embrace the Scripture, and look for Fruit, not hear-say with agendas and hidden skeletons, budgets, and egos to protect.

Well, you get the idea. 😊

“You Rejected ME!”

This is true for any gift. But men have destroyed much of Christianity by wanting to have a king. Samuel was not a king. He was a man of God. Saul was a king, and he destroyed God's people. God said, “They've not rejected you, Samuel; they've rejected God.” When we want to have a man as boss, we are rejecting God. Samuel had great influence because *he knew God*, not because he had the position of king.

They almost look the same, don't they? Someone from another country could come to Israel and say, “You have a king! Samuel is your king!” Israel would say, “Well, I know he looks like a king, because he is deeply respected and appreciated, but he is not a king. We have no king but God. Samuel just knows God very well. So we respect him and love him.” Other nations thought Israel had a king, King Samuel. But he was not a king. He was a man of God. He had no position. He went here, he went there, he disappeared, and he

came back. Kings don't do that. Men of God do that. Israel wanted to replace Samuel when he got old. They wanted to have a king like the other nations (or like the other denominations)!

When we want to have someone be boss over us, someone to fight our battles, then we reject God. *1 Samuel 8:7: "They have not rejected you, Samuel, they have rejected God."* We must not try to have men be our boss. We must love the Samuels among us that know God, respecting them and responding to them, while accepting no position of boss except for Jesus Himself. We listen for Jesus' voice in Samuel. And, as it says in 1 Corinthians 14, when revelation comes to the next "Samuel," let the first "Samuel" sit down. This is very good.

The Consequences

I would like you to hear what happens when you have a king over you. When you want to have a "bossman," a clergyman. Here is the bad fruit that comes from it:

"He said, 'This is what the king who will reign over you will do: He will take your sons and make them serve with his chariots and horses, and they will run in front of his chariots. Some he will assign to be commanders of thousands and commanders of fifties, and others to plow his ground and reap his harvest, and still others to make weapons of war and equipment for his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive groves and give them to his attendants. He will take a tenth of your grain and of your vintage and give it to his officials and attendants. Your menservants and maidservants and the best of your cattle and donkeys he will take for his own use. He will take a tenth of your flocks, and you yourselves will become his slaves. When that day comes, you will cry out for relief from the king you have chosen, and the Lord will not answer you in that day.' But the people refused to listen to Samuel. 'No!' they said. 'We want a king over us. Then we will be like all the other nations, with a king to lead us and to go out before us and fight our battles'" (1 Samuel 8:11-20).

When we want to have a king over us, when we want to have an official boss in the church, he will steal our vision, steal our children and our money, and will make us his puppets. These things are not good. But they happen all over the religious world. In every country we have ever been to, wherever there is clergy/laity, wherever there are two classes of Christians—the bosses and the normal people—the hearts of the people are stolen. The gifts do not come forth. The gift of mercy and the gift of help are squashed. The gift of teaching and the gift of generosity...these things are squashed. When one man is in charge rather than Jesus being in charge, the hearts of the people are stolen.

God's people prospered under Samuel because he did not have a position, he had a gift. It seems like a small change from Samuel to Saul because they both *seem* like kings. ***But one is a gift and the other is a position.*** When it's a gift, God's people prosper. When they have a position over them, God's people are squashed, according to the Word of God. God can still use it for some good things. David was a good king. Some good things can happen when the system is wrong. But God said, "I have a better way. My way is Samuel, not Saul." He said, "I can do some good things if you have a king, but when the problems come you will cry out and I will not answer." This is what has happened in the denominations, because they build around a man's gift and they make a man king. He could have been a Samuel, but they made him a Saul. And he was willing to let them make him king.

Some good things can still happen, but on the day of their calamity, they will cry out to God and He will not hear them, and things will fall apart. There will be politics and power plays and there will be gossip and slander, and all these curses that God said would happen will happen. While God can do many good things in any situation, we want only the best. Isn't this true? God can bless *anything* out of His mercy, His kindness and His patience. But let's build His way so that we can get the full blessing! Let's have many Samuels among us instead of one Saul. Amen?

Another difficulty that could happen is if a man goes to get a religious title and education in a seminary, although his heart might be right, when he puts on himself a title, he has to pretend to be something that potentially he really is not. He could have a lot of difficulties in his household, with his marriage and his children, or with roommates and parents. However, because he has a religious title, people will look up to him, instead of just seeing him as a brother among brothers. He will have to act a certain way that's different than the way he acts at home, as opposed to just being a brother among brothers. There is something inside of us that makes it difficult for us to question the life of the "boss." So the leaders in a church should not *want* titles that would hinder the input and help of others in their lives.

David Livingstone and Bread from Heaven

Chilembe, Africa 1996

Bread of Life

A brother spoke of David Livingstone bringing bread to Africa. David brought the nation of Africa a teaching about Jesus the Son of God. He brought a message about how Jesus loves His people, wants to forgive all of our sins and bring us a new life. I think we know this is very good news for us. David brought a bowl of bread with a lid on it, and we hear much teaching about how good this bread is. We used to come together every Sunday to talk about how good the bread is and the teaching is true. The bread is very, very good.

Part of the message that God has commissioned us to bring is not simply a teaching about how good the bread is, but what the Bible calls “the keys to the Kingdom”. Jesus’ teaching about *how* to use those keys unlocks the door, and His teaching about how to take the lid off of the bowl allows us to *eat* the bread. Jesus did not just come to forgive sins, as wonderful as that is, nor just to make us think about His teachings. Jesus came so that we could experience the same life with the Father that He experienced—not just live here, die, and then go to heaven. As the Bible says, He came here so that we could live in “the power of an indestructible life” to experience the same fellowship and life and love with the Father and His brothers that Jesus did. Jesus wants us to experience more than just teachings about the bread in the bowl; He wants us to eat the same bread that He ate with His Father.

One Loaf

Much of what religion and christianity have done for many years is to teach us great teachings about the bread. It is now time to eat the bread. It is now time to move on from learning teachings *about* the church to *being* the church (Ephesians 3:10, Matthew 16:18). Jesus did not come to make us smarter. He came to give us Life to the full—to experience His Life daily in one another, not to say borrowed words and sing and pray stained-glass religious words. He came to give us LIFE! “Little children, love one another.” This was the teaching of the Godhead and Jesus and John and Paul and Peter. We teach about the Family of God, not a religious event to attend. Do any of us attend our family at home? Or do we live in love with our family every day? You cannot attend a family. You can only *be* a family.

The Bible is very clear on this point. You cannot *attend a true* church. You can only *be* a true church. A family that you attend is an orphanage, not a true family. An orphanage has a boss over it, and they all come together to eat meals. Perhaps they go out and play together and receive teaching from the bosses. So it does many things that a family does, but it’s still an orphanage and not a family. God is calling us to be a Family now. If you are not already a Family, there will be many changes that need to be made for Jesus’ sake. In order to experience Jesus’ Life and eat the Bread, we must be a Family. And if we are going to be a family for Jesus, we must help each other very much. We must no longer be selfish. We must put away all of our pride and decide that we are open for others to speak to us about Jesus changing our lives.

We must be honest with one another about how we feel. We cannot hide behind a face or a mask, but instead must open our hearts and speak what we truly feel. It’s only then that Jesus can help us. Jesus was very angry about hypocrisy. The reason He was angry wasn’t because He hated the people. Jesus just knew that as long as we pretended to be one way when in our hearts we were a different way he couldn’t heal us on the inside, as he so desperately wanted to.

Jesus calls satan the Father of Lies. Jesus was angry about hypocrisy for the same reason. When we put walls of lies and hypocrisy between each other, then Jesus can't heal us on the inside the way He wants to. So if I am very sad and pretend to be happy, in one way I have not told you the truth. Jesus wants us to be honest with each other so that His Spirit can heal our hearts.

If we are not honest with each other then we are hypocrites and Jesus is not happy with us. This is part of being a family—being honest with each other about how we are feeling and how we are doing. But you must volunteer that. You must offer that to each other from the heart. If I am sad on the inside, I don't want to be a complainer or a whiner. I want to believe God that He can help me. But I shouldn't pretend everything is okay if it really is not. I should humbly find good brothers and sisters to talk with about these things, because as two or three are together, Jesus comes to join us. So if I am willing to open up a little bit of my heart, it will allow the Holy Spirit to come heal it and will make Jesus very happy. If I build walls around myself, and try to be strong all by myself, then many times the healing power of Jesus will not come.

Jesus wants us to be a family where we open our hearts to each other. He meets us at that place when we do that in humility. He wants us to not be complainers or whiners but, in humility, to be asking others for prayer, help, and wisdom. This is the way a Family must be. But this can't happen on Sunday morning only. The true Church is a Family daily, like any family is a family every day. Demand and expect that of yourself... "For Jesus who loves me, I will open my heart to others." This is a decision that you must make. You can decide to stay behind your mask, not open your heart and speak to your brothers and sisters about how you feel. You can decide to hide your tears and pain from others. But if you do this, you will not find the healing power of Jesus. Jesus will stay far away rather than changing our hearts and lives the way He wants to. He will only pour out His life to us if we are Family. He wants us to work these things out together.

And when we do open our hearts, Jesus in all of His power and love and glory comes to meet us. But if we have too much pride and fear and are afraid of what others might think or say about us, then Jesus won't meet us and give us the life and power He wants to.

Eating the Bread of Loving Each Other

So, we come to you in Jesus' name with the testimony of the life and power of God, asking you to eat the bread, not just study about it, and asking you to be a church and a true Family, not just to attend. Jesus wants a place where He can live. He does not live in houses built with men's hands. He lives in a Family, and only in a Family. He wants a place to live where you are, not just people that study about the bread and attend "church", but a place where there is Family and you are the church every single day.

The Holy Spirit through Paul said that every day should be counted alike. Other religions have special "holy" days, but Jesus' highest way is that every day be alike. Jesus is our Sabbath rest. The more we get into Jesus every day, the more rest we have. God is calling you to be a Family. Will you decide to be a Family? If there is a wall between you and another brother or sister, will you break it down? Will you grab hold of their ankle and beg them to soften their heart? Will you walk to the hill and pray with tears for them to soften their heart? Will you open your heart to them? Will you give your life away for each other every day, wrestling to present them whole and complete in Christ, and crying out to God for miracles of love? Will you do this for your Savior Jesus? He doesn't want you to just know about His Life. He wants you to *experience* His Life.

This is the Good News of the Kingdom. You are invited into His life if you will turn away from your pride, your selfishness, and your laziness. You are invited to *experience* Jesus, not just know *about* him. Every day love each other from the heart and be involved with each other's lives, helping each other and all of the little children to become more like Jesus *every day*.

This is the call of God. This is the invitation of Jesus of Nazareth for you. Eat the bread of love together every day, and Jesus will fill your lives and make you whole like you've never been before. He will wash away and cleanse your fears and your hardness. The River of Jesus will flood and water your heart making it fertile ground. Your relationship and your love with the Father will grow and grow. You can see the very face of God, as you truly love each other. This is very good news. Today if you hear His voice, harden not your hearts. Be soft before God. Decide that every single day you will open your hearts to those around you and you will no longer be separate from one another, because you do these things for your Savior Jesus.

The Church as a Family

In most families, there are true family members born of mother and father that we could call "problem children." Some children are more difficult than others, but if they are family, they are family, and we will help solve these problems. We don't take true children of the family and take them off to the hill and leave them. We just ask God for wisdom on how to bring them home into the family.

To help you have a bigger picture of what it should be like when the church is together, imagine in your mind a family at home, with perhaps five boys and three girls, and a mother and father. Does the father do all of the speaking in the house? If one of the boys, a thirteen-year-old, has a thought, can he not express it? Does not the mother contribute her ideas to the family? Does not even the smallest child sometimes give direction for the family? Is there always freedom in a family for one of its members to speak? Is there always room for the smallest child to cry and to speak of a need? It must also be so when the whole church is together; even the smallest one can open his heart and cry about a need, and maybe the mother can help solve that problem. I mean a spiritual mother, when the church is all together. Maybe one of the spiritual fathers can help that child's problem. But this is how the church should be when it

gathers together. Every member of the family can open their hearts, and other members of the family can help meet the needs. And this is not just in the gatherings. When three sisters wash clothing together, if they can sing in a gathering together, why can't they also sing when they are washing the clothes together?

If you can talk to the Father together in a gathering, can't all of His children talk to Jesus together as they walk down the road together? It's not about Sunday morning and Wednesday afternoon. There is nothing that happens in the meetings that shouldn't also happen as we walk along the way together. We don't wait for a meeting to tell brothers and sisters what Jesus has shown us today. We don't wait for a meeting to open up our hearts and ask for help with something. We are the same every day. In a family, if a little boy has a problem, does he have a special day when he is allowed to talk about it, or can he talk about it any time because there is love in family? This is True Church, where every day we can help each other. There is no difference between meetings and no meetings really, because we bring the teachings of Jesus to each other every day. We worship from the heart with each other every day, morning and night. As we go to gather food, we pray and worship together. This is the Family of Jesus.

Also, when we truly become one big Family, if you were to go home and beat your wife, or even just be harsh with her, she should be able to say to you, "That's not the way Jesus is." And you should try working it out together. Jesus said if that man will not listen to her, the woman should go and get two or three other members of God's family, and they should together talk to this man who is being too harsh. This is what Jesus taught us in Matthew 18. Our homes are no longer a hiding place from Truth. We cannot be rulers of our own house and ignore the teachings of Jesus. Now we are all a Family, and all of our houses belong to each other. So now a sister can bring in others to talk to her husband. We don't ignore the teachings of Jesus in our homes anymore. The teachings of Jesus are not just for

a “church building”. Now they are for when we go to the market or when we go to our homes or when we go to be schooled. Now the teachings of Jesus are for every circumstance and every situation. We are one family every day, all day, all night.

Building Jesus’ Way

Jesus said that when we put His word into practice, when the storms come (and they will), then the house will stand. It will stand because it is built on the rock of putting His word into practice, not just on thinking or singing about His word. If we only sing about it, pray about it, and talk about it and don’t change the way we live to *obey* His word with one another, then when the storms come, no matter how pretty the house may look, it will be flattened and destroyed. This is what Jesus promised in Matthew 7. So be sure to *build His way*, and DO something about His Truths. Obey them, and then the storms will not harm you.

In the same way a little bird or little rabbit hides underneath a rock when the storms come, you can hide in the shelter of Jesus’ wing if you will build the way He calls you to. The storms will shake the trees and move heavy things. They will crash and the lightning will strike. But if you will build Jesus’ way and turn your face towards Him when the storms come, you will be held safe in the shelter of His wings. The violent storms will pass and the sun will shine. The birds will begin to sing again, and life will be fresh and new. Please build Jesus’ way. This is the word of the Lord to you today.

How to Eat of the True Bread

There is also another point. In John 6 Jesus intentionally said things that are very hard. He said, “Eat my body and drink my blood,” and He didn’t try explaining this and making it easier for them. The Bible says that a multitude of people that had been following Him then left Him. They quit on Jesus and left Him because they couldn’t

understand with their minds. Jesus did not run after them and explain that He was talking about the Lord's Supper. He intentionally made it hard for them. He turned to His disciples and asked, "Do you want to leave me also?" and Peter said, "Jesus, you have the words of life. We don't want to go anywhere. We don't want to leave."

Jesus only wants people to follow Him that can hear with their hearts and their Spirit. Jesus will intentionally put hard things in front of us—things and situations we don't "understand"—in order to separate the sheep from the goats. The people who must understand with their minds but don't listen with their spirits will not be able to follow the true Jesus. The true Jesus sometimes makes very strange situations to test our hearts. He says to us or does things among us that are very difficult such as, "Eat My body, and drink My blood." This sounds like a terrible thing, like something that the Bible could never say is okay. Yet, by this Jesus was testing those who were listening with their heart versus those who were listening with their ears. Jesus was testing those who love the Spirit of Jesus and those who just love the externals. There are many things like this throughout the Bible where God separates people who listen with their ears from those who listen with their spirits. This is the way of God, and it always has been. The situation in John 6, in which many left Jesus, has been repeated in every generation before and after Jesus.

We are not God—He is God. We submit to the things that are God whether we understand them with our minds or not. This is also the teaching of the book of Job. Even today Jesus often speaks in parables that are hard to understand, to distinguish those people who love Him in their spirits, rather than those who are just using Him to make themselves feel better. Even today He speaks in parables of life that are sometimes hard to understand, to see which ones will leave him and which ones will say, "To whom shall we go? In You are light and life." It is really the same today as it was then.

Jesus the Bread in Us

“If you love Me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see Me anymore, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you” (John 14:15-20).

It is a very, very wonderful truth that Jesus didn't go far away somewhere while we stay here and sing songs to Him and try to obey all the teachings that He gave us, and then someday in the far distant future He will come back for us. The wonderful teaching of Jesus is that He will be with us until the very end and has not left us as orphans. He told the disciples that when He came back the world would not see Him but we would. And we do... not with the seeing of the eyes but with the seeing of the Spirit. He said, “Obey Me and love Me. Love each other and be one as I and the Father are one.... The world will not see Me but you will see Me because I will come and make My home in you. I have been *with* you, but I shall be *in* you.”

This is not just a tricky teaching. This is the real thing. He is just as real in a real Church as if He were physically here. In fact, Jesus said it would be even better if He left because He would come back to be *in* us, and that would be even better than if He were to just come back and stand here. This is not just a figure of speech or an allegory or some mystical teaching. This is the real thing. The same Jesus who walked on water and raised dead people to life again would come and live *inside* of us in Power and Love and Glory. He would not come where the human eye of the world could see Him. But if we will love Him and give our lives for whatever He wants for our life, and love each other from the heart, then this same Jesus who walked on water, who could walk through a locked door, and who gave sight

to the blind will live in our midst, inside of us, and allow us to have a love affair with Him, with the Father and with one another.

Some people did not taste death before Jesus came again in power because the day of Pentecost was only 50 days after Passover. He came back for us in only 50 days. He came not to be with us, but to be in us. This is a mystery that was withheld for ages and generations. In Colossians 1, the mystery of all the generations is this: Not Christ *with* you, not Christ simply coming back *for* you (though He will), but Christ *IN* you, the Hope of Glory. This is for all who will love Him and give away their lives for His purposes. Hallelujah! He did not leave us as orphans! And many people did not taste death until He came back in His glory to live inside of us. This is what Jesus meant in John 14.

God of Order and Ephesians 4

Malemia, Africa 1996

A Conquering King and Gifts for His People

Our wonderful God has not failed to give us glimpses of His heart for His Church. If you look and pay close attention to the Scriptures, you can see mighty and glorious things about our King Jesus, and His Kingdom.

Jesus was a mighty conqueror. In Ephesians 4:8 it says, He *“led a crowd of captives and He gave gifts to men”* (NLT). Envision the way a conquering king would come back from a foreign land having acquired gold, silver, and valuables from the people whom he conquered. ***Jesus has conquered his enemies and comes back in a parade of victory, giving out gifts to His people.*** These gifts that are listed in Ephesians 4:11—apostles, prophets, evangelists, shepherds and teachers—are all a part of who Jesus is. When Jesus ascended on high in the clouds and sent His Holy Spirit, He not only made His Spirit to live inside of us for those who believe, but He also took a part of Himself and gave it to different people who believe in Him. Jesus was a faithful High Priest in *all* of God’s House. He was an apostle, a prophet, a Good Shepherd, and a Master Teacher. *He was the Good News manifested in the flesh.*

The Body Needs All of His Gifts

The Bible says that when Jesus went to Heaven and sent His Spirit, He took parts of Himself and spread them out over the Body of Christ, the Church. It is very obvious to us that the different parts of our physical bodies do different things. You can see with your eyes,

and you can hear with your ears. But you cannot hear with your nose, nor see with your mouth. ☺ All parts of the body are not the same, however, they all depend on each other very much.

Before continuing with Ephesians 4:11 you need to understand how much you need *all* of the Body of Christ. We *all* need *ALL* of the Body of Christ. 1 Corinthians 12 says that we cannot say to others, “We don’t need you.” Instead we must say to one another, “I need you, I need you.” This is an attitude of heart that pleases Jesus very much.

Jesus had many gifts in Himself, and some of these are listed in Ephesians 4. In the *Church*, the Body of Christ needs *all* of these gifts. However, every *local* assembly will not have all the gifts. Perhaps there will need to be very good relationships between villages and cities. These relationships are good and necessary.

The Gift of Building

The apostolic gift is a gift that is one of building. In the first century there were very few apostles, and not very many prophets. Perhaps there were more teachers and more shepherds, but not many evangelists. Not all of these gifts were in *every* local church, so the local assemblies needed to have other brothers and sisters involved with them from other cities. If the church or the body of Christ in your city is to grow strong, it will be because the Believers will see and tell one another that they need each other’s gifts.

A car has many parts—glass, steel, and rubber. It has an engine, a steering wheel, lights, a horn and wheels. If we were to pile all of the parts of a car into a room, that *STILL* wouldn’t give us the ability to *DRIVE* that car. Even if all the parts were very good parts, you still couldn’t get in the car and drive away—*unless the parts were put together properly*. In some ways, it would just be a pile of hardware and not have tremendous value. This shows the importance of the gift of apostle.

This part of Jesus, this gift of building, is *the gift that sees how to put all the parts together to make the “car” work*. There are not many apostles in the world, just as there were not in the first century. The Bible lists perhaps 26 apostles in all of the first century: the primary twelve Apostles and fourteen other apostles. While others may be sincere and truly love God’s work, they may not have the gift to be able to see how to put together the car. Others, without this gift of apostle, may not be able to see how to take all the parts in the Church and put them together to be a strong Church—one that is of one heart, one mind, one purpose.

The Gift of Prophet

The second gift listed in Ephesians 4 is the gift of prophet. *A prophet is able to see and smell things that are very good or very bad*. He does not depend on just what he can hear or see with his natural ears or eyes. He is able to feel and to smell whether something is of Jesus or not. In this way, a prophet helps to provide *pure* building materials for the apostle. All of the four or five gifts that are listed here have a very special place in the Body of Christ. And if you do not have these gifts in your assembly, you should work very hard to build relationships with these gifts from other cities. When you read the book of Acts, you see this happen very often. The different gifts that are listed in Ephesians 4 travel from city to city and help to encourage and build the local saints together.

In order to accomplish this, the gifts of apostle and prophet are extremely important in eight or nine very important points listed. Without these gifts, God’s people would be in terrible poverty. They could be very sincere and love God very much, and yet always be frustrated and in difficult positions. But with the help of these gifts, complicated situations could be solved.

Mending the Body of Christ

The gifts in Ephesians 4:12 are necessary *to prepare God's people for works of service*. The word “prepare” means “to mend together or knit together.” In the Greek, this is the word that God chose to define what these five gifts were for—to help “put the bone back in the right place.” If an arm is broken, a doctor sets the bone in the proper place. Sometimes it hurts to put a broken bone back in place, but it is necessary or the body would be deformed and useless. These gifts mentioned in Ephesians 4:12 help to mend the Body of Christ together and to set each part in its right place.

Being Connected and Understanding the Teachings of Jesus

In Ephesians 4:13 we see that these gifts do even more for the local assemblies—they will help us all reach a *unity of the faith!* We are commanded earlier in the book of Ephesians to hold onto the *unity of the spirit*. God expects us to have unity of spirit, and God commands that we truly love one another.

However, there is a difference between unity of the spirit and unity of the faith. Without the gifts (mentioned in Ephesians 4:14) being in relationship with our local assemblies, we will be very confused about what to believe about things. It is by these gifts that we are equipped into *unity of the faith*.

Unity of the spirit is being connected to everyone that is bought by the blood of Jesus. We accept and love everyone who has the blood of Jesus covering them. And we desire to receive them the same way we would receive Jesus. *Unity of the faith is understanding together the teachings of Jesus*—teachings about baptism, laying on of hands, worship, assembling together, and the gift of the Spirit. These gifts will help make clear how to love each other, and about what leadership and about what a Christian truly is. If our assemblies do not have relationships with these five gifts, we will not have unity of the faith, and we will be very confused.

Deep Intimacy

Ephesians 4:13 also says that the gifts help us to have a *full* knowledge of the Son of God. The Father's intent is that we would understand everything about Jesus. The word for "full knowledge" in this scripture is "epignosis." It is a word that means that we would have a deep intimacy with Jesus. God chose this word to say that we must have a deep intimate relationship with His Son. This is not a word about head-knowledge, but it is about a knowledge of the heart. It is the same word that has to do with Mary and Joseph not "*knowing*" each other intimately until after Jesus was born. It is the same word used when Adam "*knew*" Eve and they had a child.

So, these five gifts are absolutely necessary for the Church. They help God's people to have a full intimacy with Jesus and turn their faces toward Him and find rest and strength in Him when things are very hard. They will learn to call on the name of the Lord and not be ashamed or disappointed.

The words of one song say, "What a friend we have in Jesus, all our sins and griefs to bear. What a privilege to carry everything to Him in prayer." These five gifts are necessary to help God's people have a friendship with Jesus—a very close intimacy with Him—so that when the violent storms come, they don't forget to hide in Jesus. They turn their faces toward Him, see His warm smile, and are able to make it through the storm. These five gifts are necessary to have full knowledge, full intimacy, of Jesus.

Steady in the Storm

Ephesians 4:13 adds that these gifts are necessary to attain *the whole measure of the fullness of Christ*. This means that our personality would become just like Jesus', so that we wouldn't be blown here and there by every wind of bad teaching or every wind of bad circumstance. We will be able to stand very strong in God's love. And when the storms blow across and shake everything that can

be shaken, the life of Jesus inside of us will still be able to grow and become stronger. Usually God lets the storm really shake us and take us to the very brink of disaster. The Father did this with His own Son, Jesus. And Paul, another apostle, “despaired even of life,” the scripture says. These are the opportunities that the Father gives us to become more like Him. And when the storms come, and the waves toss, and the winds blow, we won’t be tossed to and fro. Rather, we will become stronger and stronger as we become closer to Jesus and closer to one another.

Speaking the Truth in Love

Ephesians 4:15 says that we will learn to speak the truth in love. These gifts help us to be able to communicate with each other in a loving and truthful way. This is a very important thing in any relationship of love. Speaking the truth in love is finding a way to please the Father and one another by communicating properly. We must speak truth, but it must be covered with love, patience, and kindness. Our gentleness must be *evident*, our love and our peace *evident*. The gifts help us to be able to communicate in love in ways that we might not be able to without them.

Learning to Trust Our Loving Master

The scripture also says in Ephesians 4:15 that these gifts help us to grow up into the head, which is Christ. ***Jesus is the head of everything.*** He is the Boss and the Master of the land and the sea. He is the Master of the clouds that rain and of the winds that blow. He is the Master of all of the little creeping animals and the larger animals. He is the Master of the birds of the air. He is the Master of every stone along the road. Our Jesus is the Master of every star in the sky and every sun and moon. He also wants to be *our Master*, but He invites us to enter into His school, the school of Christ, where we learn to let Him be our Master too. We learn to trust Him. We learn that He is very wise, that He knows everything, and that He is very strong to protect

us. When we don't let Him be our Master it is only because we don't trust Him enough, or don't trust that His ways are so perfect, and that His love is so great, that it never fails.

And so these gifts help us to grow up into the headship of Jesus, to see how wonderful He is—how trustworthy, strong, wise and loving He is. In this way, we can trust Him to have us do *whatever He wishes*.

David, a lover of God, wrote many love songs to the Father. The Father wrote a love song to David too, and called him a man after God's own heart. One of the reasons why David was a man after God's own heart was because he knew God was so good and wonderful that He would never let him down or lead him down a wrong path. God would not disappoint him or crush him. God would not give him a stone when he asked for bread. God would provide all things for him, if he would simply look to Him and yield to *His way* in *all things*. David would do anything that the Father asked, not because he was an obedient robot, but because he trusted the Father's love and wisdom so much. This is what we all learn together with these gifts: ***How reliable and trustworthy our Father is, and how Jesus gives good gifts, not bad ones, to His children.*** So we can trust Him to be our Head, because He is so very, very good to us.

“I Have Need of You”

Ephesians 4:16 says that the whole body is “joined and held together by every supporting ligament.” Just as the arms and the legs are all fit together in the body, these gifts help the Body of Christ come together to be able to do God's work. You can imagine that a human body would not have much use if the arms and legs were scattered in different places. They could be wonderful parts and very strong by themselves, but if they are not connected to each other in love, and connected to the head for the head's direction, then the body would be of very little value.

I want to encourage you, saints, to understand the value of these gifts and see all the wonderful things that come from them. Be committed

to welcoming brothers and sisters from other places to help you have this wonderful list of things that comes from having relationship with these gifts. Then we can become useful to Jesus. We can become loving and wise just as Jesus is. We can become much more able to reach our community, much more able to have loving families, much more able to raise loving, obedient children, and much more able to use our own gifts in love, ***because we have welcomed these five gifts into our community.*** Probably no local assembly has all of these gifts (at least I've never seen one yet). So God forces us to need each other from village to village, city to city. He wants us to know that we need each other, so that we won't remain babies or infants. He wants us to GROW into the FULLNESS of HIS SON!

For more on this topic, please refer to the Foundation Series book titled "The Plumb Line."

A Foundation of Jesus

Chisitu, Africa 1996

People...Not Buildings

The Bible teaches that God does not dwell in houses built by men's hands. Ephesians 2 and many other Bible passages say that *we* are the dwelling place or the habitation of God by the Spirit—the Church.

We know what a church building looks like, so if *God's* house is *people* and not buildings, what does *it* look like?

When you walk or drive down the road, you can usually identify a religious building because it looks like a religious building. But since a true Church is made out of people, *and is not a building*, then what does it *really* look like? How would you recognize the difference between a true Church and a false one? The following is a description of the Church when it is made out of *people* and not stones.

When Jesus is looking to and fro to find a *real* Church, how will He recognize it? First of all, a true Church made of living stones that Jesus looks at and loves must be made of good materials. If any building is built out of faulty materials, you know that it will fall. If the wood that holds up the roof is rotten, it will fall down. Bricks that are soft, improperly made, or made from the wrong materials cannot support weight and will fall down. A true Church that is made by God, not by man's hands, is made out of living stones—true Christians—as opposed to dead stones, bricks or straw. If the House that God is making out of men and women is going to be able to stand, it must not have bad stones in it (1 Corinthians 3-5).

From the Least to the Greatest, They Will All Know Him

The prophecy about the New Testament said that the Church God builds (Jer. 31, Heb. 8, Heb. 10) is the true Church, and from the least to the greatest, all its members will know the Living God.

In the “church” of the Old Testament, you became a member because of who your parents were (Jews). If you basically believed the right thing and your parents were part of this church, and you “attended church” regularly and tithed, then you were a member of the “church.” *In the New Testament Church of Jesus, this is not true—you must give your heart to God.* The prophecy about the New Testament said that the Church God builds (Jer. 31, Heb. 8, Heb. 10) is the true Church, and *from the least to the greatest ALL its members will know the Living God.* If a person does not truly know God, they *cannot* be a member of Jesus’ Church. That would be like building a house with soft brick or rotten wood. The House that Jesus makes is the best house in the world, and Jesus will only use true and good materials to build His House.

No Compromise

Acts 3 says that Jesus was a prophet and He would build His church, and anyone that would not obey Him would be completely cut off from among the people. This is the same thing that Jesus said in Matthew 18. He said that if a person continues to be hateful, stubborn or selfish and continues to have habits such as drinking, yelling at their wives or children, cheating in their daily business, lying or being lazy, then we must go to them and try to help them. However, if they don’t care about obeying the teachings of Jesus, then we must bring two or three others and talk to that person again. If they *still* don’t care what Jesus says, and they don’t want to change, then we must talk to the *whole* church and (we must) ask the person to leave.

1 Corinthians 5 says we must remove leaven from the batch. Jesus commands us to not eat with nor associate with a person who will not change their life according to the teaching of Jesus. *There can be no fellowship with them*, and they *must* be expelled from our midst, the Bible says. Jesus is a *great* builder. He will not build with soft stones or rotten wood. He wants to build a Glorious House to live in—one that's fitting for the King that He is.

Choosing Building Materials

So the building materials in God's house must be of the best quality. This does NOT mean that every person is perfect. It does mean that *every person wants to love and obey Jesus* and doesn't despise help from others who want to help them love and obey Jesus; they *want* that help. Good building material for God's House is when a person "loves the light," according to Jesus Himself. Bad building material, like rotten wood, is someone who does not want that help. That person says, "Don't judge me. Mind your own business." They say defensively, "Get the log out of your own eye." That is bad building material, which He said is unacceptable in His House. Jesus will *not* build His house that way. That is rotten wood and will be completely cut off from among the people (Acts 3:23, Matthew 18, 1 Corinthians 5). In a True church, a person that acts that way is not welcome. It doesn't matter how much money they have or how well they know their Bible. They might even be a leader, but if they don't respond softly to the teachings of Jesus, then they cannot be a part of Jesus' true Church that is made in the Spirit. If they resist love and pleading, wisdom, help and patience, then to allow them to continue amongst God's People would be for us to defy Jesus also by ignoring His commands.

Jesus will *only* build with good building materials. If we have married Him in Covenant and Oath, turned from all other loves, been Born twice, have soft hearts, love His teachings, truly want to change the things in our lives that need to change, and turn our face to Him in

moments of adversity or difficulty, asking Him and our brothers and sisters to help us, then we are beautiful living stones for the House that Jesus dwells in. This is all about the *kind* of materials that God builds His House with.

A House Built With Wisdom

Now that we have defined what are good building materials for God's House...consider this: Suppose we take all the good stones, all the good wood, and all the good, suitable building materials that Jesus chooses for His House and heap all those good materials in a pile. Guess what? We still don't have a house. God's House requires even more than just good building materials (true Christians). Just because all the materials for a house are heaped in a pile, does not mean you have a house to sleep in. That pile won't protect you from the storm, no matter how good the materials may be.

There is a way we must build with these good building materials—a way that Jesus wants to build using His living stones. Just as a religious building has a certain look to it, so does a true Church of Jesus; it's made not of stones, but of people, Living Stones. And it *must* be built a certain way together in order to be a good House for Jesus to live in.

There is a certain way to build a house so that it is easy to live in and so that it can stand the storms. Jesus is a very wise builder and builds His House that way. We will talk about what Jesus' House looks like, because if we will not build His way, the house will fall when the storms come. This is also how we must build, with the very best of materials. Bad materials are not welcome in the House, unless they change to become good materials, according to Jesus.

The rich young ruler was considered to be a pretty good man. But he was not welcome at that time to be part of Jesus' House because he held greed in his heart. He depended on his money rather than on God. It made him too sorrowful to give away his money. So Jesus

said, “You cannot be a part of the Church that way. Until you change your heart, you are not welcome to be a Living stone in My House.” That is still how Jesus builds His House. He looks at us and loves us as He did that man, but He also calls us to change. And if we will not change, in spite of all of His love and all of His promises, He will not be able to use us as a Living stone. He will set us aside until we soften our heart.

The Design of the House

But if we have good materials to build the House, its design still must be good. Jesus has chosen for His House a design that looks the same in every country, no matter what the language or the culture. The design is that all of God’s people lay down their lives to love and serve each other *every single day, as Family, together*. The true church of Jesus, designed His way to be strong, must be a Family every day. They eat together from house to house, they serve each other and help each other in many ways every day. They speak God’s word to each other daily to help them become more like Jesus. When they see sin, they go for a walk and talk about it together. They don’t wait for “Sunday” to hear someone preach a sermon about it. God’s Intent (Eph. 3:10, 1 Peter 2) is that we are all daily priests and ambassadors of God to one another and the world “as we rise up, sit down, and walk along the way.”

We are all called to be priests for Jesus. We are all called to bear the word of God and help one another. This means that if you see your neighbor being selfish or angry, or if you see drinking, or pride that breaks Jesus’ heart, then each of us will take responsibility to help each other change. This is for every day. It has nothing to do with Sundays. The true Church of Jesus is made of Living Stones, and the design of the House is everyday Family. It’s not something that we “attend,” but it’s something that we are every day. If we will build this way—changing our selfish or lazy lives, and truly learning how to love each other like family every single day, taking responsibility to

serve and help each other with the word of God—then it will be a House that Jesus can live in and can love. It will be a House of good design that will be easy for Jesus and for all of us to live in and make our home in.

It will be a very, very strong House of good Design. When the storms come and batter on the House, it will stand *because it has only good materials, and because the design is good*. There will be very little damage to this wonderful House, and we will all be safe. Just as Father was very specific about what materials and design Noah should use to build the Ark, so also Jesus has a plan for materials and design of His House. And His Plan is not , in the New Agreement, a holy man giving a speech to an “attendance based” organization of disconnected people. It is NOW “a hundred mothers, brothers, sisters”—deep daily intertwined intimate “from the least to the greatest” relationships of Light-lovers.

This is the good news of the Kingdom of Jesus. He said, “My Father has much zeal for the house being built.” The Father strongly desires that we build His house His way. In many countries and cities very seldom is the house built the way Jesus wants it built. In almost every “church” in almost every country, there are people that come together with rituals and traditions and then go their separate ways living their lives however they please. Maybe they sin freely, or maybe they try not to. But it’s not a house because they are not a family, every day, together.

Sticking Together as One

It is only when all the stones are stuck together, by the glue of practical love and vulnerability, and built by God’s design, that it becomes a place that He can call home. Even if you are a pretty good living stone and try to live a holy life, you are still just one stone. If I put that stone on the ground, it still would not be a home for Jesus. He doesn’t want just individual good stones to sit out in a field. We must make ourselves, even force ourselves, to stick together to other stones.

Every day we must demand of ourselves that we be stuck together with the other stones, daily in God's design for a House... as we "rise up, as we sit down, as we walk along the road" together. Washing the clothes together, and going to market together. As we work in the fields, make the bricks, cut firewood, or fix meals, let us do it together so that we will be one Family instead of many individuals or many families. It is in these "trivial" issues of daily life that we bond our Faith, Hope, and Love together. These daily tasks, lived out together as a Family, are the "windows of the soul" that allow us to truly wash each other in the water of the Word, rather than the make-believe religion of "attending" religious ceremonies and sing-alongs and holy man speeches. Jesus is not building anything but family.

A Hundred Fathers, Mothers, Brothers, Sisters

Jesus said if you truly obey My will, you will have a hundred fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters—not a hundred neighbors, but a hundred very close family members. This is the will of God. These are the teachings of Jesus Christ—that He builds His house with good materials. Bad materials are not welcome if they won't change when they hear Jesus' words. Jesus' House is built by *His* design, not ours. And His design is a "hundred fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters." His design is that we would "confess our sins one to another" and be healed. His design is that we would "bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ." His design is that we would be "one together, as He and the Father are one"—so united that when you've seen John, you've seen David. When you've seen the Son, you've seen the Father. Jesus said we would be one just as they are one, so we must also be one that way. God's desire is not for separate stones that come together on Sunday to "attend" a speech or ceremony, but His desire is a family that is built together every day, intertwined in all areas of daily life, as Family.

This is a design of God. The storms will come and this house will stand. Jesus will come and inhabit it, and it will bring Him pleasure.

This is God's will for His people in every country, and we invite you to take this very seriously.

Bringing Great Pleasure to Jesus

If there are any changes that need to be made, Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will keep My commandments." So please make the changes that Jesus is calling you to make. Don't be afraid. Some people do not love the Truth and will be angry about these things because they have things to hide in their own life; the true ways of God are always opposed by satan, the enemy.

So have courage, endurance and patience in these things. Show your love to Jesus by doing everything you can to obey these teachings of Jesus. Find brothers and sisters that you can be with, pray with, and talk with every single day. Break down the barriers between your brothers and sisters—barriers of fear and of pride, barriers of laziness or of embarrassment, barriers of shyness, and barriers of judgment. Take all of those barriers and wash them away for Jesus' sake. Learn how to love each other every day. This will not only bring great pleasure to Jesus, because it is the right design for His church, but it will radically change *your* life also. Put the Lord to the test; these things are true.

To you genuine Christians, those of you who have the Holy Spirit living inside—one day, we will have no more language barrier. The curse of the tower of Babel will be broken; all true living stones will be able to have true, full communication and fellowship with each other.

House of God

Komba, Africa, 1996

A “Healthy” Family—The Bride Prepared

Jesus will come back for His Bride. The Bible says that Jesus will come back for His Bride when she has made herself ready. How can we position our lives to be prepared? Well, consider this picture with me.

When most of our religious or spiritual endeavors happen in one place on one day each week, then it is like eating just one meal every week. That’s NOT how Father made us to live. We need to feed our physical bodies most every day in order to live. He also made our spirits to need to eat many times throughout a week—to eat bread from heaven and to love on one another daily, daily, daily. He made us to be a Kingdom of Priests together and to bring each other the Bread of Life as we rise up, as we sit down, and as we walk along the way.

Our *worship* of Jesus is as we cut wood together and as we wash clothes together. We teach each other the Word of God in the places of our lives as we walk to the market together. If we see a man that is harsh with his wife, we bring him the Word of God and wrestle with him to help him see Jesus. When we see a man or woman that is selfish with their possessions, we love them with the Word of God each day. We don’t wait for someone to “preach a sermon” about it on Sunday, but we offer them the Word of God because we are all priests.

A little child who would eat only one meal every week would be sick and weak. This is also true for the Bride of Christ. We must be feeding each other every day—day and night, day and night—in order to grow strong. We feed each other the Word of God. We worship together every day. We ask God to help us every day.

Most people would think that a physical family would be very ill if it were only together on Sunday and Wednesday. In the Bible, we read about the Family of God in Acts 2. It says clearly that they were together every day and were devoted *every day* to the teaching of the apostles, to fellowship with one another, and to prayer together. Every day, every night. They did not count their possessions as their own; they broke bread and ate meals together in one another's homes every day.

We were taught many years ago that christianity and church is something we attend and then we go back to our old lives. We have two or maybe three different worlds. We have the world of our home and family, the world of our work and occupations, and the world of our "church". This was not how our Jesus lived. Our Jesus taught us that all these worlds are together and the same. Anyone who has given their life away for Jesus has 100 fathers, mothers, brothers, sisters, lands, and possessions—not 100 next-door-neighbors and third cousins, but 100 mommies and daddies. This is what Jesus taught us. This is what the CHURCH is meant to be. It's not a place to go, but who we are every day. The Church is as intimate and close with one another as a mommy is with her newborn baby. These are the very words of Jesus.

Obstacles

So what keeps us from living these things? The first obstacle is the incomplete teaching that we have had over the years. But even when we become familiar with the teachings of Jesus about these things, there are other barriers or obstacles that keep us from living the way Jesus wants us to live as a Church. If we are selfish or lazy, we don't want to be the Church that Jesus wants us to be. We want to live our own lives the way we want to live them. If someone comes to you or me and brings us the words of Jesus about how we are treating our wife or husband, a selfish person says, "Mind your own business. Stay away."

But this is not Jesus' way. Jesus said, "Everyone that knows Me and loves Me loves the teachings that I teach." A lover of Jesus will say, "Thank you so much for helping me. I want to love Jesus more. I was blind and you helped me to see a little bit, and I thank you for that." This is how the Family of God lives together every day. We help each other to know Jesus better by helping each other put away sin, loving one another more, and by caring for others' needs more than we care for our own. These are the teachings of Jesus. This is how He lived His life for us, and now He has called us to live this way for one another. This is how the Bride is made ready for the return of her groom, Jesus.

We become more and more beautiful as we learn how to truly love each other more. As we put away our selfishness and pride that keep us separate from each other, and as we willingly open our hearts to be vulnerable with each other, then the Spirit of God, the Grace of God and the Love of God pour out on us... and we become a beautiful Bride READY for the return of our groom, Jesus.

This is the will of the Father for us—not to "attend a bride," but to be a Bride. We can only BE His church and live His Life as we love each other and exchange our lives with each other every day. This involves more than just a "Hi!" and "I love you!" when I walk by. Instead, I open my heart to you and ask you to help me. If you see sin in my life, things that are not like Jesus, then you come to me and beg me to turn my life to Jesus. You don't turn the other way and ignore it. You are an ambassador of Jesus as if God were making His appeal to me through you.

This is a Church—to live this way every day, not *attending* the house of God, but *being* the place where God lives. Then our homes, our workplace and our church all become one. There are no more barriers from my heart to yours and no more barriers between my home and yours. I put away selfishness, pride, laziness and unbelief, and I love others as Jesus has loved me. When everyone does that, from the least to the greatest, Jesus pours out His healing oil, and we are a

Church, a beautiful Bride. If we are content to just attend something on Sunday morning, we will miss the heart and the call of our God, and be like some other religions that are meaningless.

Leadership in the House of God

In Acts 20, Paul was speaking to some leaders and said, “It was the Holy Spirit that made you overseers.” This is very different than man’s way. In most countries that we have been to, the way a person becomes a leader in God’s House is that perhaps he goes to bible college or seminary, or perhaps he can read better than other people can. Perhaps he is a leader in business or some other area, or perhaps he can speak better than others. But these are all the wrong reasons. *These are not the ways that God makes leaders.*

There have been times when we have traveled to churches in various cities and were asked to speak to the leaders. At that point, there were two ways that we could decide who the leaders were. The normal way to decide is, “Who are the people on staff, or who are the people chosen by men to be leaders?” Perhaps the leaders are all the ones that have titles, such as “pastor” or “reverend.”

But this is not how Jesus picks His leaders. He didn’t choose men with college or seminary backgrounds. He chose men as He looked into their hearts and saw that they were willing to leave their nets and their desires for human life and follow after Him to serve Him no matter what. So, when we have been asked to speak to leaders in various cities or countries, instead of inviting everyone that has a title or a position to come, we have said, “Everyone that feels as if God is using them to touch other people’s lives, everyone who goes to sleep praying for other saints, who during their days cares about other saints and other unbelievers, who has a heart to serve God’s purposes in the earth, male or female, young or old, if you are caring for other people’s souls and not just for your own, then you are a leader. Come. Let’s talk.” This is how the Holy Spirit makes overseers. This is unlike the way man does it, which is to make a leader of a person with position and education.

In Acts 6, there was much work to do in Jerusalem. They did not say, “Choose from among yourselves seven men who have a seminary education and can read better or speak better than others.” They said, “*Choose from among yourselves seven men who are full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom.*” You see them loving people and helping people in their daily life. These are the men or women that the Holy Spirit is raising up. It does not take a certificate on the wall with a gold seal. *It takes a large heart with the Holy Spirit’s seal.* So these are some teachings about leadership, because God wants to raise up leaders from among every people.

What men think of as being important, God does not. When Samuel was trying to find a man to be king, several of David’s brothers *looked* like they would be good leaders. But the small, uneducated shepherd boy was the one that God chose. He doesn’t care about a man or woman’s externals. He looks at the quality and the largeness of a person’s heart. David was willing to risk his life to save his little lambs from the lion and the bear. Little David killed a lion and a bear in order to save one of God’s little lambs. David told King Saul, “I killed a lion; I killed a bear; I can kill Goliath.” Because David was willing to risk his life to save a little lamb, God saw that David would also risk his life for God’s Lambs. This is a mark of a man or woman that God will raise up as a leader, not a man or woman with credentials or education necessarily, but a person that will risk their life for God’s Lambs.

The book of Acts also says that David was a man after God’s own heart because he would do whatever God said. David made mistakes in his life; we know that. But his heart was to do whatever God said. For that reason, God could pour His anointing oil all over him and allow David to be a great leader among His people—because he would risk his life for God’s lambs and do whatever God asked him to do. This is God’s kind of leadership: *The men, women and children that will risk their lives for God’s Lambs, that will do whatever God says, that will do whatever God asks them—these are men, women and children that are after God’s own heart. Amen?*

Heart, Soul, Mind and Strength

October 1999, Africa

Recently, I was speaking with Father about what it means to love Him. My discussion with Him was for me. But since the subject of what it means to love God from the heart has come up by the last song this brother began for us, I feel as if maybe I should tell you what He has tried to teach me recently. If it's okay, I'd like to share with you what God has shown me about what it means to love Him.

I am sure we all know the greatest commandment. It makes sense to me that if we are going to disobey any commands, we wouldn't start by disobeying the greatest command. Of course we would not want to disobey any commands, but the one that Jesus said is the greatest of all the commands certainly is worthy of much attention. When I asked Father what it means to really love Him, He reminded me of this greatest commandment, then He asked me to consider with Him what that commandment means. God said that we should love Him with all of our heart, we should love Him with all of our soul, we should love Him with all of our mind, and we should love Him with all of our strength. As we discussed together what each one of those things meant, I thought about them and wrote some of them down. I did this for myself, and my relationship with Him, but if you would like, I will tell you some of what we talked about.

All Our Hearts

When He said that we are to love Him with all of our heart, there are some specific things that He meant by that. He meant that all of our affections should be given first to Him. He wants no competition for the affections of our heart. So, if I choose to obey the command of loving Him with all of my heart, I must be very careful with my heart.

I must make decisions about my heart. We all lean toward having affections for different things. Some people have affection for food. In some countries, this affection for food is very important to people. In the country of Italy, for example, they may smell the food and say, “Oo la la!” They may have affection in their heart; they smell the food and *love* the smell of the food. God said, “I will not allow you to have affection and passion in your heart for food (this special kind of food and that special kind of food) and to say, ‘Isn’t this wonderful! Oh, this food is so perfect and it smells so good and tastes so good! This food looks so beautiful!’” God has said, “No! You must decide not to give away your affections to something foolish like food.” The Master said, “I want all of your affection for Me—none for food.” Food is good, but you must not give your heart to it.

In most countries, in most cultures, people don’t understand the Church, and the Church is not truly a Family. People give their hearts to their physical families. “Oh, this is my family!” Instead of giving their heart to what Jesus said about all of God’s people being my family, they have very special passion and they are very jealous for “my family, my family.” “These people have the same last name as me. These people look like me in some way—MY mom, MY dad, MY children.” They allow DNA, and flesh and blood, to prejudice them against the Truth of the Spirit of Christ and what REAL family is when we are truly born a SECOND time. What does Jesus say about this? “A HUNDRED mothers, brothers and sisters.” “Who ARE my mothers and brothers and sisters? Those that DO THE WILL OF GOD.” Some people, even some supposedly religious people, have hearts that are drawn toward their physical family in a way that blinds them to how GOD says we must live and how we must feel.

It certainly is good to care for our family. We must care for our physical family or we are worse than infidels, the Bible says. Surely we must love our wives, our husbands and children. But when my heart is passionate towards that and blind towards others, then it’s MY! MY! MY! This is a serious mistake. The apostle Paul wrote to

us by the Holy Spirit, “Those that have wives should live as though they have none. Those that have possessions should live as those not possessed by them.” This is what the Scriptures teach us. He is not saying we should not love our wives and care for them, or not love our husbands and children and care for them. God said, “I am simply very jealous for the passion of your heart!” God said, “I want all of your heart! I want all of your passion! And then I will distribute amongst other people.” We must not own our physical families and be possessed by them blindly. Our hearts first and foremost belong to God—ALL of our hearts.

I have known people who have given part of their heart away to other foolish things. They just loooooove the mountains, loooooove the clouds, loooooove the water. They can stand by the seashore and watch the waves come in for hours and hours because they love to watch the water. God said, “I want you to appreciate My creation. I want you to thank Me for My Creation! But you must not give away your love and your passion to simply the created things.”

Some people have given away their hearts to nationalism. They are jealous for the country that they live in. If you watch a football game, or soccer or rugby on television, there are World Cup Games, one country against another country. In these large sporting events you can see people in the stadium crying because their team lost. Or many thousands of people are thrilled—they are happy when their team wins! God said, “NO! Your heart must belong to Me alone! You don’t give away your heart to foolish things. You can enjoy the game, you can even be happy when your team wins, but crying and great joy, that’s reserved for Me alone!”

The Lord has told me He wants all of my heart. When I start to feel those things come up in my heart, whether it’s for food or physical family or national sports or anything like that, I must decide to obey God and not give away part of my heart to something that belongs only to Him. He said, “I want all of your heart; I want all of your passion for Me alone.” That is a command, so I must decide to do

that. When I feel my heart starting to go towards other things, I must decide to push it back and then to push it up for Him alone. It is a command and, therefore, a **choice** that I must make. **I give my passion and my heart to Him alone.**

All Our Souls

The next one is “all of my soul.” This means many things. It has much to do with the word “pride.” It has to do with the things I find my identity in. Who am I? Who do I think that I am? That is my soul. I’m prone to allow myself to take pride in the things that I accomplish.

I have done great things in business, and I feel good about myself. I have done great things in sports, and I feel good about myself. I look very pretty, and I feel good about myself. I dress very well, and I feel good about myself. I am very smart, and I feel good about myself. I am very clever, and I feel good about myself. I can make people laugh and tell stories, and I feel good about myself. I am very good at raising my children, better than most people—I feel good about myself. I have a very good memory, better than most people’s memories—so I feel good about myself. I am strong and never give up, while other people give up easily—so I feel good about myself.

This is my soul and it is an ABOMINATION to God to allow these thoughts! You can probably think of many other thoughts like these. Do you remember when Lucifer was thrown out of heaven? If you read the passage in the Old Testament where Lucifer is thrown out of heaven, you hear Lucifer saying, ‘I, I, I, me, I, I,’ many times. Lucifer was not thrown out of heaven because he killed another angel. Lucifer was not thrown out of heaven because he stole another angel’s goods. Lucifer was thrown out of heaven because he had an attitude. He thought about himself rather than about God.

He said, “I am beautiful. I will ascend to be like the Most High. I have the gift of music and shine like many colorful gems and stones. I have a right to be noticed and to be important. I have the right for people

to think about me and to pay attention to me because I am special. I am more spiritual than these other angels.”

God said, “I banish you forever from My Presence.” God said, “You must worship Me and love Me with ALL of your heart! You must control your soul so that you worship Me and love Me with ALL of your soul.”

The apostle Paul said, “I have very much to boast about, but I will boast in nothing except Jesus Christ and Him crucified. I am crucified to the world and the world is crucified to me.” He said, “I am the chief of sinners; I am the worst and the lowest of all the saints. I will boast in my weaknesses.” This was the apostle Paul, who was a very good man. But he made a decision that he would love the Lord his God with all of his heart with all of his soul. He would take no pride in accomplishment or how he looked or how he spoke. This man had been caught up into the third heaven, into the very presence of God. Yet, he didn’t even want to talk about it. He said, “I know a man who, many years ago...” He didn’t boast, “I am the apostle Paul; I’ve even been caught up into heaven.” He was very humble to speak of such things. He did not want to draw attention to himself. He did not want to be a hero. He did not want to be exalted. Like John the Baptist, he wanted to decrease so that Jesus would increase.

Every time we draw attention to ourselves by thinking about ourselves, we are separating ourselves from God. Every time we make a decision to think of ourselves more highly than we ought and every time we judge others because we think of ourselves as being special in various ways, we are separating ourselves from God. God said, “I want you to love Me with all of your heart. All of your passions and all the things that are very special to you will be wrapped up in Me alone. And I want you to love Me with all of your soul. I want you to find all of your identity ONLY in my Son Jesus and His blood. Any gifts that I give you are only to be tools to serve Me better. You are not owners of these gifts of music or of intellect or memory or good looks or any of those things. You could be paralyzed in a bed

by getting hit by a truck in a split second. You don't deserve any gifts that God has given you. You must not take ownership of them." **We must have no pride or ambition about any of the good things that God has done in our lives. They are for Him and for Him alone.**

When we build a house with our own hands and we come back to that house after being gone for the day, we must not walk around and say, "Oh, what good work I do! What a beautiful house I have built with my own hands! What a wonderful job I do raising my children!" We must never draw any energy to ourselves. All of our soul energy belongs to Jesus and His Father. "I want you to love Me with **ALL** of your heart and **ALL** of your soul."

All Our Minds

Then I asked Father what He meant by, "I want you to love Me with all of your mind." Certainly, these things overlap a little bit. But one thing that He showed me about loving Him with all of my mind is that every thought that comes into my mind presents me with a choice I must make. If I am going to love Him with all of my mind, then I must make decisions about every thought that comes into my mind. The scriptures, through the apostle Paul, say we must take every thought captive. We must cast down imaginations or thoughts that jump into our minds that are not true. God said, "Whatever is pure and lovely and noble, whatever is holy and worthy of praise, think about these kinds of things only." Paul said, "We are transformed by the renewing of our minds." Romans 8 says, "The mind controlled by the Spirit of God is life and peace."

Have any of you ever had a thought of bitterness come into your mind? How about a thought of jealousy? How about a thought of anger? How about a thought of lust? How about a thought of pride? These are thoughts that present themselves before you. It's as if a little man has walked up to your mind and said, "I want to introduce you to a thought." We decide whether to bring that thought in and think about that thought or to reject it and say, "No! Go away!" This is taking

every thought captive. Have you ever had a thought of depression or self-hatred? You can think to yourself, “I am a depressed person; I hate myself.” But that’s not a mind controlled by the Spirit. We must take **every** thought captive. When that little man walks up and presents his idea to our brain, if it is not a pure and lovely and noble and praiseworthy thought, we **MUST** reject that thought! God said, “I want your mind! I want you to love Me with all of your mind. You will permit no thoughts in your mind that are not My thoughts. You will be transfigured and transformed by the renewing of your mind.” We permit only pure and noble and praiseworthy thoughts into our brain. We cast down every other imagination. If we will do that, we will be transformed. If we replace these kinds of thoughts with the thoughts of the Words of God, we will be transformed.

All Our Strength

Each of us will make choices every day. We will choose where our affections go and whether we will love Him with all of our hearts. We will choose what our souls are allowed to do. Is my soul allowed to find identity in other things other than the blood of Jesus? Paul said, “I am crucified with Christ, I no longer live. Not I, but Christ lives in me.” Paul loved the Father with all of his soul. His only identity was in the cross of Jesus Christ. He meant nothing to himself apart from the cross of Jesus. So also with us. If we love Him with all of our minds, we will only permit the Word of God and the thoughts of God into our minds. We will not tolerate thoughts of depression or lust or fear. No! We push them back out of our minds. We will not permit thoughts of unforgiveness or bitterness or jealousy. We push them out of our minds. We will not live like the Gentiles in the futility of their thinking. But we will take every thought captive for the glory of God. We will love Him with all of our minds. We will spend our thinking on Him and not on other foolish things. We will love the Lord our God, not only with all of our heart (our passion), not only with all of our soul (our identity and our ambitions and

plans), not only with all of our minds (every thought in our brain), but also with all of our strength.

Father showed me that our strength consists of many things. If we are going to love Him with all of our strength, then we must realize that our time belongs to Him. Our time is part of our strength. Our time is part of what we have in the physical world to accomplish things. We will allow Jesus, the love of our lives, to show us how to use our time for Him. We will not allow our time to be consumed with things that flow from love of self, rather than love of Jesus and His Father. Also, if we love Him with all of our strength, then He will also be Lord over how much we sleep. He will also be Lord over what we eat and how much we eat. What we eat is part of our strength.

King David, a “type” of Jesus, the Lord, shows us another aspect of loving our God and Father with all of our strength. He said that he and his men would intentionally withhold from themselves physical gratification whenever they were to be focused on the Battles of the Lord (1Sam.21:5). Our ability to do Exploits for God is limited or enhanced by how we use our strength! We have a certain amount of physical energy or strength that we will use for one thing or another. If we choose to use our physical strength on all sorts of things for self, so that we are too tired or distracted to serve God, then we are not loving Him with all of our strength. We must make choices so that we will have sufficient physical strength to serve God in very visible, tangible ways.

Our money is also part of our strength. Money comes from the work of our hands. Part of the choice we make about how we spend our strength is how we spend our money. The apostle Paul, as he went from city to city and country to country, said, “Because I have changed your life and I have given you spiritual truth, I have the right that you would give me money for that. Because of what I’ve given you, it’s right that you would give me cake, that you give me your chicken, that you would give me your clothing.” But he said, “No. I want to give to you instead. I will find a way to work hard with my

own hands—night and day if I need to—in order that I might be able to give to you. Even though you owe me your very life because of the spiritual things I have taught you, I don't want to take your chickens or your clothing or your money. I want to find a way to give to you instead. The Lord has said it is more blessed to give than to receive, so I want to find a way to give to you." So the apostle Paul said he would buffet his body daily in order to find a way to serve God.

The Scriptures say to offer our bodies as living sacrifices, and the parts of our body only as instruments of Righteousness. Paul and other servants of God would crucify their bodies by lack of sleep and tiredness. He would crucify his body sometimes when he was hungry or beaten up by robbers—when he was stoned and left for dead lying out in the street. Because he loved God with all of his strength, he picked his bloody body up off of the ground and went back into the city to talk about Jesus. Peter and John had bloody rips on their skin from having been beaten. The religious leaders and the Bible scholars beat them with whips, and they rejoiced that they were counted worthy to suffer for the name of Jesus. Then they went back into the marketplace and into the place where the religious people were—the places where the God-haters were. They went back into those places and told the full Good News of life in Jesus because they loved Him—even when their blood was on the ground—with all of their strength. Stephen and James and John the baptizer, and many others gave their last bit of strength in the service of Yahweh and His precious Son. We, too, are to "Love not our lives, even to the point of death." Father wants us to focus on Him, to love and trust Him completely, even with all of our strength.

Deeper and Deeper

After I asked God this question of what it means to love Him, I was quite shocked to find out how deep the answer was. He requires of me that I love Him with ALL of my heart, because He is a jealous God. He requires that I love Him with ALL of my soul, because He is a

jealous God. He requires of me that I love Him with ALL of my mind and ALL of my strength. Now, as I wrestle with these things and try to make sure that my life is getting closer to these things, I find that He catches me up into the middle of Christ deeper and deeper. I find that He makes me wiser and more loving and freer. I find that He can make rivers of living water gush from inside of me like Jesus promised. I find that He can put within me more and more of the power of an indestructible life. I find that He puts weapons of righteousness in my left hand and in my right hand. Elijah, a man like us, commanded clouds to stop raining and then commanded the clouds to rain. The scriptures say Elijah was a man like us. What is available to us in Jesus, if we will truly love Him with all of our heart, soul, mind and strength, is beyond our comprehension. Very few people experience these things because very few people will love Him with all of their heart, all their soul, all their mind and all their strength.

And Help Each Other

Part of loving Him is to love our neighbors as ourselves, and to love them enough to help them love Him with all their heart, soul, mind and strength. If you see someone around you that is a brother or sister, and they are not loving Him with all their heart and all their soul, all their mind and all their strength, then God said we should help them do that. They are only robbing themselves and robbing God. If we all help each other love Him that way, then the church will be something that is spectacular to behold. But it starts with this most basic command for you as an individual—Love the Lord your God with ALL of your heart. Love the Lord your God with ALL of your soul. Love the Lord your God with ALL of your mind. And love the Lord your God with ALL of your strength. Amen?

That was for me, between me and God, but if it's helpful to you, then I'm glad we had a chance to talk about it.

Money: Giving in the Kingdom of God

October 6, 1999, Lilongwe, Africa

In the church where I live there is no one who is salaried, no one who collects money for themselves, no one who gives sermons in order to get money. But everyone is still very much involved in giving. In a setting like this we do not ever pass a basket around, but still every single person in the church gives financially to the work of God. There are various people in the church who have been entrusted with the responsibility to provide in their home a private way in which brothers and sisters can give. To be able to give in private like that allows the right hand not to know what the left hand is doing. They are not going up front to give so that people can see, but they are able to give from the heart.

There are many different things people may give towards. Many of the brothers will put their money in an envelope and write on the outside what they want that money to be used for. They might say, "The Poor", which might firstly be the poor among us, or it could be in our community. They might write, "For Printing Materials", like some of the books you have received. Different saints gave part of their income because it was their prayer and heart to share those truths that have been so precious to them. Someone might give money to a brother who lately has been laboring very hard in the Lord. Perhaps he is on a trip away from home. He is not in his job like he normally is, but because they want him to be able to be with those believers in another place, they give part of their income for that purpose.

Writing on the outside of the envelope enables people to connect their heart with what is happening. It is not just throwing money blindly in a basket, but the money represents the work of God.

So in this way they can connect to the specific work that has been important to their heart. There may be times when nothing specific is in mind. They may not know this week what to give to. So they might put “For Leaders to Decide”. There are many possibilities.

In the first century, sometimes people sold lands and houses and laid the money at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed as each had need. So sometimes it’s like that. Most often, however, they are giving to something specific. Because no one is watching, it can be easy to become lazy. Because the left hand is not watching the right hand, you can become lazy in your giving. We each must be very careful not to let that happen. Does this answer some of your question? Is there more? Have I missed something that might help?

What About Tithing?

The teaching of tithing is not in the New Testament. If you want to tithe, you should also offer animal sacrifices. It is a teaching of the Old Testament, the Old Covenant. It was a discipline of ten percent that God commanded His people in the Old Testament. “Tithing” is no more a part of the New Agreement, the New Covenant, than animal sacrifice, or a “holy man” cleric or priest, or temple worship are part of the Covenant of Jesus’ Blood. They are not, and “tithing” is not. There is NO TITHING in the New Contract. Men, trying to extract money from God’s Lambs for BARF mortgages (Buildings Appropriated for Religious Functions) and Hireling salaries, will try to pull Old Covenant Scriptures out to persuade God’s People to pony up. However, these same men do not generally also insist upon Saturday (“Sabbath”) worship at a Temple in Jerusalem, or in animal sacrifice, which are also part of that Agreement. It is totally dishonest and fraudulent to grab a line out of one Contract and another line out of a different Contract in order to construct one’s paradigm. Paul taught clearly that we are dead in our sins, and the Blood of Jesus is worthless to us if we live in the Covenant of circumcision and Sabbaths and tithes. There is no “10% tithe to the pastor” in the BIBLE. That is not God’s Way.

In this Agreement, God wants it all, and wants it FROM THE HEART, and wants it BY THE SPIRIT. Jesus said, “Unless you surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees, you cannot enter the kingdom.” In THIS Agreement, it is to be RELATIONAL in a living, current love affair with the Messiah. Our giving in this Covenant is to be sacrificial, as directed by, and in obedience to the Spirit of God, day by day.

When Jesus was standing at the temple courts, he saw a woman that put two pennies in the collection. Those pennies weren't very much in terms of quantity. Jesus said she didn't give ten percent, she did not tithe, but she gave *all* of her money. She gave her food money. God was more important to her than food. She loved the Lord her God with all her heart, soul, mind and strength. She wasn't trying to find a way to only give ten percent. She wanted to give the best gift she could. And Jesus said, “Look at this woman. The angels are applauding and clapping for her because she didn't think about tithing, she gave all her heart, soul, mind and strength.” This is the message of the New Testament. The Old Testament is weak by comparison.

No Peddling

When Paul wrote to some of the churches, he said, “We do not peddle the Word of God for profit.” Paul did not look at his gifts as something that he could sell. Jesus had given him these gifts to build others up, not to get money from them. Instead of trying to get money from people, he tried to give. As mentioned, others have sacrificed to print the books that we brought. We are not selling those books. We are *giving* those books to you and to others. The teachings in those books belong to Jesus, not to us. Jesus shared those things with us freely. So of course we want to freely share them with you.

I hope no one would ever think of selling one of those books to someone else. In any gift that Jesus gives you, if it is teaching, if it is wisdom, if it is knowledge, if it is the ability to sing or play music, if it is the ability to communicate well in public, this is something that does not belong to you. It is something that the Master has entrusted

to your care. That gift still belongs to Him. But He has entrusted it to you so that you can enrich other people. One time Jesus told the Pharisees, “If you pray so that others can admire you, that is your only reward.” The same is true in the matter of money. If you teach or write or sing so that others can pay you, that money will be the only reward you ever have. But if you are willing to give freely what God has given you, the reward is great. The blessings multiply in lives around you, and it is to the honor of God.

On a practical basis again, each person makes a decision before God about how they should be a giver, how they should give of their material possessions. Between them and God they make that choice, because they love Him with all their heart. And so they make choices, and then they will decide where to give that money. There are neighborhoods where many saints live close together. We put a box at one of these homes in each one of those neighborhoods. And the saints that live in that neighborhood will quietly go to that house every week and they will ask God to receive their gift. They will write a note with that gift about what area of work they want to give that gift to and they will quietly put it in that box and walk away.

We also have two or three brothers that will go around to each of those neighborhoods (small villages) and they will collect all that money in one place. And these trusted, honest brothers working together will take the money that is labeled for the poor and they distribute it amongst the poor in the community. The money that is labeled for printing of books, they will collect all that money in one place and give it to those that do the printing. And if certain brothers or sisters that are faithful servants of God have had their lives changed, their families changed by certain people’s gifts, they might label it with a person’s name on it and these trusted brothers, working together, will make sure that the brothers or sisters that have their name written on the envelope receive it properly.

Like Paul, these other brothers or sisters may make tents or do other kinds of work. Because Paul affected people’s lives for Jesus

in Philippi and Thessalonica, perhaps they would send him a gift for the work there. He would also give to the poor around him with that gift. He would also help other brothers and sisters like Timothy and Titus so they wouldn't have to make tents all the time. In the letter to the Philippians, Paul said sometimes he received things from others, sometimes he didn't. Sometimes he made tents, sometimes he didn't. If God provided for his needs another way, then that was wonderful. If not, he would make tents and provide for other people's needs. No problem. So these brothers that collect all the money will distribute it to whomever's name is written on the envelope or to whatever kind of work is written on the envelope and they will take *nothing* for themselves. Does this make sense?

While someone might give money to a person who is changing lives, no one decides they should get money because they themselves think they are changing lives. The people whose lives are being changed are making that decision. *No one is deciding to get money.* Everyone is deciding to serve Jesus with whatever gift they have. Everyone, not a clergy and an audience. Everyone. Some gifts are very helpful. As those gifts have helped you, we want to help free up that gift to help others. So sometimes that happens. But never because someone is peddling the word of God for profit. Their only goal is to be helpful and useful. They are not trying to make money. It doesn't matter to them if they make tents for the next five years or if they are freed up for a period of time. They serve God with a whole heart both times. That is very different than how most of the religious world functions. People view the Word of God as a career. It is not a career like a carpenter. That is not in the Bible.

It is *Better* to GIVE

One more point: Jesus said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." It is okay to receive, but it is *better* to give. But it is never okay to demand to receive. If my children were to tell me, "Father, Father, give something to me" and they would demand and cry, all I would give

them is discipline. But if I see my children sharing with others and loving other people, I feel very free to surprise them with a gift. The same is true in the family of Jesus. There must never be anyone who is demanding to receive money. No one should say, "It says, 'We have all things in common. You need to give me money.'" No one should ever say, "It says, 'If you have two coats, give one to your brother. You have two coats; give one to me.'" That's a sin. That is selfishness. So if anyone is demanding money or demanding anything else, the church should not give it to him or they will actually be hurting him. But if someone is truly in need and the brothers find out about that need and out of love and a desire to serve Jesus they give, that's a beautiful thing; that is acceptable to God.

Everyone Serves God Full-Time

When Paul traveled from city to city and country to teach others, Paul didn't say, "I am an apostle of the Most High God! I must not lower myself to make tents. I'm a servant of God!" Paul made tents when Paul needed money. If God supplied his needs from other ways, that was okay too. But he didn't care. If he made tents, then he would meet people in the trade, people that he would buy fabric from for making tents, people that would come to buy the tents that he made, and that was the field that he was working in too. He didn't care if he met people in the marketplace or if he met them in the synagogue. His whole life was to love God and to love people, to be all things to all men, to be in every circumstance he could be in. If he is in jail, he converts the jailer. If he is before kings on trial, he tried to convert the king. If he is making tents, he tried to convert the buyers of tents. How he made his living did not make any difference.

If God provided for his needs from other brothers and sisters that loved him and were grateful to him, and he was then free to not have to make tents for a period of time, then perhaps he was free to travel with Silas and the other brothers to go to other cities. If he ran out of

money, which in the Philippian letter it says he did at times, then he would make tents for a while again. No problem.

The traditions of men have taught us a bad concept of what it means to be a servant of God. Paul was a much more powerful servant of God than most of the little men today who call themselves servants of God. Paul would take money or not take money. Paul would work hard with his hands night and day and even pay for his own meals. To the Thessalonians he said, “I even paid for my own meals when I was among you. I could have expected you to give me meals, but I paid for your meals. I worked hard with my own hands so that I could provide for my own needs and the needs of others.”

If that is true for a great gift like Paul, why do all the less international gifts think that they would never need to work hard with their own hands to support their own needs and others’ needs, too? If God supplies our needs in other ways, that’s okay. But no one should expect it or demand it. If God’s people have a heart to free us up to do that so we don’t have to make tents, that’s wonderful and that’s okay. If God’s people don’t see that we need to be free right now to serve in a way that is unhindered by making tents, then we will make tents and try to supply for other people’s needs.

So, these are very practical things, which have benefited us for fifteen years now, with many brothers in our number who used to be pastors or leaders. They have given away their salaries and their positions and their titles, and God has been very faithful. None of them are hungry, and all of them are serving God full-time. All of the saints, even the children, serve God full-time. They don’t serve God for pay; they serve God out of love, and God provides for needs in various ways. It’s a very precious truth, but it is a little frightening sometimes to put away the traditions of men, especially when it costs us money out of our pockets. No one has ever trusted God this way and God ever failed him. God is faithful. He cares for the lilies. He cares for the birds of the air. He cares for everyone that loves Him. There are no special classes of Christians.

There is no caste system in Christianity where some people sell their gifts, and other people just have “normal people” gifts. No one sells his gifts in the true church. God meets everyone’s needs as God sees fit. God decides how our needs are met. We are all full-time servants of God, whether in the marketplace, or the jails, or our homes. These are very important truths. We must shake the tree of the traditions of men and break it down. God is faithful; he will protect us if we do that.

A practical example: Other brothers and sisters decided that we three should come here. We didn’t decide “we are superheroes, so we are going to travel somewhere.” We are not. We are just simple slaves, as you are. It was their decision, not ours. They also offered to help pay our bills while we were gone. We didn’t decide that or ask them for that. God’s People, listening to God, decided together that we should go. It’s a very simple matter.

The temptations that Jesus received at the pinnacle of the temple, they were very similar to the temptations that we receive sometimes, aren’t they?

Do We Really *Believe*?

Question: As we choose to share the message of the King and Kingdom with our friends within denominations, what should we tell them in regards to the funding that they and others within the denomination receive? Some people are currently dependent on the denomination for their livelihood.

If a person decides to stay a part of a denomination because of money, God will judge them very severely. If a person will reject Truths of God for the sake of money, then they are satan worshippers. This is not about money! *This is about GOD, who is much bigger than money!* We must trust God and obey Him no matter what the cost. If it costs us our family, if it costs us our house, if it costs us our jobs, if it costs us all of our money—these things are for Jesus and it’s worth it no matter what.

Peter and John said, “Silver and gold have I NONE. But I do have Jesus and what I do have, I give to you.” If a denomination is throwing money into people’s lives and that is their livelihood, and those people within that denomination begin to obey Jesus no matter what the consequences, then one of two things will happen. One thing that can happen is the truths of God will flow into the denomination and change the whole denomination. People will give even more money because their lives are changed. The other thing that can happen is the denomination will cut off the money. And if they cut off the money... I say, “**SO WHAT!**” *God will provide for everyone who is obedient and faithful.*

Do we really believe that God owns the cattle on a thousand hills? Do we really believe that whatever we ask of Him in His Name, He will provide? Do we really believe that He loves us more than He loves the sparrows and the flowers of the fields? Or is this just some religious game that we’re playing to get something out of for ourselves? If you follow the ways of God for money, or if you are willing to compromise and put aside the Truths of God for money, then I say to you the same thing that Paul said to Simon the sorcerer: “May you and your money perish in hell!” We must not be affected by money. We must believe God and obey God no matter what the cost. He is a wonderful Father who loves to give good gifts to His children.

Consider this...

When Ethiopia was a Christian nation and many people obeyed God, Ethiopia was called the breadbasket of Africa. Well, it is God who calls the rains to fall, the crops to grow, the cattle to flourish and a nation to prosper. When Ethiopia became an Islamic nation and Christianity was compromised, God judged the land and the rain stopped falling. Ethiopia is a desert now, not a breadbasket.

Stop and think about it because what I want to say to you is that the reverse is true also. If we will build God’s House and not our own houses, and if we will spend ourselves for God rather than trying to

protect our own wealth, then God will cause our crops to grow. He'll cause the rains to fall, He'll cause our businesses to prosper, and He will find ways to care for our needs.

If, on the other hand, we try to protect ourselves, and we compromise and disobey truths because we're afraid of what might happen, then God will judge us severely. Our pockets will have holes in them. The money we thought we had won't be as much as we thought it was. The seed we sowed in the field will not grow as much as it should. But, if we trust God, He *will* care for us. And likewise, if we disobey and compromise, He will judge us (Haggai, Chapter 1).

When will God have a people who will finally trust Him and obey Him no matter what the consequences? Will you be that people? If not, you will ROT. If so, you will prosper to the GLORY OF GOD!

Lord God Almighty, please pay attention to our prayer right now. We're asking You to open the heavens. Please continue to pour out revelation to sincere brothers and sisters. Continue to pour out the oil of joy to those who are obedient. Continue to build Your Church with great wisdom, love and self-sacrifice for those who will obey You at any price. We also ask You, God, as You promised in the Book of Deuteronomy, that You'll bring curses and judgment on those that will not obey You. We invite You to be our Father if we love You and obey You. We invite You to be our Judge if we disobey You. We know You take no joy in bringing calamity, but sometimes we need a spanking to break our spirits. We invite You to spank our stubborn spirits if we have them. We ask that You hug us and help us in our weakness. Please break our rebellion, and help our weakness. We invite You to stretch out Your hand and do supernatural things in these ways. We know You are Real, Alive, and Glorious. This is not a game and we're not trying to elect You to be God. YOU ARE GOD, and we must bend our knees to You. We're foolish and weak at times, but we invite You to make us men and women of God, crushing our rebellion. We give Glory to YOU as our Author and our Maker, the Lover of our souls, and the Builder of Your Church. Great is Your name! AMEN!

The Butterfly's Cocoon

October 1999, Africa

Question: As we are sharing with people the Truths of Jesus, and people want to repent and come out of their denominations, what should we tell them?

Even if people want to come out of their denominations, it is best to try to stop them if you can! The reason is this... If they know or have recently discovered Truths of God *such as confessing sins to each other, bearing one another's burdens, admonishing one another daily, and removing leaven from the batch* (these Truths that have always been in the Bible but have been forgotten, or ignored, or just rebelled against), then they should share these things with their closest friends. We push people to take the Truths that they've seen from God and share those with other people in the denominations.

They have friends and family members who are a part of these denominations. The Bible says the one who is given a Trust must prove faithful with it. If that person we've met has gifts from God through God's word, they must be obedient and faithful with the relationships they already have. When people are obedient and faithful with their current relationships, then one of two things will happen. Either many lives will be changed in that denomination, and together they will throw away their "labels" and "titles", or like Jeremiah, the person who is trying to uphold and live out God's Truths will be thrown in a well, and kicked out of the denomination.

But someone who repents and just tiptoes out the back door is not being faithful with the Truth that God has given them. If you were in a hotel and you smelled smoke and saw that there was a fire, if you tiptoed out the back door you would be responsible for many people dying. When someone discovers that a denomination is "burning down," don't let them tiptoe out the back door. We teach people to shout from the rooftops, *"Learn the ways of God! Obey God! I have*

great news—there are many Truths that we've not experienced yet! We can be set free from sin! We can be one people instead of scattered individuals! We can be a true Church that the gates of hell can't prevail against!" So we encourage people to stay in the denominations and be faithful with their family and their friends, and then either a miracle will happen, or they will be kicked out. But we don't let them sneak out the back door when they smell smoke.

If everyone is obedient in that way, and we call everyone to be obedient that way, then it's not us building the Church, it's **JESUS** building His own Church. We are not trying to collect people that think like we think. We are trying to make everyone obedient to the ways of God, wherever they are. And when Jesus shakes the tree, good fruit will come down. There might be ten more good people in that denomination. There might be a hundred more good people in that denomination. But if someone sneaks out the back door and leaves the denomination quietly, then there are ten people or a hundred people that could have had their lives totally changed...and they would never know.

If you have a caterpillar's cocoon, and you take a razor blade and cut it open so that you can pull out the butterfly, it will never fly. It is only the process of fighting out of the cocoon that gives the butterfly the strength to fly!

So ask people who are beginning to see these Truths of God to stay and be faithful with their friends and their family with no compromise at all and without blending into disobedience. Ask them to stand with courage in these Truths that they've discovered from God. If they will be faithful, obedient, courageous, and willing to pay any price regardless of any potential rejection, then they will be like the caterpillar that is turning into a butterfly and breaking out of the cocoon.

People will learn many of the ways of God just by all of the rejection they experience. So we won't steal growth away from them by cutting open the cocoon and taking out the butterfly. We make them fight their way out ... so that **THEY CAN FLY!!!!!!**

Intrusion into a Religious World

October 2, 1999, Salima, Africa

I want to talk with you for a few minutes about the People of God who lived 3,000 years ago. They were the Israelites. They had a temple in Jerusalem on a mountain called Zion. It was a building. It was covered with gold and beautiful woodcarvings. Many times a year people would come to the building. There were special days. There were holidays. When they would get there, they would sing songs to God. They would offer God sacrifices. They would want to draw close to God. There would be priests there who would help them at the temple. The priests' job was to help people draw close to God. The priests would offer the animal sacrifices. The priests would kill the animal and sprinkle the blood on the altar so that the people could have their sins forgiven and draw close to God.

That was 3,000 years ago. Let's talk about the People of God today. Let's talk about the true Israel. Brothers and sisters, if you have given your hearts to Jesus, you are the true Israel of God. Amen. If you have given your heart to Jesus, He is your King, and you are the Israel of God.

I was sitting here a few minutes ago watching a man walking across the yard. As he was walking, there was a shadow behind him. When the man walked, the shadow walked. When the man moved his arms, the shadow moved its arms. The shadow had legs. The shadow had arms. The shadow had a head. But was the shadow a man? No. The shadow was not real. It looked like a man. It moved like a man. But it was only the shape of a man. Brothers and sisters, the children of God from 3,000 years ago were a shadow of the children of God today. Let's talk about what some of those shadows mean.

In the past, there was a temple. Today, we do not have a temple made with hands. Today, you are the temple of God. God does not live in

a building. Jesus lives in the hearts of those who have chosen Him to be King. You don't need to go to a holy place. If you are holy, then this is the holy place. You don't need to go somewhere special to be close to God. You can know God in your heart. We are the temple.

Brothers and sisters, you do not need a special day. The Bible says, "Today is the day of salvation." It says, "Today do not harden your hearts." It says to encourage one another daily. We don't have to wait for a Sabbath day. We don't have to wait for a time of worship. Seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day we can live close to God. So we don't need a special place or a special time.

What about the priests? The priests' job was to draw people close to God. Now that we don't have a shadow, we have something *real*. Today the priests of God are YOU. Your job is to draw close to God in your heart and then draw other men and women close to God, too. You don't need a man to dress up in special clothes or call himself some special name because *you* can be a priest of God.

Today the Kingdom of God is not about a place. It's not about a time. It's not about special songs. It's about a people who live for Him, a people who live to serve Jesus seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day. A people who love Him with all of their heart, soul, mind and strength.

When Jesus was walking on this earth, He talked to a woman. She asked Him a question: "Where should we worship God? Do we worship on this mountain or on that mountain?" Jesus answered, "Neither place. The Kingdom of God is not here or there. The Kingdom of God is within you." The kind of worshippers the Father wants worship Him in Spirit and in Truth. Amen. So the people of God are the people who worship Him seven days a week, twenty-four hours a day by loving Him with all their hearts.

There is more to the temple as well. One person cannot be a temple. Yes, God can live in one person's heart, but each person is a stone that is built together with other stones and built together to become

a temple. We must have each other. How am I to worship God each day? According to the Word of God, unless I have encouragement from my brothers and sisters every day, my heart will grow hard to God. My heart will become full of sin. I will become hardened to my sin. I must have other brothers and sisters encouraging and exhorting me, and it must happen each day. In that way, we can be stones that are built together. In that way, we can become the temple of God. In that way, true worship to God can be offered in our hearts.

Let's talk a minute about worship. Today we don't need an animal sacrifice. What is the sacrifice we are to offer to God? According to the Bible, the sacrifice we are to offer to God is our lives. We are not a dead sacrifice, we are a living sacrifice. Our minds must not be like the minds of the world. We must think with the mind of Christ. We must offer ourselves to God. We will be *living* sacrifices. That is worshipping God, even if we are not singing or praying. We can worship God when we are working. We can worship God while we are cooking or washing clothes, or sitting with our friends.

If we have minds that are controlled by Jesus and if we are offering ourselves to Him as a sacrifice, we are worshipping God. Brothers and sisters, that is the Kingdom of God. Not a place, not a time, but a people. A people who live as priests of God, all day, every day, encouraging and helping one another so that they can love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, so they can offer their lives to Him each day. That is our inheritance as His People. That is what God wills for His People. We can live that way. We don't have to be like the shadow. We can be the real man. That's what God wants for us today. Is that what you want, too? Okay, let's learn how to live that way together.

Build According to the Pattern

I know that many things that you have heard so far today might be a little bit difficult. But we have seen all over the world that this is very good news. We came because we are very excited to tell you about

a way that God has always wanted to build His House. We have met people all over the world that are very good people. Some are Pentecostal, some are Baptist, and some are other denominations. They have spent their lives being divided from each other. They have spent their lives with their hearts broken by sin. So many good people have spent their lives with heartbreaks with relationships in the family. So many disappointments, so many things that are not like Jesus. Even disappointments in ourselves; things that we know we want to do for Jesus, and then we can't. Sin that we want to put away and then we find ourselves too weak to put it away.

The Bible says in 1 John 3:8 that the Son of God came into the world to destroy sin. He didn't come just to forgive sin. That is so indescribably wonderful that He would forgive sin, isn't it? Amen? But He also wants to destroy sin. He wants to take the devil and crush him under His foot. That is our inheritance as a people of God, to crush satan. Not just to survive, but to destroy the devil's works. Many of the reasons that we have not seen God manifested that way to heal broken hearts and to destroy sin is not because there are not many wonderful people—there are. It's not because there aren't many special gifts in the Body of Christ—there are many special gifts. Much of the reason that we have failed with our hearts' desire to please God is because we have not built God's way.

The shadow we were speaking of about God's House, God's temple in the Old Testament, was supposed to be built according to the pattern. God told them how to build that temple, and they built it the way God said. What if they had taken all the stone and all the gold for the temple and then just did it any way they wanted to do it? God would have been unhappy, and the house would have fallen down.

God has many wonderful people all over the world. What has happened very often in the last 2,000 years is that these people have been desiring to change their lives and please Him, but they have been frustrated. They have been unable to find their full potential

and really serve Him well. It is their whole heart, but they fail again and again. The reason why they fail is because we have often built the wrong way. We have not built according to the pattern, the design, that God has given us. When anyone attempts anything, but attempts to do it in totally the wrong way, they will seldom find success, no matter how sincere they may be.

We want to talk about how good people can reach their potential *now*. We can allow the gifts in the Body of Christ to be built together into a habitation of God, filled with God's glory. There is a way God wants us to be built so we can see sin's power broken in real life and no longer be slaves to all of our weaknesses. God's plan is to build relationships, not to have problems all the time. God has a wonderful way to build His House with wonderful people. Religion in the world, until now, has usually built God's House wrong, with men as bosses and holy men and attending meetings as their definition of "church."

In the natural realms, we have learned over the years how to build with concrete. There is a certain amount of sand that has to go in the concrete, as well as a certain amount of water. If you put in too much cement or too much sand or too much water, the concrete crumbles. We have learned around the world that in order to make concrete strong, you have to put reinforcement steel in it so that it doesn't crack when it gets hot and cold. We know that when we make bricks or mortar, there are certain ways to build buildings and how to put the brick in a furnace. There are things that we have learned about building in the natural realms.

After ten years of being a Christian, most people in clergy-controlled, attendance-based religion are not very much stronger than they were after their first year. This is not good. If our one-year-old children grew to be ten but they were still not any stronger or wiser than when they were one, that would be very sad. If you had a ten-year-old child in your family who was still as weak as a one-year-old, and still couldn't walk or talk much better than a one-year-old—as a father or mother that would break your heart, wouldn't it?

How do you think our Father in heaven feels when all of His People should be strong and wise and “full of the Holy Ghost and full of wisdom,” and “ought to be teachers by now” “no longer infants,” doing the work of God... yet many of us are still no stronger than one-year-olds? This is true around the world, and it breaks God’s heart. We can’t sing enough songs or “preach” enough sermons to change that, because we have not been building God’s way in God’s House. God has designed His House to be built so that sin can be redeemed and crushed. God’s way to “have church” allows relationships to be healed and sin and weakness to be removed. This is God’s heart for His people around the world. We have not known how to build, but now we must learn how to build. God said we must be “very careful how we build.”

So, hopefully by God’s grace we will talk about many practical things in the next period of time. Just as engineers have to learn how to use concrete, how to make it right so that it will be strong, also God’s people have to learn how to build correctly so that His House is strong. The same good people, the same gifts built correctly, make a glorious House. That’s what we want to talk about, how to build God’s House better with the same good people. This is not an insult of the past. We are not angry with the system. With humble hearts we just want to say that it is time to go forward now. The past is the past. Let’s grow up now. Out of love and patience and kindness let’s go forward now. We have spent too many years being one-year-olds. It’s time to go on now, with our hands open.

The Holy Spirit has given us much to think about. I just wanted to add a short word of encouragement. A little while ago we were singing. A few of the songs were in English, and I understood them. One of the songs we sang was “Lord, You are Excellent, I Know You are Excellent.” It’s a very true song. Jesus is excellent. I thought of a scripture in 1 Peter 2:9. “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of

darkness into His marvelous light.” Our Lord Jesus has called us out of darkness into light, and we are grateful. Are you grateful? Amen. Do you want to declare that He is excellent? There are many people around us who need to hear that the Lord Jesus is excellent. This morning on the bus we passed by groups of Muslims. Would you like them to know that Jesus is excellent? I want them to know that.

Around the world we have found people who worship ancestors or idols, and some people who don't worship anything at all. They need to know that Jesus is excellent, and it is our job to show them. But this matter of showing that Jesus is excellent is more who we are than what we say. That's what Peter says here. He calls us a “royal priesthood.” We have talked about that some this morning, where there is not just one priest, but many priests. It also talks about us being a holy nation, a people belonging to God. That means that among Christians, the Lord Jesus is King, and we obey Him. In that we will declare His excellencies.

I live in the United States of America. On our trip, I brought an American passport. But I am not, in truth, really an American citizen. I am a citizen of the Kingdom of God. You are citizens, not of Malawi, but of the Kingdom of God. Now usually that means that citizens of the Kingdom of God are the best citizens of their country because they obey the laws, not out of fear, but out of a desire to obey. But if their nation tells them to disobey God, they say, “No. We will obey God, not man.” That's what it means to be a holy nation. In the same way, we will not let our cultures tell us what to do. We will let God tell us what to do. I come from a country where the culture is very sinful. Our culture in America has forgotten how to be ashamed of sin. I will not obey my culture. I will obey God. Amen.

I don't know Malawian culture very well. But you, too, must obey God, not your culture. That's part of what it means to be the Kingdom of God. The same thing is true about denominations. This morning we passed by a building that said “Nazarene church.” We passed by a building that said “Lutheran church.” We passed by a building that

said “Church of Christ.” All of them are meeting today. They are all serving their own traditions. Part of the Kingdom of God means that we obey God rather than traditions. Amen? Tradition will not be our king. The Lord Jesus will be our King. We are that kind of holy nation. We will be able to proclaim the excellencies of Jesus Christ. When we are a holy nation, our proclamation will be clear, not confusing, and all men will be able to decide whether they will bow their knee and obey Him. So this morning we are not bringing you a new denomination. We are just bringing you the Kingdom of God. Let’s live that way together. Amen.

Four Truths for a Foundation

Salima, Africa, October 3, 1999

(This was spoken extemporaneously by three brothers at a stop in a village in Africa, at a pentecostal denominational expression. IN ONE DAY the entire "congregation" radically responded to Jesus and has never looked back. At great personal cost, many changes were made, forever transforming many people and even their economic structure in that village. In a matter of a FEW HOURS word was out in their area within other religious groups that something supernatural was going on amongst them. I wish it were possible to have captured the things that were said by the local brothers from that village in Africa during the next hour after these thoughts were deposited with the Saints there. It was and is amazing and inspiring, truly, to see their courage and "zeal for the Father's House" expressed by "love of the Truth" and action in the time since that day.)

A precious treasure is awakening God's people around the world right now. There are special truths that have always been in your Bible that will change your life and change the way Church is expressed, in order to more highly exalt our King Jesus and see His Dream fulfilled! It is our hope, by the Holy Spirit, that all of our eyes will be opened to see these beautiful truths! God wants to build His House so we can all be stronger together. He wants to build His House so the gates of hell cannot prevail any longer. He wants to build His House so relationships can be healed. He wants to build His House so that He will be free to heal our bodies, our minds, and our souls. He wants to build His House so we can be strong and wise, and the Good News of Jesus can go forth, stronger than ever before.

Do you have the courage to hear these things? Will you obey the Word of God as you hear these things? Will you change your lives

regardless of the cost? If you have the courage to obey and to risk, then please read on.

There are four Truths upon which we must build. Without them, God's House will never be strong, and the gates of hell will continue to make a shambles of the House. However, if we understand these four things and obey them, and if we are willing to take risks for these Truths of God, then God will honor this and He will send His Power into our lives. The poor shall be rich and the weak shall be strong! This has always been God's heart and intention. However, this treasure has been stolen from us from the very first century on. We've been robbed by the empty traditions of men.

Truth #1: What is a Christian?

The first foundational Truth is to properly define what a Christian is. We have been very sloppy about this around the world and in every culture. Because we have not been clear about what a Christian is, we have built much of God's House on the sand. We have defined what makes someone a Christian by such things as sentiment or emotions or family upbringing. We have defined what a Christian is by whether a person has the "right" set of beliefs. We have defined a Christian by whether a person sings well, or attends enough, or tithes properly. That is *not* how Jesus defined Christianity.

Jesus said, "Unless you forsake all, you cannot be my disciple." Jesus said, "Unless you take up your cross every day, you cannot follow me." In the book of Acts, the Bible says, "The disciples were called 'Christians' first in Antioch." So, whenever you see the word "disciple" in the teachings of Jesus, think in your mind the word "Christian." When Jesus said, "Unless you forsake everything you cannot be My disciple," He was saying *you cannot be a Christian if you don't give away your life*. He did not say, "Unless you attend, you cannot be a Christian." He did not say, "Unless you read your Bible, you cannot be a Christian." He did not say, "Unless you give money, you cannot be a Christian." Jesus said, "Unless you die to your very self, you cannot be a Christian!"

Jesus is calling for a people who will die to their very selves. They will forsake everything to come after Him. They will forsake their pride and material goods to follow Him. They will turn away from personal sin and selfishness. They will love others more than they love themselves. This relationship with Jesus will change how they act every single day.

Unless we define the word “Christian” the way Jesus does, the House will sink into the sand and be washed away. This is what Jesus the King promised would happen if we build on the sand of hearing, singing and talking, but do not obey. The house we build will perhaps be something that is fun for us, but it will mean nothing to Jesus. The house we build may make us a little happier because we are singing and getting together, but it doesn’t mean anything if God is not happy about it! It doesn’t mean anything if Satan is still winning the battle in our lives. If we are not building a life and a Church that brings pleasure to Jesus, then we are wasting our time and God’s time.

Serious Consequences

The number one foundation stone in building God’s House is describing what a Christian is the way the Bible describes what a Christian is. ***We must make our decisions according to what God calls a Christian.*** Can a person be a member of God’s Church and not be a Christian? Absolutely not! But around the world people are being taught that it is okay for Christians and non-Christians to be part of the Church. The Bible says this is not true! In 1 Corinthians 5, the Bible says, “Remove the leaven from the batch.” Remove the sin from the Church. This is very important to understand, because God said, “A little bit of leaven leavens the whole batch.”

Do you remember when the walls of Jericho came crashing down? God’s people were mighty in a supernatural way. However, right after the walls of Jericho fell, Israel was defeated in battle. They were crushed! Why was Israel crushed in battle? Because one man in all of Israel had sin in his tent. God was very upset because one man in the

whole Church had sin in his life that was hidden. That man, Achan, had an idol buried under his tent. God caused *all of Israel* to suffer a great defeat because of it. God is the same yesterday, today and forever. Right? God is still very unhappy when people in His Church have hidden sin in their lives. This breaks His heart. The Bible says that God brings judgment for this.

Is it okay for us to say that someone who has never really given his life totally to Jesus can come and be part of the Church? *No!* This is a *very* big mistake. God brings judgment on the *whole House* because of that one person who claims to be a Christian, but has never really given his life to Jesus. So, if we are going to see a Glorious House that does the work of God, the first thing we must do is define the word “Christian” the same way Jesus does. The Scriptures say, “Unless you forsake all, you cannot be My disciple.” “If you love father and mother and children more than Me, you cannot be My disciple.” “If you love the world and the things of the world, you have become My enemy.” “God opposes the proud and gives grace to the humble.”

We must accurately define what a Christian—a member of the Church—really is! You cannot claim to be washed in Jesus’ Blood, and be a part of Jesus’ Body and pretend you are a Christian if your heart does not belong to Jesus when you are at home, or at work, or in the fields. If your relationships are not Holy relationships, you must repent and give your life to Jesus.

Truth #2: What is Leadership?

The second thing we must define, the second foundation stone of building God’s House, has to do with what leadership is in God’s House. This is a very wonderful Truth! This will excite you and change your life. In countries all over the world, we have all made a very big mistake about leadership in the Church. In many places the person who studies the Bible in seminary or bible schools, or a good businessman or speaker, gets to be the leader or the “pastor.” We have seen in India and other countries, many times, that the person with a

bicycle who can also read is chosen to be the leader. This is not God's way! God's leadership is not based on who can read, or who knows the most, or who can speak the best, or who has the best business experience, or who has wealth or education or charm or good looks or a bicycle.

Living Like Jesus

I will give you an example from the Scriptures. In Acts 6, there were some Greek widows who were very hungry at times because they were forgotten. When food was distributed they were overlooked and not cared for properly. The Church in Jerusalem had to decide how to solve this problem. They decided to choose some men to solve the problem. If you read your Bible, you will find out that there was a certain way to choose those men. Does the Bible say, "Choose from among you seven men who know their Bibles"? No. "Choose from among you seven men who can sing well"? No. "Choose from among you seven men who are experienced in business, or in the food business"? No. "Choose from among you seven men who can speak very well"? No. The way to solve the problem was, "Choose from among yourselves seven men who are full of the Holy Ghost and full of wisdom."

These were men who were tested every day. These were *not* men who went to school to become spiritual, or who simply spoke well. *These men were friends of God and deep friends of their brothers and sisters every day.* Stephen and Philip and those seven men were in people's homes every day, trying to help them. They would draw the water for the other believers and help them. They would hold the hands of the children of their friends and talk to them and teach them. They would go to people's homes when they were discouraged. They would go into people's workplaces during the day to encourage them. And they weren't even so-called leaders! They were just normal brothers who were living Jesus' life every day. "Choose from among yourselves seven men who look like Jesus, seven men who can see God and

hear God. Choose seven men who are washing the feet of the saints every day. Seven normal, everyday brothers who love God deeply from the heart, and demonstrate a supernatural connectedness to the Messiah.”

Because these men look like Jesus, every day in people’s homes, then we know they are full of the Holy Spirit. They are not full of the Holy Spirit because they can yell louder or sing better or say more things. They are full of the Holy Spirit of Jesus *because they look like Jesus with their daily lives*. This is the *only* kind of leadership in the Bible. In the New Covenant, Jesus told the twelve apostles to call no man teacher, call no man father, call no man leader, call no man master, call no man rabbi, call no man pastor, call no man reverend, for you are all brothers! So now we have a wonderful, different view of leadership.

So Different From the World

Learning this was very difficult for me, personally. Many, many years ago I used to be the “pastor” until I realized that the Bible said I was only supposed to be a brother amongst brothers. I was to use whatever gifts I may have “in the midst, as one who serves”—rather than as a boss or someone to look at all the time. If that was true for Peter, John, James, and the other apostles, it has to be true of any of us, no exceptions! “You are all just brothers.”

I walked away from large amounts of money I had made in the business world to be a “pastor.” And *now* I had to walk away from the money and position of being in an unBiblical position that men call “Pastor” of a church. I had to decide I was going to be a “*brother amongst brothers*.” Whatever Jesus has done in my life will show up in homes and in other lives as I hold the children’s hands. I didn’t have to be a big shot anymore! I didn’t have to be the main man anymore. I could just do what Paul said he did with the Thessalonians, and the Philippians, and the Believers in the town of Corinth—and that is to love people as a father and friend, and as a brother from house to house.

Paul said, “I went from house to house with tears.” He *loved* the people as a father or as a brother. He nurtured their lives as a mother would nurture a child. The other believers did that for him, too. This is true leadership in the True New Testament Church.

Jesus said to the apostles, “The Gentiles have a certain way to have leadership, but not so with you.” In the True Church, the Church against which the gates of hell cannot prevail, *leadership is very different from the way of the world system*. Leadership comes from within, not “lording it over” from the top.

The Gifts and Authority of Jesus

Let me paint a picture for you. The Bible says in Ephesians 4 that when Jesus went to Heaven, He gave gifts to men. Jesus took all the gifts that He had (and Jesus had many spiritual gifts, didn't He?), and He gave them to His people as a whole. He didn't take all the gifts that He had and deposit them on the “pastor” or on one “man of God.” The Scriptures say ***He took all of His gifts and gave them to His whole body***. The Bible says the Spirit is deposited and given as a Gift, as the Spirit wills, over the whole Church. If you are truly a Christian, if you have truly forsaken your very life for Jesus, then the Holy Spirit gives you a very special gift. Your gift is part of Jesus.

Before Jesus went back to Heaven, He said, “All authority in Heaven and on earth belongs to Me.” Do you remember that Jesus said that? All authority belongs to Jesus and no one else! So, if JESUS gave part of Himself to you, part to this person and part to that person, then whatever spiritual gifts He gave each of you, there is *authority* in that gift. Jesus gave the gifts, and He has all authority.

There are many kinds of gifts listed in the Bible. The Holy Spirit, for example, gives mercy as a gift. The gift of mercy is part of Jesus that He gave to some people. It is a supernatural gift. All of us should have mercy, shouldn't we? But there is supernatural mercy that is a gift of the Holy Spirit. And all authority belongs to Jesus. So, if He gave you the special gift of mercy, you have been given authority in the area

of mercy. If you have the supernatural gift of mercy and I do not, and if all authority belongs to Jesus and you have that piece of Jesus, then I honor that gift in you. You have authority in that area. Do you understand? This is what leadership is about!

All authority belongs to Jesus and we all have our own special gifts. For example, there are gifts of teaching. Hebrews 5 says, “We all ought to be teachers by now.” But in Ephesians 4 and Romans 12 it says there are supernatural gifts of teaching that Jesus gives. *This means there is authority in that gift because Jesus gives it and He has all authority.* We are to submit to each other in this. But teaching is only *one* gift and *one* part of Jesus. *There are many other gifts.* Since all authority belongs to Jesus and every gift that each of us has is a part of Jesus, then we submit to the gifts that are in each of us because Jesus has deposited them.

There is not some special authority that is in one “man of God” and everyone else just sits and watches. Because of the way men have built the church over the last 1800+ years, we have acted as if there is only one gift—the gift of “pastor.” (Or perhaps everyone else is allowed to have the “gift of giving money”!) But pastor/shepherd is only one gift! If we build wrongly, we all lose. If one man is pushed to the front to be the “pastor” and everyone else just sits and listens all the time, then no one gets to share your gift. They only get the “pastor’s” gifts. That is too small and corruptible! If we want to see the greatness of God, and if we want to see all of our lives change and our children’s lives change, we need ALL of Jesus. We must not settle for just part of Jesus. Amen?

Courage to Change and Courage to Run

Do you see why we said you must have courage? Things must change! You can’t keep doing what you have been doing. You are going to have to decide to use your gifts more and welcome others to do so also. You are going to have to decide to be obedient and to have courage. If you keep sitting in your chair or on the floor all the time and don’t

use your gifts more than you have been, your gifts will continue to dwindle away. “He who has been given a trust or gift must prove faithful.” Do you remember what happened to the man who buried his talent? Jesus said, “You wicked, lazy servant.” That’s what Jesus says to us when we don’t do what we are supposed to do. If I don’t use my gift or if you don’t use your gift, we are “wicked and lazy.”

Do you see how the traditions of men steal and rob the Word of God? What if you were an Olympic runner lying in a bed and someone took a rope and tied it around you? Even though you might be a champion athlete, if you were there tied to the bed your muscles would shrivel, and you would eventually die. All your potential would be lost because you have been roped to a bed for months or years. Do you see how the traditions of men steal and rob the Word of God? The way we have built for over 1800 years in God’s House has roped most of God’s people to the bed! They have not been able to get up and run and fulfill their destiny because humans have built wrongly, not following the Word of God. If we build or structure the church in a way that exalts one man or a “staff” and quenches others’ gifts, we are criminals in the Heavenly Courts because of the damage and loss many will suffer because of “leaven in the batch” and un-used Gifts! It’s not usually because people are “bad” that we have been building wrongly. Mostly it’s because we just didn’t know how to build God’s House, by God’s Design.

So, remember that the first building block for a true Foundation is that only *true Christians* can call themselves members of the Church. The second foundation stone that will build God’s House is that we have to understand leadership properly. We have placed just one man in charge for 1800 years. We have taken one gift, the gift of “pastor” *(or shepherd, better translated) and made it the primary gift. This is *far* from true in the Church in the Bible! And it must not be true now, either. This has roped most of God’s people to the bed so they could no longer be who God called them to be. Leadership is in *all* of God’s people. The Bible calls us a Kingdom of priests. The

Bible does not say a Kingdom *with* priests, but a Kingdom *of* priests. There is not just a special group like the Levite priests of the Old Testament. In the New Covenant, *all* of God's people are supposed to be priests to one another. GOD said, "When Revelation comes to the second, *let the first one sit down!!*"

If you are full of the Holy Ghost and full of wisdom, then you are a leader. It's not whether you went to school, or if you speak very well. It's not whether you are male or female, or young or old. Leadership is a person with a gift of Jesus and relationship with Jesus, full of the Holy Ghost and full of wisdom. Leadership is holding the children's hands every day. Leadership is healing the wounds of God's people from house to house every day. Leadership is helping to solve problems of sin in people's lives and washing people's feet every day. That is what leadership is, and it is the *only* kind of leadership of which the Bible speaks—using the part of Jesus that His Spirit deposited in each of us. That is our area of leadership and authority. This means we have to change how we currently function. We have to change how we view leadership and how we act out the process of leadership.

This is very revolutionary. This will change how we function in our meetings, how we function in our every day lives. There is a cost to it—a price that we pay. But God rewards us one hundred times whatever we give up, according to the exact Promise of Jesus.

When I was the "pastor," I decided that I was going to live differently. I decided to believe and obey the Scriptures about Leadership. I chose to be a brother in the middle of brothers rather than up in front of brothers. To be honest, I was afraid. I was afraid of how I would support my family. I was afraid that perhaps I would lose touch with God somehow and that people would not respect me anymore. I was afraid of many things. But I knew what God said in the Bible. He wanted me to be a brother amongst brothers. In my everyday life, I wouldn't be the boss anymore. I would just be one of the brothers, and still use my gifts from Jesus as "a brother amongst brothers" who

were also equally using their gifts. It changed *everything* for me, but God was very, very faithful. He promised that no one who has ever given up anything would fail to receive one hundred times as much or more than what was given up. God keeps His promises! Amen?

A Circle Around the Throne

From a practical standpoint, I want to suggest to you that if we really want to honor the gifts that are in each of us, and draw out the gifts that are in all of God's People, then we need to change many things. As silly as it sounds, one of those things may be how we sit when we are gathered together. When Jesus was here, He had a circle of people around Him. "To those seated in the circle around Him—these are my mothers, my brothers, my sisters" (Mark 3). Seated in a circle around Him! Isn't that the most natural thing to do, when we are gathered to hear HIM, and not a mere man with limited gifts? This may sound very simple to you, and it may not even sound very important, but I assure you it is. I've heard that the words for "pulpit" and "flesh" are pronounced the same way in French.

If someone at the workplace or in the market says something to you, does it matter *how* they say it? Of course it does! If they are leaning back, sitting against a stone and say something quietly with a yawn, that would be very different than if they said the same things with their face right up to yours and glared in your eyes with fire. *HOW* anything is said matters a great deal.

When we sit with everyone facing the front, it brings all the attention to one man. We are not equals amongst equals any longer. I am subservient to whoever has taken the throne in front of me as my master, or the conductor or facilitator or traffic cop or expert of the "class" or "service." But note this well! A true servant of God does not desire attention for himself. John the Baptist, who was the greatest man born of woman up until that time said, "Jesus must increase, I must decrease." Every true man of God says the same thing, "Jesus must increase, I must decrease. I don't want to draw attention to

myself. I don't want people looking at me all the time as the person who has all the answers. I don't take great joy in being the one who gets to speak. I just want to love and serve Jesus, and help everyone else do that, too. Jesus must increase. I must decrease."

Every true man of God wants to back away so Jesus will get the spotlight rather than himself. Again, some will say this is meaningless, but having been in many countries and cities, I assure you that it is not unimportant. It is absolutely important *how* we say something. When we set the chairs in rows instead of a circle seated around Jesus, it's like turning a spotlight on one man. Everyone else is just an audience and one mere man is the attraction. That is *very wrong* because there are many gifts amongst us, and they are all parts of Jesus. If we put everyone looking toward the front, we are exalting only one gift. How proud a man would have to be to allow himself always the "chief seat" or the spotlight.

So, what if instead all the gifts have an equal place? Perhaps there is someone with the gift of shepherd sitting in the circle. Maybe someone with a gift of teacher is sitting here and a gift of mercy sitting there. The gift of help may sit here and one with a gift of prophecy may sit here. All of the gifts have equal place because they are all Jesus! Does this make sense? (If you have a computer, take a look at www.JesusLifeTogether.com/JesusAsHead to see a "picture" of this.)

Now, if a mother in this circle is in tears about raising her children, the gift of teacher can speak to her and teach about what Paul says in Titus about women. The gift of mercy could offer thoughts of mercy; perhaps she had young children at one time and could share the feelings of it. The gift that has prophetic insight can see into the heart of *why* this sister is having problems with her children, and so on. Now, finally, we can truly obey the Command from God, "When Revelation comes to the second person, let the first one sit down." Hallelujah!! (Shouts, echoed!)

Everyone, Equally Important

In 1 Corinthians 14, God also said, “When you come together, brothers, and the whole Church is together, let everything be done for the building up of the Body. Every one of you has a word of instruction, a song, a revelation.” There is no boss except Jesus! “*Call no man leader, master, teacher, or pastor. You are all brothers.*” You all have Jesus and He is equal in each of us. Certainly there will be maturity differences, and some gifts are more “public,” while other gifts are more quiet or less visible in public settings. But, all are available and have opportunity. Sometimes we need the mercy of Jesus, and sometimes we need the teaching of Jesus. Sometimes we need the songs of Jesus, and sometimes we need the help of Jesus to solve problems. But it’s all equally Jesus. Please do read 1 Corinthians 14:26-40.

Can you see that this takes courage? Can you see that this takes faith and obedience? Can you see that this will change your life if you begin to live in these things? You will no longer be roped to the bed! Your gift will no longer be pushed back. Your gift is different than my gift, but yours is equal to mine. I need your gift just as much as you need mine.

Some of the most important things that have happened in my life have happened because a twelve-year-old with their gift affected my life. Women affect my life and children affect my life. Old people affect my life and not just on Sunday morning, but every day!

We are a Kingdom of Priests *every day*. Meetings are just extra, really. Ninety percent of our growth comes from living together, and maybe only ten percent comes from meetings. That means you have to get out of your house and into other people’s homes. You bring water, or food, or clothing to their house. When you see they are angry with a child, you may need to pull them aside to talk with them and walk with them. When you see pride in their life, you put your arm around them and ask them not to have pride. When you see selfishness in a brother’s life, you put your arm around him and say, “Please don’t be

selfish anymore.” We don’t just close our eyes until the next meeting. We live in the middle of each other’s lives every day as priests doing the work of God, and as “a hundred mothers, brothers, and sisters.” This, too, is an absolute command from God in Hebrews 3, and many, many other scriptures.

The first foundation stone is “What is a Christian? What is a member of the Church?” If you have people who are not truly converted to Jesus in the Church, then you will constantly have battles and fights that you don’t need to have. The Bible says, “From the least to the greatest, they will all know Him.” When everyone who calls himself a member *truly* is in love with Jesus, there is so much more peace—no fighting, no gossip. And there is *deep love of one another every day*. You cannot be a true member of the Church of Jesus unless you have forsaken your very life. Only Christians can be members of the Church. Everyone else is only visiting. But they are not members of Jesus’ Church.

This is absolutely what the Bible says. And “leaven” must be removed from the batch, or we do not love Jesus as much as we say. “If you love Me, you will obey My Commands.” The Church is for the bonding and strengthening and equipping and protecting of those washed in His Blood, having chosen to die to themselves in order to marry the Master, Jesus, forever. Anyone who has not made that decision, as evidenced by their lives and choices, and whether or not they “love the Light” (Jn. 3, 1Jn. 1), is *not* to consider themselves a Christian or a member of the Body of Christ. This is what God has said.

Any other definition of “church” is man-made, and the “gates of hell” *will* prevail against such a counterfeit. Look around. You will see it on every street corner in city after city, nation after nation. It is *not* God’s Plan, but only something to accommodate men’s flesh, while using the logo of Jesus to salve their consciences. But there is no healing there! The Messiah only circulates where He can leave a Lampstand!

The second foundation stone has to do with leadership. The Spirit and Current Life of the Resurrected Christ—is our only leader. “The

world won't see Me, but *you will!*" The measure of that Spirit that anyone has, the gift that one may have, that maturity and depth of real, living relationship with the Living Jesus that they have—that is the biblical definition of "Leadership."

Truth #3: Daily Life

The third foundation stone has to do with our daily life together. Daily life has nothing to do with how many meetings we have, but rather how much we are involved in each other's lives. Are we involved every day as a priesthood in the marriages and with the children of those around us, and with the work habits and the character traits of those around us? Are we involved every day, on a heart level with brothers and sisters? Do we "bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the Law of Christ"? Do we "confess your sins one to another, and so be healed"? Do we "contend as one Man for the Faith," "joined and knit together by every supporting ligament"—and accept *nothing less* as "true Church" and the very "Body of Christ"? Only *there* will you find out what Jesus meant by, "I will build MY Church that the gates of hell cannot overcome or withstand!" Everything else is a "house built upon the sand" of compromise, lukewarmness, disobedience, disconnectedness, and rationalization. And it will bear the appropriate fruit, unfortunately. God said it *does* matter *how* we build!

I will show you one Scripture, and it will change the rest of your life if you will obey it. If you will do this one Scripture, you will be amazed at how these other things make sense. It is a *command* from Jesus. Will you do it? Will you? Do you love Him? It will change your whole life to DO what He says, rather than just agree with it or study it or sing about it or have meetings about it! Let's look at it together. The Scripture is Hebrews 3:12-14:

"Be careful then, dear friends. Make sure that your own hearts are not evil and unbelieving, turning you away from the living God. You must warn each other every day, as long as it is called 'Today,' so that none of you will

be deceived by sin and hardened against God. For if we are faithful to the end, trusting God just as firmly as when we first believed, we will share in all that belongs to Christ."

Notice what this Scripture says—this is from God. Almighty God says to you and me that we must every day warn each other and help each other. We must be alongside each other every day. The Holy Spirit chose to say "every day." He didn't say every Sunday. He didn't say every Sunday and Wednesday. He didn't even say in meetings. He said get involved on a Truth level in each other's lives every day. If others are available or could be, and you do not get involved because of lifestyle, or pride, or selfishness, or choice of living situation, God said you will become harder and unable to feel what He feels. You will be deceived into thinking that you know what is right when you do not. That is what Scripture specifically says! He didn't just say to do it. He said if you don't do this, it will hurt you greatly. If I don't have brothers talking to me every day about my life—every day—I will become hard. I will become deceived. You may say, "But I read my Bible every day!" "But I pray every day!" "My wife is a Christian and I see her every day!" That's not what God said. You can read your Bible and pray every day, but if you won't be involved in each other's lives every day, you will become more and more hard, and more and more deceived. God says this in Hebrews 3:12-14. Do you believe the Bible? Do you believe God?

Who wrote the Bible? God! God said that we have to be involved in each other's lives every day. If you see me being selfish, you need to come to me and say, "Brother, don't be selfish. That makes Jesus sad." If you see me being proud, please help me and remind me that God opposes the proud. I don't want God to oppose me! You have to help me, because I can't see it all the time. No one can. "Admonish one another daily so that none of you are hardened and deceived." This is an important (and almost totally disobeyed worldwide) part of our daily life together. This is one key way you are a priest using your gifts, and "an ambassador of Christ, as if God were making His appeal through you."

Truth #4: Meetings

For 1800 years, the Christian world has confused the issues of who is a Christian... who is a leader... what daily life is supposed to look like... and what meetings are supposed to look like. Our Father wants to restore these things to you in your lives now. Just as the Word of God had been neglected in King Josiah's day, and Truth was found buried in the rubble of men's kingdoms and traditions, so today God's Truths, so long ignored (but always in the Bible) can set men free. God will change your life miraculously and change everyone around you as a result. These are very powerful and precious truths. Whether there are few or many in your village, as Jonathan, David's close friend once said, "God is not hindered to save by many or by few." "He who is given a trust must prove faithful." We must have the courage to do something about Truth we have ignored or disobeyed in the past. And He Himself will be your Shepherd, your Fortress, and your Rear Guard as you live boldly for Him.

We must have the courage to have meetings like the Bible describes in 1 Corinthians 14, "When you come together, brothers, everyone has a word of instruction, a song, a revelation." There is no one in charge except for Jesus Himself. We gather together having considered how we can "spur each other on toward love and good works" (Hebrews 10:24-26). We must give thought and prayer about how we can help each other when we do come together, and each of us takes responsibility to be a bearer of the Word of God and the Love of God. We have *each* "considered how to spur one another on to love and good works." This is in Hebrews 10. Please be sure and look at the very next scripture! This is for all of us, even in "meetings"!

1 Corinthians 14 says, "When revelation comes to the second person—when a second person hears something from God—let the first one sit down." That's what the Bible says. Why don't we do what the Bible says? No "special person" should be "automatically" expected to do anything—except listen and respond to God like everyone else. If someone brings a teaching from Jesus and others

come with a word of instruction or song or revelation...if this brother or sister is sharing something that Jesus showed them and revelation comes to a second person, the first one sits down—if we are responding to God’s command, rather than the traditions of men. Just like the Bible has always said.

Why don’t we do that? It is because we have inherited a heavy load of traditions from the roman catholics and from our “protestant” and “denominational” and pagan forefathers. The “priest” or “pastor” or MC or CEO is up front, talking to the “lesser” laity—all the poor people, all the audience—just sitting and listening. This is likely the practice and “doctrine” that Jesus said He hated—that of the “Nicolaitans” (translated as those who “conquer His People”). But GOD has said all of that must change, for His sake and ours.

Instead, Jesus said to “the circle seated around Him” that *everyone* has a word of instruction, a song, a revelation. We are all equal. We are all brothers and sisters with different parts of Jesus poured into us individually for the common good. How amazing and wonderful this is! He is setting us FREE from the “empty traditions handed down by our forefathers” with its clergy, laity and ritual. He’s setting us free into the “dangerous” world of trusting and loving HIM as our all-in-all! And there will be no chaos there, because He calls Himself “the God of Peace” and “of order.” It is simply *His* order, rather than man’s manipulations “for” Him.

Foundations for Change

Is this different from what you are used to? Do we have the courage to build God’s way? Is it frightening? Does it sound like fun? It is very fun! Some men who are part of the Church we are a part of had been Christians for twenty years and were still babies. But when they learned these ways and began to function as priests, they grew ten year’s worth in just one year. Hallelujah! Others had been “leaders” of churches that had hundreds and even thousands of people. They found out they were still only spiritual babies! They thought they were leaders, but

they found out that many children and mothers were more spiritual than they were. They had to grow up from being babies, and they have! All of this is very frightening, but it is also very exciting.

If you put into practice these truths that have always been in your Bibles, you will be amazed at how much closer to Jesus you will be two years from now. “Admonish one another daily.” Be involved with each other’s children and marriages and workplaces “every day.” Go there! You must get out of your “comfort zone” and go there when you would not have done so before! Yes, I mean YOU! 😊 Please, for Jesus! Speak the Word “as of God” into each other’s lives, in a practical, loving, wise way, every day. “When you come together, brothers, everyone has a word of instruction, a song, a revelation.” “When revelation comes to the second, let the first one sit down.” As you walk this out, you may find that some whom you thought were Christians don’t love Jesus as much as you always thought they did. You also may find some whom you thought to be very weak are becoming stronger and wiser than you could ever imagine. God’s ways expose frauds and counterfeits, and make the weak very strong. Glory to God!

These riches are entrusted to you. Put them into practice for Jesus’ sake. These stones are foundational. You must define what a Christian really is by what Jesus said. You must understand leadership and what it is really supposed to be. Live your lives every day, together, encouraging each other, building one another up. Help each other to grow and love Jesus more throughout your afternoons and evenings. Come and meet together around King Jesus.

If you love Jesus and build the right way, the gates of hell will no longer prevail. Sin will be crushed. Weakness and sickness will be healed. Sins will be forgiven. Kindness will lead many to repentance. Relationships will be built or restored, beyond what you could imagine in your wonderful dreams. You will shine like stars in the universe, displaying the goodness of God. And the Bride, the Church, will “make herself ready” and be ready when the Groom returns!! Amen?

Breakthrough of Glory

October 3, 1999, Salima, Africa

If you were building a building or a house, you would need tools: a saw, hammer, nails, and maybe a trowel. It is also true in the House of God. There are certain tools that are helpful. Even though the true Church of Jesus doesn't revolve around meetings, sometimes meetings are helpful as a tool. If we're singing songs together in Jesus, there are things that you can learn about your brothers and sisters while you're singing to Jesus. If you went before a chief or a magistrate in a community, and you were talking to him, and you were checking your watch and you were looking at your pockets or you were talking to others, the chief would not like this. If you were talking to him and then you would start to fall asleep or forget what you were saying or maybe just stop and not say anything for a while, then He would say to you, "Go away from my office until you mean business. When you are ready to pay attention to me, then you can come back. But you must leave until you're ready to be serious."

God is the same. When we're singing to Jesus, if we're really singing to Jesus, then our hearts will be connected. The look on your face, the focus of the eyes, the strength of speech, the ability to stay focused—these are all things that are a part of having a relationship with the King of Kings. So meetings have a value, and I'm going to give you a tool now. Meetings are only maybe 10 percent of our real life with Jesus. But it can be a clue of how we can help our brothers and sisters as priests. If the person sitting across from you while you are singing together is bored and not interested in singing, if they are just singing but you can tell it's not coming from their heart because they are just saying the words, then you know that you need to help them. You need to find out what the trouble is. Singing isn't about our personal entertainment. Singing is communication—singing to the King of Glory.

Or perhaps it's speaking to one another songs, hymns and spiritual songs. If I was talking to Joshua and then I turn away or start looking up in the air, then there is something wrong with my relationship with him. So someone would come and help me to have a better relationship with him. So here's a tool for helping to build God's house. And building God's house is, as Paul said, "Wrestling to present everyone complete or perfect in Christ." As a priest or a priestess, you must wrestle to present everyone perfect or complete in Christ. That is your job in God's house. Not to sit and listen, not just to sing, but the Bible says to "wrestle to present everyone perfect in Christ." The Bible says, "See to it, brothers, that none of you have a sinful, unbelieving heart.

So here's a tool to help you to do that. When you're together and everyone is singing, now you can see each other's faces, right? You use to only see the back of their heads. But now we're family and we can see each other. If I'm singing a song to you, I can look at you and smile and sing that song to you as if I were talking to you. If I'm singing a song to Jesus, I can look at Him with my heart and I can sing to Him as if I'm speaking to someone, which I am. If we're singing and I'm not interested, I'm just hanging my head and not paying attention and just wriggling around—then you need to ask me what is happening with my relationship to God. Obviously, there's some problem with my relationship with Jesus if I'm distracted when I'm speaking to Him.

The Bible says that true Christians, like newborn babies, crave the pure spiritual milk of the Word. True Christians crave to have a relationship with Jesus like a baby craves milk. Jesus said that to be truly one with Him, the zeal for the Father's House would consume us like fire consumes a log. We each have a fire in our bones that can't be quenched. And if you see someone that is a wet log, and the fire is not burning, just smoke, then you need to help them.

One of the tools for helping to build God's House is that as we're lifting our hearts to God, if you see people that are just bored or

distracted or don't really seem to care or be excited about Jesus—then think about it and pray for them. Perhaps go to their house later on in the day. Ask them how they're feeling, and ask them what they are thinking. Say, "I noticed that you were distracted, and you weren't really expressing love to Jesus. You were just not really putting your heart into it. And I wonder if you are very sad about something. What is on your mind that seems to be more important than Jesus to you? Have you been spending good time with Jesus in your prayer closet? Or have you just been attending meetings only and your relationship with Him is gone?" So this is one of the ways you can help each other to grow in Jesus and to pay attention to other people when we're together in one place. This is one of the ways that we are a priesthood rather than just attenders.

What Evil Men Say

There was a very evil man one day, named Cain. Do you remember Cain, Adam's son? He was very evil. One of the things he said was, "I'm not my brother's keeper." Evil men always say that. We *are* our brother's keeper. We love one another deeply from the heart. We wrestle to present one another perfect or complete in Christ. We're in the pains of childbirth until Christ is formed in each of our brothers and sisters. This is what Paul said about his brothers. This is what we say to you. That's why we have come all the way around the world to tell you these things. We're in the pains of childbirth until Christ is fully formed in you. We've come to wrestle to present you perfect in Christ. And you must do that for one another too. Wrestle to present one another perfect in Christ. It is not you and just your personal relationship with God. We being many are *one*, the Bible says. If your finger has a sickness or an infection, you start to get a headache, you start to get a fever—your whole body starts to hurt. It is also true in the Body of Christ. If one of us is hurting spiritually, we are all affected by that spiritually. We are our brothers' keeper. And if you see someone that is having problems with their relationship with

God in worship or child rearing or any other way, we must help each other. We being many are ONE. We are members of one another. It's not just me and my relationship with God and then everybody else. We are together ONE. Across the miles and across the ages, we are one. And we need each other. And we love to help each other grow.

So, a tool in your hand in building God's House is to pay attention to each other when we're all together in one place. And if you're seeing someone who is not plugging into God and plugging into others (they are just here taking up space), and they're distracted, then you need to get into their life and into their home and take them by the hand and help them to love Jesus more. You are your brother's keeper. We must help each other. Pay attention to each other.

When we sang that last song did you connect with God's heart and force your heart to connect with God's heart? And did you look around to see if there were some here that are suffering? Some that might be bored? Some that might be in rebellion against God and need some serious healing? Some that are weak and just don't pay attention well? There's probably a little bit of each of those things here. Because we've been roped to that for so long, we haven't paid attention to those things. It's time now that we begin to all grow up and take responsibility in God's House. It's on all of our shoulders together to serve the purposes of God in our generation. Amen?

While it's true that these things can cause divisions sometimes, it can tend to expose things on the inside of us that were hidden while we were dancing and worshipping. Some people love the light and some people hate the light. So living this way will create a division because some love the light and some hate the light. Jesus said I didn't come to bring peace but a sword. Sometimes it'll even divide family members from each other.

The Good News

We already have way too much division. You walk up the street in that direction, you see all kinds of division—Church of Christ,

Nazarene, Lutheran, Catholic. There's already way too much division. But, here's the Good News. If you live as the Kingdom of God rather than just one denomination, if you represent Jesus rather than a denomination, if you help other people to love Jesus more to get away from sin, and be friends to the Baptists, Lutherans and all these others, everyone will begin to put away their labels. What will happen in this city of Salima? As everyone comes to understand these revelations and obey them, up and down the street, there will still be divisions. But the divisions will be between those that want to love and obey Jesus and those that don't want to love and obey Jesus, instead of all these foolish labels that we have now. Division will be over love and obedience and *not* over traditions. And Jesus will have a testimony in this city of a oneness that has never been seen before. This is why it is so important that you build the way that we spoke of today. Reach your lives into these other believers in this city and help them to build this way, too. If you do this there will be no more division about names anymore. Only division over those that want to love and obey Him and those that just want to play "religion." Is this Good News?

If we learn to live this way, people's lives will change. People will actually look more like Jesus. There will be someone that you care for very much and you and others together will be wrestling to present that person perfect in Christ. You will see that person making decisions to obey and see a transformation in that person's heart. Do you know what you'll do then when you are together with your brothers and sisters? You'll sing loud because you'll be praising God for what He has done. You won't be thinking, "Well, I better sing loud, I'm a Pentecostal." You'll be thinking, "Jesus has done great things. I want to praise Him!" What we are talking about today—just how people's lives will change, how Jesus will come on His people—that's something to sing about! That's something to praise God about!

Satan will be crushed out of our lives and that's something to praise God about, too!

I have to say that when we began to walk in some of these things fifteen years ago, it was quite frightening and quite challenging. Does this frighten anyone?

You are more courageous than I was then, because it was difficult for me at first. But after fifteen years, and thousands of people around the world that are beginning to walk in these things now, it is quite exciting, and the fear is gone. So God will protect you and give you wisdom and love as you go forward in these things. He will truly supply all our needs according to His riches in glory. It will be okay. He'll be a Father to us. He will be a Teacher and the Lover of our souls. And we'll make it through the hard times together. Jesus will get the victory. He'll get the victory all down the street and through this whole city. He'll get the victory inside of our hearts where the fear, selfishness and pride live. He'll wash us clean and make us full and free in ways that are more than we can ask for or imagine. These things are true, and you'll experience them if you'll open your hearts and go forward.

When Joshua went into that Promised Land, God had to say to him, "Don't be afraid." And when the priests went first across that river, it was a little difficult for them. The Bible said they had never gone this way before. And God said, "It's okay, I will be with you." And these things are true for you too, not only in this assembly, but all through the streets and other assemblies and all through the city. God will be with you when you go forward with His Word. Be thou strong and courageous! God said, "As I was with Moses, as I was with you in your past, so shall I be with you as you go forward. Be not afraid!"

much later after several saints share from their hearts...

Brothers and sisters...Have you seen what has happened here today? We're beginning to see a Kingdom of priests. When revelation comes to the second, the first one sits down. And when revelation comes to the third and the fourth....!! (*cheering from all around the room*)

Five Chairs

Tuesday Afternoon, October 5, 1999

By God's grace, I'd like to impart to you some tools for understanding and discerning people's behavior. Let's suppose for a moment that we have before us, five chairs. And seated in those five chairs are five individuals representing five types of people that you are likely to meet during your journey on earth.

The First Two Chairs

In the first chair, we have an unbeliever or pagan—someone who makes no claim to follow Jesus at all. Perhaps this person is a Muslim or a Hindu or an atheist. This person does not claim to be a Christian.

In chair number two, however, we have a person who claims to follow Jesus, but this person does not obey Jesus. At meetings, this person appears to love Jesus. But he does not really love Him because he does not obey Him. In Matthew 7, Jesus said that there would be many people who say, "Lord, Lord." There will be many who do high-profile works in His Name, but to whom He will say, "Depart from Me, I never knew you."

Everyone knows that the person in chair one is not saved because this person doesn't even claim to follow Jesus. We know that unless you have the Son, you cannot have the Father. Unless you believe in your heart that God raised Jesus from the dead, the Blood will not wash away your sins. This person does not claim to be interested in the Savior. He doesn't believe that Jesus is the Son of God. This person cannot be saved because he does not trust in Jesus. Jesus' Blood does not wash away this person's sins. Until this person in chair one surrenders to Jesus, he cannot be saved. He might be considered a wonderful person and a good father and a good worker, but he cannot be saved without the cleansing of the Blood of Jesus.

On the other hand, the person in the second chair says, “I’m a Christian.” But the behavior of this person is bad, even though this person may do seemingly “good” works in Jesus’ Name. In the Gospel of Luke, Jesus said that on the Day of Judgment, people like this will say, “Jesus, you taught in our streets. You ate at our table. We did miracles in your name. We gave our wealth to the poor.” But Jesus says to these people in Matthew 7:21, “You did not obey me. You did not do the will of my Father. I never knew you.” Jesus is indicating here that many people who profess to be Christians, and even do mighty works in His Name, are actually on the broad road that leads to destruction. These people claim to be Christians, they claim they are members of the Church, but in reality, they are not.

The person in the first chair is not saved because of unbelief. The person in the second chair is not saved because of disobedience, which the Bible says is also unbelief.

The Other Three Chairs

Now the people in the next three chairs represent true, Blood-bought followers of Jesus. These three are Christians. But I want to clarify something so that there is no confusion with the person in chair number two.

There is a very intriguing passage in 1 John 2 that identifies the individuals we have in our last three chairs. John said, “I write to you children, I write to you fathers, I write to you young men.” And then he said it again, “I write to you children, I write to you fathers, I write to you young men.” Now our normal way of thinking of the order of things is children, young men, and then fathers. Right? But God gives this order, “Children, fathers, young men.”

Children, fathers, young men—these are all saved individuals. These are people that believe Jesus is the Son of God, and their sins are forgiven and they are washed in His blood. Chair three represents children, chair four represents fathers, and chair five represents

young men. You could think of them as babies, mature or responsible adults, and then warriors.

The thing I want to make clear is that sometimes the behavior of children, even though they are totally saved, looks like the behavior of unsaved people (like the person in chair two). But the person in chair three (the True child) is washed in the Blood of Jesus. The person in chair two may claim to have been washed in the Blood of Jesus. This person might even sing songs about the Blood of Jesus saving them, but because this person can go on and on deliberately rebelling against Jesus, this person is not truly a Follower of Jesus. “Anyone that claims to be in Him must walk as Jesus walked.” “Everyone that will not listen to Jesus will be completely cut off from amongst the People.” “Everyone that has this Hope purifies himself as He is pure.” “No one who is truly born of God will continue to sin because God’s Seed remains in him. He cannot go on sinning because he has been born of God.”

The Chair Two/Chair Three Dilemma

Sometimes the behavior of the person in chair two might even be better than the behavior of the person in chair three. But, there is something you have to understand about the Good News of Jesus. The person in chair three is saved because he has surrendered to Jesus and sought cleansing in His Blood. In Ephesians 1 and Galatians 3, God said that when a person believes in his heart (not just in his head) in Jesus Christ, that He gives that person the gift of the Holy Spirit to live inside of them. The Holy Spirit is given to everyone who truly believes and trusts in Jesus from the heart.

So, now you have a dilemma. If you’re only judging by the behavior, how do you know how to respond? What if you encounter the baby Christian who behaves poorly, and you have an unbeliever that claims to be a Christian, but, for all you can see, perhaps behaves a little better? Well, has anyone ever been saved from sin because they have good behavior? Is that the Good News of Jesus? Is the Good

News that we're saved by our good behavior? Of course not! We're saved by the Blood of Jesus. We're saved from our sins past, and we're saved from our sins future by the Blood of Jesus Christ.

So then, why does it say in the Bible in the book of Galatians that everyone that lives like a sinner will not enter the Kingdom of God? That sounds like our salvation is affected by our behavior. But we know that can't be true. We're saved by the Blood of Jesus, not by our behavior. So then, why does the Bible say that everyone who lives in sin and continues to live in sin cannot enter the Kingdom of God and will not go to Heaven? Why did Jesus say, "The sheep are the ones who do My will and obey Me, and the goats are the ones who would not obey Me"? Jesus said the sheep are going to heaven, and the goats are going to hell. And Jesus said you know the sheep by what they do, and you know the goats by what they don't do. That sounds like we're saved by our behavior. But we know that can't be true.

Resolving the Dilemma

What is the message here? How do we understand this aspect of the Gospel? Well, this is the mystery and the power of the Good News of Jesus. Everyone who has truly given their heart to Jesus and has turned away from their past is given the gift of the Holy Spirit. We read in the book of 1 John that there are many signs of what the indwelling Spirit looks like in a person's life. There are many who will say, "Lord, Lord," but will hear Jesus say, "I don't even know you." So we know that a person is not necessarily a Christian just because that person claims to be or does seemingly wonderful things in the Name of Jesus.

The book of 1 John was written about sixty years after Pentecost. The Apostle John was perhaps eighty-five to ninety years old. John had many years to think and to pray about what a true Christian looks like. By that time, sixty years after the day of Pentecost, there were many people that had grown up in the Church. There were new babies born who grew up and had their own babies in that amount of time. So there

were many people that grew up saying the right words because their parents said the right words. By this time, there were many people who “grew up in the church” and so knew all the songs and could clap and sing and say all the right words. But John recognized that though some might appear Christian, they might have never truly given their lives to Jesus. A person is not a Christian because his or her parents are Christians, right? A person is not a Christian because that person attends Christian meetings. A person is not a Christian because of mentally believing the right things. A person, according to Jesus, is not even a Christian by virtue of performing miracles in His Name. There are going to be people on that Day, who have apparently done miracles in His Name, and He will tell them, “Depart from Me into outer darkness. I never knew you.”

A Deposit of the Holy Spirit

As I mentioned, the book of 1 John was written sixty years after Pentecost. John answers many of these same questions that he likely had to face also. John wrote many different things in the book of 1 John that describe what a genuine Christian looks like. Over and over he describes what it looks like if someone has evidence of the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit. The Bible says that everyone who is truly a Christian has a deposit or a down payment called the Holy Spirit.

When a person is buying a house or buying a car, sometimes they will give a down payment or a first payment. That deposit, or down payment indicates that the buyer is serious about the purchase. That first payment is like a guarantee that the full payment will come. The Bible says that God, as a down payment, gave the Holy Spirit to everyone who believes. This is the proof to us that we will inherit eternal life forever. If someone is missing the down payment, the deposit of the Holy Spirit, it is an indication that there has been no agreement or covenant made between this person and Jesus.

This is why John, the apostle, says that the difference between a Christian and a non-Christian is not whether they do miracles, not

whether they believe the right things, but whether they have the Holy Spirit. And what does it look like when a person truly has the Holy Spirit? Is it doing miracles? Is it singing and attending meetings? No, those are not indicators that help us understand who has the Spirit and who does not. The person in chair three, who is a baby in the faith, may have truly surrendered to Jesus from the heart, but might display bad behavior sometimes.

Some Love the Light

John and Jesus gave us one very important test to help us make sense of this confusion. Jesus put it this way, “Some love the light, and some hate the light” (Jn. 3). John said, “If we can continue to sin, then we don’t know God, and we have proven that we don’t have the Holy Spirit” (1Jn. 1-4).

Jesus said, “Some love the Light, and some hate the Light.” This saved person’s behavior might not be very good sometimes, but because this person has the Holy Spirit in their life, this person will love the light and love the truth. Like a newborn baby, this person will crave the pure spiritual milk of the Word. When you approach this person and say, “Your behavior at work, or with your wife is disconcerting, brother. Do you realize that when you do these things you’re hurting many people, including Jesus?” The person in chair three may start to cry and say, “You’re right. I know you speak the truth. In my heart, I am sad about how I have treated my wife. Thank you for coming to tell me. I want you to tell me these things. I need your help.” This is very strong evidence that this person has the Holy Spirit and is truly saved.

Perhaps this person’s behavior is not very good at home or at the workplace at first, but the Bible says that if one is truly saved, the Holy Spirit will manifest Himself with a love for the Light and exposure of Truth. This person will say, “Pray for me! Ask Jesus to help me! Please—YOU help me, too? I invite you to speak the words and insights of Jesus to me anytime. I will open my heart and welcome Light and Truth and His Priesthood of all Believers.”

What does the person in chair two say? This person does not have the Holy Spirit. This person may appear to do miracles in Jesus' name. This person may sing and dance and even preach sermons, but still not have the Holy Spirit. How do you know this person does not have the Holy Spirit and is not really saved? Because when you go to this person and say, "Your behavior is not very good with your wife," this person says, "You're judging me! Get the log out of your own eye! You're being legalistic! Mind your own business! Who do you think you are to talk to me like that? Don't you know I'm a 'pastor'? You can't talk to me like that! Touch not God's anointed!" This person is not saved, because this person does not love the Light. There is strong evidence that this person does not have the Holy Spirit, because this person does not love the Light. Some love the Truth and so are saved. Some do not love the Truth and are not saved (2Thes. 2:10). Some love the Light and some hate the Light because their deeds are evil (Jn. 3:19-21).

So, if you judge only by behavior, you'll make mistakes. Sometimes the behavior of the chair number two people and the chair number three people looks very similar. In fact, sometimes chair number two people look better than chair number three Christians. Chair number two people appear, at times, to be doing great works for Jesus. But Jesus in John 3, and the Apostle John in the letter of 1 John say behavior is not how you judge. You can only understand who is saved and who is not by who has the Spirit. And a key evidence of the Spirit living inside of a person is that person's response to Light.

The New Covenant

I'll go back all the way to the Old Testament to prove this point. The prophesy about the coming of Jesus in the New Covenant can be found in Jeremiah 31 and also in Ezekiel 36. In both cases, He said the same thing about the coming of the New Covenant. God said that in the Old Covenant, a man says to his neighbor, "Know the

Lord, know the Lord!” (We’ve tried to re-enact the Old Covenant in modern church for many years now, and it’s the wrong idea.)

The New Covenant, according to both Jeremiah and Ezekiel, works like this: “The proof that I’ve forgiven their sins and remembered their transgressions no more, the proof that I’ve truly forgiven their sins and made them Christians is that I’ll put my Spirit in them and I will cause them to keep my commands and decrees.” The proof that a person is truly a Christian and their sins are forgiven, according to prophecy six hundred years before Jesus, is that Jesus will put His Spirit in them and turn their hearts of stone into hearts of flesh. He will put His Spirit in them and now the sheep will know the Shepherd’s voice.

The Proof of the Holy Spirit

A Christian, a partaker of the New Covenant, loves the Truth (2Thes. 2:10) and loves the Light (Jn. 3:19-21), and is now a “partaker of the DIVINE nature” (2Pet. 1:4; Rom. 6:1-14). That’s the proof that the Spirit lives in them or in any of us. We don’t have to take everyone’s word for it just because they say, “Lord! Lord!” This is good news! Pagans or false religionists no longer can control the Churches! We can now obey, out of relationship, the command to “get the leaven out of the batch” without being “judgmental”! If they do not love the Light of exposure because they earnestly desire to grow in Jesus, but rather resent and resist and close others out by being defensive, they are not saved, according to Jesus, and cannot be considered part of His Church. Now, remember: ONLY WITH DAILY RELATIONSHIPS can you EVER know if anyone loves the Light and the Truth, and is therefore a child of God. A few meetings a week will never allow anyone to know if someone loves the Light and is just weak, or if they hate the Light and therefore are not yet Saved. If they do not love the Truth and desire it with all their hearts (rather than resist the Truth with pride and defensiveness and blame-shifting), then the Holy Spirit says they are not saved at all. This is

very helpful to understand! IF they are saved, they WILL have the Holy Spirit (Rom. 8:9, Galatians 3, Ephesians 1). And the PROOF that they have the Holy Spirit in them (no matter how many times they tell you a great “testimony” and say, “Lord, Lord!” Matthew 7) is that they love to obey. They are new creations and now love the Light, and love the Truth (2 Thessalonians 2:10), and “like newborn babies crave” the Word of God to be *applied in their lives* (1 Peter 2). Under the New Covenant, we won’t have to convince someone, “Know the Lord, know the Lord.” We won’t have to say, “Change your behavior so you can act like a Christian.” Now we can say, “You’re behavior is not like Jesus.” And true believers, like newborn babies craving milk, will say, “You’re right. God forgive me! Will you forgive me, too? 1 Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4 say I need your help to be all I can be for Jesus. Can you help me? Please pray for me. And if you see me acting like that again, please come to me again. And if I’m not listening to you very well, please bring two or three and come talk to me again, the way my Master and my beloved Jesus said to do.”

Do you remember that scripture in Matthew 18? If you talk to a brother or sister and at first they don’t understand you or won’t hear you, Jesus says you should bring two or three others to help them understand. Then, if they still don’t understand and won’t change, you should tell the whole Church. Isn’t that what our Lord taught us to do?

Now, let’s say you come to me and I’m angry with my children, and you say, “You shouldn’t be angry with your children like that. You can be kind.” Or I’m quarreling with people and having arguments with people, and you come to me and say, “God said the Lord’s servant must not quarrel.” If I’m a little baby, I might say, “You know, I don’t really see what you’re saying. I don’t really agree with you. I don’t understand what you’re saying. You say my behavior is bad, but I don’t really see it that way. Will you please bring three others to help me understand, because I don’t agree with you? If you’re right,

I want to know about it, because I want to change. So please bring two or three others to help me understand and then even tell the Church if you need to, because I want to understand.”

Look at the Heart, Not Behavior

This heart is the proof that the Holy Spirit lives inside of a person. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the deposit that guarantees their inheritance. “This is the verdict,” says Jesus, in John 3. This is what separates innocent from guilty. Not that everyone is perfect, but the ones who have their sins forgiven ALL “love the Light.” They have the gift of the Spirit that they didn’t have before. Now, from deep inside, their hearts of stone have become soft hearts of flesh. From deep inside, God is causing them to keep His commands and decrees. From deep inside, they care about Jesus’ words about their behavior. The sheep know the Shepherd’s voice because they have the Spirit of Jesus. The sheep say, “I want to follow Jesus! Lead me that way.” The goats say, “Leave me alone! I can do miracles! I can give my money to the poor! I know things. I’m better than you, and I don’t care what you say.”

Looking at behavior is not the best way to understand the heart. If a person’s behavior is bad, that’s an indication that there is a problem. But if you cannot talk to them because they do not love the Light, then you have a serious problem. That person is not saved. If, on the other hand, a person’s behavior is not very good because they are still a baby, the behavior is still a problem. They just may not know any better, but they love the Light and want help. And that’s a very workable situation.

We must not look only at the behavior problems. Many people have problems because, perhaps, their parents raised them poorly. Others perhaps had friends who were bad company before they became disciples of Jesus. Perhaps before coming to Jesus many were deep in sin (as I was and some of you were), and so we came into the Kingdom with pretty bad habits. Again, the issue is *do we love the Light?!*

Do you remember this example from Scriptures? The believers in Corinth were new Christians. None of them had been Christians for more than three or four years. They lived in a very wicked city called Corinth. There were many evil things in that city. Many of the believers in the Church in Corinth had been involved in those evil things, including homosexuality and many other things, according to the letter. These believers had come out of those evil, wicked things, but they were still babies. They had given their lives to Jesus, but they still had weaknesses and bad habits. So their behavior was not yet perfect. But do you remember what Paul said when he confronted some of their problems? He said, "I knew that you would obey."

In the second letter to the Corinthians, in chapter 7 Paul said, "When you got my first letter, you responded with great energy and great repentance. You were frightened by the evil that you saw in your own lives. You were alarmed by it, and you were very earnest and passionate to rid yourself of that sin." Paul said, "I bragged to Titus that I knew when you got my letter that you would repent." That's what it says in 2 Corinthians 7.

Their behavior was very bad in the Church in Corinth. Paul wrote the first letter to them confronting all of their different kinds of sin. But they were truly saved, and Paul knew that they were, so he was able to write, "I knew you had the Holy Spirit, so I knew that when I brought these things to your attention that you would repent. And I even told Titus you would repent. So now Titus has returned to me and brought me a lovely message, and it brings great joy to my heart to hear you have repented just as I told him you would." Any person who truly has the Holy Spirit will welcome a letter or welcome a brother coming to them and helping them. They want to change.

The Good News of Jesus Christ is that we are washed by His Blood and all of our sins are forgiven because we put all of our faith in Jesus as our Savior. The proof that we have done that from the heart, the deposit that guarantees our inheritance, is the Holy Spirit given to every true Christian. If a person has the Holy Spirit, they will love

the Light and love the Truth... and then their behavior will begin to change. They repent of how they treat their husband or their wife, and they change. They repent of how they treat their coworkers, or their children, or their neighbors, and they change. They repent of their past sins and wicked habits, and they change and become more mature.

God's Plan for Growing Us Up

Now, do you see how the Church comes into this issue? God's plan is a treasure in earthen vessels. God's plan is a priesthood of believers. God's plan is for His people to "admonish one another every day." As we truly live this out together, one benefit is that all of God's true children become more and more mature. Another result of walking together as God intended is that if someone doesn't love the Light, then they are exposed as a pretender. If they are uncorrectable, if they don't care what Jesus says about these things, if they get angry and arrogant, then they are exposed as being a counterfeit Christian. It becomes clear that they must not have ever really given their life to Jesus because the truth is one cannot have the Holy Spirit and not love the Light (John 3, 1 John 1, 3).

So, if the church is truly being the Church, then as priests we will all help each other to grow in maturity. We will all be Light and Life to one another. We will all help each other see things that we can't see in ourselves. If I'm selfish, I can't always see my selfishness. But my selfishness is hurting Jesus. My selfishness is harming my ability to love Jesus. If I have selfishness, it's harming my ability to be blessed by God, because God won't bless selfishness. It harms my testimony for Jesus if I'm a selfish man. So the purpose of a priesthood is to help each other know God better every day—in the marketplace, in the home, in the workplace. In the Church, I can grow from being a baby who is selfish, and eventually become a true man of God.

Paul said (1Cor. 3) that some people who are saved barely escape through the flames. These people go to Heaven, but they sneak

through the flames to get there. Read it in 1 Corinthians 3 yourself. The Bible says that some people are saved, but they are burned escaping through the flames. But that is not God's intention! It is not God's desire that we just barely make it to Heaven. God's intention is not that a bunch of babies with lots of sin in their life go to Heaven. God's intention is that we be a City set on a hill that cannot be hidden. God's intention is that we be established as the Chief among the mountains. God's intention is that we be a Bride that has made herself ready. God's intention is that we be a pure, spotless and blameless Bride. God's intention is that His Church be an equal yoke for the Son of God when He comes back for His Bride.

Everyone permitted by God into the Church loves the Light. Some of us may be immature. Some of us may even behave badly sometimes. But if we truly have the Spirit of God, if we are true Christians rather than counterfeit Christians—then we will love the Light. And loving the Light together with other brothers and sisters, we will be able to help each other to grow. Then everyone will grow stronger and stronger and wiser and wiser. We can have more and more love of Jesus and more and more power from God in our lives. The testimony of Jesus can get stronger and stronger and humiliate the enemy. There will no longer be a bunch of babies who are an embarrassment to Jesus' Testimony—a bunch of babies with bad behavior that look nothing like Jesus. A bunch of babies with bad behavior is not impressive to the gates of hell. A bunch of babies with bad behavior will not help unbelievers become followers of Jesus.

If we are a Church of men and women of God who are mature and look like Jesus with our lives...if the Church is a glorious, wise, wonderful Bride for Jesus with the power of God and the character of God in our lives every day, then people will be very impressed with Jesus and they'll want to come to know Him!!

So, consider this issue of what a false Christian is (chair number two) and what a true Christian is (chairs three, four and five). Consider that good behavior does not necessarily mean you're a Christian

(Mat. 7). Consider that bad behavior does not necessarily mean that you're not washed by the Blood of Jesus. The real issue according to John 3, 1 John 1, 2 Thessalonians 2, and 1 Peter 2 is that a true believer has the Spirit of God. A true believer's behavior might be bad sometimes, like sometimes a young child's behavior is not good. But if they are truly born a second time with the Spirit, like a newborn baby they will crave Truth and crave Light. The purpose of the Church is to help the person with bad behavior who does love Truth to have the wisdom and the courage to obey Jesus and become more mature.

So, we must define a Christian properly. We must also live like the Church is supposed to live—admonishing one another daily so that none are hardened or deceived by sin. We must live as a priesthood. Then all the babies will get stronger and stronger. Then Jesus will have His testimony—a Bride filled with His Spirit and His personality. Jesus will have His Church that the gates of hell will not prevail against. And then, the beauty of Jesus will be here for all of Islam and all of Hinduism and everyone to see. We must not be just babies who say the right things, but don't live like Jesus. And, the Church is not a collection of counterfeit Christians who say the right things but don't have the Spirit of Jesus living inside of them, as a Person. But we can be and will be a glorious Bride for Jesus. This is the Good News of the Kingdom of God.

Power to Change, Power to Expose

Now, back to the five chairs illustration. The people who might sit in chairs two, three, four and five are all found in most religious assemblies today. These four kinds of people are all in Baptist, Nazarene, Methodist and Pentecostal Assemblies. Because we have been building the Church wrong, all of these people are all together. All the "four chairs" are together, including those in chair number two that should not be permitted in the Churches as "members." But, for lack of true, deep relationships in a daily Priesthood (as God has

desired and commanded), those in chair number two are welcomed (in disobedience to the Master, [1Cor. 5]). And just as bad, those in chair number three are often ignored or rejected. Frankly, more than 85% of those permitted in the churches worldwide are either in chair number two or chair number three. This is very sad. This is also unnecessary if we were building JESUS' WAY! Very seldom would you have an Islamic or a Hindu man that thought he was part of the Church. But the normal religious church (which is not really a church as God defines a Church) will have all four of these kinds of people together. Do you understand?

If we live the way Jesus said and begin to build the way the Church is supposed to be built, then we can find out who the pretenders are and who those who are weak are and we can help. If the Church is built around daily relationships instead of a meeting on Sunday, then all of these four types of people will be having relationship every day. The pretender and the true children, fathers and young men will be in relationship with one another every day. As you know, the Bible says to admonish one another every day. The Bible says true Christianity confesses sin one to another on a daily basis. We know the Bible says we're supposed to serve one another, love one another, and bear one another's burdens in order to fulfill the Law of Christ. If that's what the Church looks like, then you have power to change things and to expose things.

Do you remember in Acts 2:42-47, from the very first day of Christianity, all of the believers were together and had everything in common? This was not because of "culture" or "expedience"—it was people living out the Life and Teachings of Jesus. People today hide behind arguments of "culture" to excuse the fact that they love the world and the things of the world, and want a god of convenience for Sunday morning and Wednesday night, and "cell group Friday." But GOD'S People, born from above with JESUS' PRIORITIES were daily and in public and from house to house. They were all together every day, devoted to the apostles' teaching, devoted to fellowship,

devoted to breaking of bread, devoted to prayer. They did not have a “common purse” (Acts 5:4-5), but the New Life inside of them, as Jesus commanded, “counted none of their possessions as their own.” The Bible says they were of one accord, contending as one man for the faith. The Bible says they were joined and knit together by every supporting ligament. That is the New Testament Church—daily, close relationships. Every single member of the Church lives like they have a hundred mothers, brothers, and sisters. If that’s how we build, there is power from God to change, and power to expose and remove the enemy’s strongholds in our lives.

We Must Build God’s Way

If we build the way men build, with the traditions of men, we have a Sunday morning meeting and a sermon, and then these people, even false Christians in “chair number two,” just all show up like an audience. Now, 1 Corinthians 5 says we must get the leaven out of the batch. The Bible says if there are gossipers among you, or immoral people, or selfish, idolatrous people, or people that love the world, we must remove them from the assembly. The Scriptures say we must not even eat with people who claim to be believers but live this way. We must not associate with them or be their friends. JESUS says we MUST “expel them from your midst.” The Bible says anyone that calls himself a brother and lives in those sins must be removed from the assembly. Now, how do you do that on Sunday mornings? We can’t do that. It’s impossible on Sunday mornings, or a quality of life that is defined by Sunday morning for many of the “members.”

Why isn’t it possible to obey the Scriptures that call us to be One, and to “get the leaven out of the batch”? Because we have built wrong. Because of the way we have built with the traditions of men, this weak person (the child in chair three) looks very bad, and this person who is not even saved (chair two) looks like a hero many times. Sometimes he is even a deacon, or an elder, or the “pastor”! This chair two person is doing “miracles” in Jesus’ name. On Sunday

mornings, this man is a hero—and he’s not even a Christian! This other person in chair three looks weak. But this weak person is saved—and this person in chair number two that makes excuses and does not “love the Light,” this “hero,” is not saved at all. He is leaven, and God said he must not be permitted to be there.

Now some people use the teachings of Jesus in the parable of the wheat and the tares (Mat. 13) to excuse sin in the church, saying, “We must let the wheat and the weeds grow up together, as Jesus said. The angels will take care of it at the end of the age.” This is a terrible mistake. It is twisting what Jesus said (sometimes unknowingly, sometimes knowingly for their own benefit!) Read the parable yourself, and you will see that Jesus did NOT contradict Paul, who by the Spirit commanded us to remove the leaven from the batch! Jesus did NOT say, “You must allow weeds to grow up in the Church.” Jesus said, “The field is the WORLD!” Jesus did NOT say, “The field is the CHURCH.” Of course, we are “in the world, but not of it,” and the enemy will sow weeds “IN THE WORLD.” We are NOT to try to create a social and spiritual “utopia” in the “WORLD” by trying to remove all the weeds from “the WORLD.” We are to be “the salt of the earth” and the “light of the world,” and “this is how ALL MEN will know that you are My disciples”! The Church must be “a city set on a Hill that cannot be hidden,” so that “they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the Day He visits us.” We ARE to allow the weeds to grow up with the wheat, “IN THE WORLD.” However, Jesus did NOT say, “The field is the CHURCH.” The weeds and wheat do NOT grow up together in the Church, according to God.

“Don’t you know that a little yeast works through the whole batch of dough? Get rid of the old yeast that you may be a new batch without yeast—as you really are. For Christ, our Passover lamb, has been sacrificed. Therefore let us keep the Festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and wickedness, but with bread without yeast, the bread of sincerity and truth.”

“I have written you in my letter not to associate with sexually immoral people—not at all meaning the people of this world who are immoral, or the greedy and swindlers, or idolaters. In that case you would have to leave this world. But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat.

“What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside? God will judge those outside. ‘Expel the wicked man from among you’” (1 Corinthians 5:6-13).

Jesus did not contradict Himself, of course. The “field” where wheat and weeds grow together until the end of the age is not “the Church.” According to Jesus, the “field is the WORLD.” Do not ever let anyone mislead you with a message of disobedience and compromise!

Now, to be practical. If we will begin to build correctly, the way the Bible says a Church is to be built, then all four of these kinds of people will have relationships with each other every day. This person in chair number two looks like a hero in a meeting—he can sing SO good, and he knows SO much Bible! Isn’t he wonderful?! But as you have relationship every day, you can see he is angry with his wife. When you walk up to his house on a Tuesday, you may hear him yelling at his children. Or you go to his house on a Thursday night just to visit and read some Scriptures with him, and you find he is not at home. You might ask his wife, “Where’s your husband? I wanted to read some Scriptures with him?” And she says, “I don’t know where he is. He is not at his office. He just leaves, and comes back late and I don’t know where he has been.” How are you going to find that out on Sunday mornings? You only find out this man loves the world and has a secret life if you’re at his house on Thursday night. He’s not going to wear a sign on Sunday morning that says, “I’m a hypocrite and I have a secret life.” So, then you say to him, “I came to your house to pray with you and to read the Scriptures last night, and you weren’t there. Where were you? Your wife didn’t know where you were. Were you off with a couple of brothers sharing Jesus in the streets?”

He responds, “No, I wasn’t. But it’s none of your business where I was.”

Then you say, “Oh, okay. Then you will not talk with me about this? Can I know why?”

“It is none of your business. Get the log out of your own eye. You are being legalistic and judgmental.”

“Okay, I hear where you are coming from, and would beg you to soften! Maybe there are no problems at all. I just need to ask, because I am unsettled in my heart. But won’t you at least talk to me and help me understand?”

“No. Mind your own business.”

“Well, then, I need to do what my Jesus said to do next, in a case like this. I guess I need to go get two or three brothers and we’ll have another conversation about this. Anyone that you would prefer, that we both would agree is sold out for Jesus and is discerning? Jesus has commanded me to bring two or three others and talk about these things. Since you claim to be a follower of Jesus, you won’t mind if I obey Jesus and bring two or three others and we can sit down and talk about this.”

He responds with, “I don’t want to talk to two or three brothers. Mind your own business.”

Then you realize, “Oh, we have a bigger problem here.” If it does not change, then the fact that he does not “love the Light” or “love the Truth” proves that he is instead “leaven” which must be removed from the Church, if there is no repentance.

A Helpful Tool

Now, how did we find out we had a very serious problem in this family? This man was such a superman on Sunday mornings. How did we discover that this man was a hypocrite leading a double life? We found out by being in his home on Thursday night. In the end,

we found out this brother did not love the Light. And because he didn't love the Light, he proved he did not have the Spirit. He didn't want to change. He didn't care what you thought. 1 Corinthians 5 says if a person calls himself a brother, yet lives in sin, do not eat with him, do not associate with him as a friend, and put him out of your midst. If we build the way men build, then we would never even KNOW there is a problem in this man's life! His conscience is getting harder and harder. But if we build the way Jesus tells us to build, by admonishing one another daily, perhaps this person could become a Real person.

"See to it, brothers, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But admonish one another daily, as long as it is called Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ if we hold firmly till the end the confidence we had at first" (Hebrews 3:12-14).

If we build in the traditions of men and do a Sunday morning preaching thing, we may think this man is a Christian. But God says, "I never knew him." How can we help him if his sin or rebellion or love of the world is never exposed? Sometimes the best evangelism happens inside the traditions of men to people who already think they are Christians.

If we build the right way every day, from house to house, then sin will be exposed and we will find out whether or not others love the Light. If they do not love the Light, then we put them where they should be, which is, according to God, "Expel them from your midst" (for more about this topic, see RevolutionDancing.com). Now this man is not a superhero anymore. He is going to start thinking about his own soul, because he doesn't have all the props around him anymore. Perhaps now he can become a true Christian.

Also, by building God's Way, we discover true RICHES we would never have known! If we are, as God has commanded, involved in each other's lives and families and jobs and their Work for the Messiah together every day, wonderful things will happen that would never

have happened just by some “cell group program” or Sunday morning meeting. IF we will live as God said, “contending as one man for the Faith,” “we being many are ONE,” and “ALL the Believers were together and shared everything in their lives”—wondrous things will happen. But this requires “seeking FIRST the KINGDOM” rather than leading self-centered, separate lives according to flesh and blood rather than according to Spiritual re-birth.

History shows many men that were in “chair number two” and were christian leaders, but not even yet saved! Have you ever heard of Charles Finney? As a grown man, he was a choir leader in a church. He found out that he wasn’t even a Christian. Then he had a true conversion and became a man of God. Charles Finney went on to bring 500,000 people to Jesus in his lifetime. Did you know John Wesley was a very zealous and religious man growing up? And he found out that he was not even a Christian. He then had a true conversion and became a true man of God. I can name many, many other men that we know of today as very powerful men of God from history—they were even leaders in Christianity—and they found out they were never really Christians yet.

If the Church is really a Church with daily relationships, then we can help people that are pretenders. By obeying God and being involved in their lives, being a Priesthood and bringing and receiving daily “Light” and “admonishment,” we will be serving them and serving our God in a wonderful way! And, if they are very proud and stubborn, if necessary we will have to obey God by putting them out of the Church if they won’t hear the Word of God. This is a “tool” in God’s “toolbox” to truly help people that are very proud and disobedient. But, if we do it God’s Way, we can truly help them to be a miraculous story like Finney or Wesley, perhaps! We can make them hungry for the Word of God, by “do not eat with them, and do not associate with those that call themselves brothers, but will not turn from sin.” This is far better than allowing them to instead be deceived into thinking they’re already okay. Perhaps, they will repent and become

true children of God. Some of the most powerful men of God that history has ever known once thought they were Christians. They learned they were not and later became true Christians.

So the best thing we can do for a person that does not love the light is to obey what Jesus said and what Paul said, “Go to them and them alone” and try to win them. If they continue in sin and they won’t hear you, then bring two or three others. If they don’t love the light and they don’t care, then we must obey God and put them out of the Church. Perhaps their soul will be saved because we used this tool that God gave us to wake them up. We don’t do this out of anger or out of self-righteousness. We do it out of obedience to God. We love them. We want them to have true conversion rather than be self-deceived. This is a tool that God has given us to help wake up people who are religious, but deceived.

Unless we admonish one another every day and have true relationship every day, this person’s true condition might never even be known. The Bible says a little leaven leavens the whole batch. So, if a person has a secret sin in his life and hasn’t dealt with it, then all of God’s people are hurt because of it. God’s People were beaten severely in Ai because of one man’s (Achan’s) idol buried in his tent. God had His PEOPLE deal with this matter, as you recall. We must build the Church the way it is supposed to be built so that we can really have an unleavened house. Only then can more and more people move from chair number two, to chair number three, to chair number four, and chair number five!

Let’s Help Each Other Grow Up

Now, there’s another reason we must build the Church properly. This has to do with the weak person [chair three]—the one whose behavior isn’t very good, but they are truly saved. If we build the way men build in the traditions of men, then we will preach sermons to this person. We may try to get him involved in a program. But if we build man’s way, this person’s sin will also continue and go

unexposed. Perhaps he cries about that sin when he goes to sleep at night because the sheep know the Shepherd's voice and he is a true Christian with a soft heart. This person doesn't want to be weak. This person talks to Jesus about the sin. But in the traditions of men, he doesn't have any Help. He hears a sermon and he tries very hard. But many times, the sin goes on for years. Then he gives up.

On the other hand, if we build the way God has told us to build, there is much hope. In God's House this same person, by the time he is one week old in Christ, will already have four or five brothers who are helping him with his weaknesses. They are praying and talking together. They are talking about the words of Jesus. This person is confessing his sins to others. These believers are admonishing one another daily and bringing their gifts into this person's life. So, instead of suffering alone, this baby Christian has people involved in his life every day helping him to change. No one has a secret life, or a separate life unknown to those that Jesus has "joined and knit" him to, "baptized by one Spirit, into one Body." We're all helping each other with our weaknesses (and we all have them). There are no heroes. We're all helping each other as brothers among brothers.

So, let's say this person has been a Christian for one week. He has true faith in Jesus as his Messiah. The Bible says his sins are washed away. The Bible says if he confesses his sins to Him, God is faithful and just, and the Blood continually cleanses us of all sin. So, let's say these brothers are working together to help this new Christian, and he has not yet totally overcome that sin, but his heart is soft. He has the Spirit and he loves the Truth. He wants to change. What if this believer dies before that sin is conquered in his life? This person is as saved as Jesus Christ and Paul of Tarsus. By the Blood of Jesus, this person is as saved as any man could ever be saved. It is not our behavior that saves us! It is the Blood of Jesus that saves us from our sins! This believer loved the truth. He wanted to change. So he is totally saved, not partially saved. This is the great salvation that we have, brothers and sisters. Amen?!

The Good News of the Kingdom!

Let me give you one Scripture that helps pull all of this together. In the book of Hebrews, the Bible says that we are made perfect and being made holy. We're made perfect—that has already happened when we truly gave our lives to Jesus. Made perfect and being made holy. The word "holy" means pure and useful to God. The Father loves the Son, and as many as have been baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. As many as have given their lives to Jesus from the heart have put on Christ and have become clothed with Christ.

Therefore, the newest baby Christian and the most mature Christian are saved exactly the same because the Father has saved His Son, Jesus. So, when the Father looks down and He sees people that are washed in the Blood of the Lamb, the death angel marches right on by and will not touch them. The Blood of Jesus has made this person 100% saved. In our illustration of the five chairs, all those in chairs three, four, and five (children, fathers, young men)—they are all 100% saved.

Only Jesus was truly perfect, right? When we're clothed with Jesus, we become perfect like Jesus. As far as our salvation goes, we have become perfect like Jesus when we put on Jesus. We're made perfect and being made holy. That's what the scriptures teach. If you have the Spirit inside, when you're truly saved, then you are made as perfect as Jesus Himself. Your sins have been atoned for. The price has been paid for all of your sins. You are made perfect in the Spirit of Jesus.

Now the other issue we're talking about relative to the Church is the process of not only being made perfect, but also becoming holy—a "useful vessel in the House of God." If the Church is built the way God wants the Church to be built, and we're involved every day in relationships with each other and we're a Kingdom of priests, we're not going to help anyone be more perfect. They are already perfect by the Blood of Jesus. But we will help make them more useful to God. We'll make them stronger in Christ. We'll make them have

more of a love affair with Jesus. And now, instead of us just getting salvation from Jesus, Jesus could get something from us! The babies get something from Jesus. The fathers and the young men give something back to Jesus! The Lamb of God should get the reward of His suffering. Amen?

The Church that Jesus wants to build is the process of all of us becoming mature. If we build with the traditions of men, most people stay babies forever. They are an embarrassment to Jesus rather than a joy to Jesus. If we build according to God's plan, according to the pattern, then babies turn into Stephen, Philip, Paul and John. And from the least to the greatest, they all become more and more like Jesus together and the Church becomes a City set on a hill that can't be hidden. Together, according to Paul, we become a habitation of God by the Spirit. And not only do we get a reward of salvation, but now, at last, Jesus gets the reward of a true Church! That is the Good News of the Kingdom. Made perfect and being made holy.

"God is light; and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say we have fellowship with Him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. But if we walk in the light, as He, Himself, is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the Blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from all sin.

"If we say we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and righteous to forgive us and to cleanse us" (1 John 1:5-9).

There is a person who loves the Light. There is another person who claims to be without sin, but really loves darkness. From this passage, it's very clear God regards them very differently.

"I am writing to you little children because your sins have been forgiven for His name's sake; I'm writing to you fathers because you know Him who has been from the beginning; I'm writing to you young men because you have overcome the evil one" (1 John 2:12-13).

If we build God's way, it will be clear who loves the Light and who loves the darkness. And if we build God's way, all who love the Light can go from being young children to fathers to young men. This is wonderful Good News!!

Being Filled With the Holy Spirit—TOGETHER!!!

Tuesday Morning, October 5, 1999

From a time together in Africa, translated to and from Chichewa, different brothers' thoughts and heart expressions merged....

Recently, a brother was speaking about being able to hear Jesus' voice and the necessity of living in Jesus to be able to hear His voice. This has very much to do with our personal relationship with Jesus. This also has very much to do with us being the Church of Jesus, against which the gates of hell cannot prevail.

The Bible tells us to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Spirit must be in us and fill us all the way to the top. That's a command from God. This means we can obey the command or disobey the command to be filled with the Spirit. We know that to be a Christian, we must be in Christ, and that Christ must be in us. Amen? However, it is possible to be in Christ and to not be *filled* with Christ. It is possible to never experience Jesus or hear Him the way we should. Unfortunately, this is the case for most Christians today. But there is revelation from God about how this can change. The solution has to do with building the Church properly so "the gates of hell cannot prevail." We must build our lives so that all of God's people, from the least to the greatest, can be filled with the Spirit—not just one or two leaders, but *all* of God's people filled with the Holy Spirit.

Totally Immersed!

Let me draw a picture for you to help illustrate this idea. Suppose you have a bucket of water. Let's say that being in the bucket of water is the same as being in Christ. Now picture a cup of water with a lid

on it. The cup is like the individual that has Christ inside of them. In order for this person to be a Christian, he must be in Christ. So the filled cup must be in the bucket of water. If a person is filled with the Holy Ghost, he will be totally in Christ—the cup will sink to the bottom. However, if a person is *not filled* with Christ, if there is air in his cup, he will float to the top. If we are not filled with the Holy Spirit, as an individual, we may be in Christ and be saved, but we may never really be totally immersed in Jesus.

Paul wrote to the Church in Galatia (ch. 4), “I am in the pains of childbirth, like I am about to have a baby. I am having labor pains until Christ is formed in you.” He was writing to people in the Church of Galatia who were already saved (it says that in chapter 3). There was much weakness in this Church, however. They did not have Christ fully formed in them. They had some air in them, the air of the world, rather than just Christ. So they floated to the top. They were not totally immersed in the Spirit of Christ. Because they were not individually, totally filled with Christ, they didn’t sink totally into Christ.

Romans 12:1-2 states that in order to know the good, perfect and pleasing will of God—in order to truly hear God as an individual, we must not conform to the “patterns of the world.” We must not love what the world loves. We must not think like the world thinks or talk like they talk. We must raise our families differently than the world does. We must spend our time and money differently than the world spends their time and money. God said that our spiritual worship is not to be like the world in any way. God said to have our minds transformed, like from a caterpillar to a butterfly, by the Word of God. *Then* we can hear God. “Then we can know the good, perfect and pleasing will of God.” If we have some of the world in us, instead of being transformed by the Word of God, we float to the top. Even though we can be in Christ and be saved, we are no longer deep in the purposes of God.

We Need Each Other

The purpose of the Church is to help everyone be filled with the Holy Spirit, so we can help each other get the world out of our lives. Hebrews 3 says, “We must admonish and help and warn one another every single day so that none of us will be hardened and deceived.” The Bible says we must help each other every single day. We must get out of our homes and get into each other’s lives, in the workplace and in other people’s homes. We must look into each other’s lives and see how we can love each other. We need to help each other to no longer be conformed to the patterns of the world. Some people say, “I have my own relationship with God and I’ll leave everyone else to have their own relationship with God.” That’s not what the Bible says. The Bible says, “Admonish one another every day so that no one will be hardened and deceived.” The Bible says we are a priesthood of believers and we help each other to be filled with the Holy Spirit. We each use the gifts that are inside of us to help other people to be full of the Holy Spirit. Every single member of the Church helps every other member of the Church.

This is very different from how most people around the world have built together in christianity. In most countries, people come together on Sundays and preach sermons, and maybe they have “bible studies” with the children or even with the adults. In most “churches” around the world, no matter what country, people come together on Sunday and sit in rows, and the official “holy man” comes before them and delivers a sermon. But this is not what the Bible says Christianity is supposed to be. We have often, in every country, built the Church wrong for almost 2,000 years!

Why have we built the wrong way? Because we have built an Old Covenant way where there is a priest and a bunch of people in an audience. A Levite priest would offer sacrifices for all the people. He was a special man of God who would help other people to know God. That’s a good thing if you were a Jew 2000 years ago! If we want to be Christians instead of Jews, we should build like Christians. Amen?

We have often built wrong in Christianity in every country. But God is now restoring New Testament Christianity to every country.

A Kingdom of Priests

In the New Covenant, all of God's people are supposed to be priests to one another. God's intent is not one special holy man who can give sermons. The Bible says that Jesus ascended on high and gave His gifts to all of His people. He made a Kingdom of priests. He put part of Himself in each of His people that are truly converted, young or old. That's why we need each other's gifts. We need *all* of Jesus' gifts! There are hundreds of gifts because ALL of Jesus was poured out on His Family. This is why Jesus said we are all to be brothers amongst brothers. We don't need one man and one gift standing in front of us anymore. We must not permit that anymore. All of His truly converted and Indwelt, living in consecrated daily Life with one another and observably His (Heb. 3:12-14)—ALL are Priests!

God's heart is that the gift *you* have would be given to me and the gift *I* have would be given to you. Jesus said, "Call no man a teacher or a leader. Call no man master, reverend, pastor or priest." Even to the twelve apostles He said, "You are all brothers." If that is true for Peter and John, surely it is true for all of us! The gifts that each of the sisters and brothers have are part of Jesus. Even the children have gifts that are part of Jesus. We need all of those gifts in our lives. We are all brothers. That's what the Bible says.

"So when you come together, brothers, everyone has a word of instruction, a song, a revelation." This is what the Bible has always said in 1 Corinthians 14, "When you come together, brothers, everyone has a word of instruction, a song, a revelation, a prophecy." When we live that way, even the unbeliever falls on his face and cries out, "God is among you!" "When revelation comes to the second person, LET THE FIRST ONE SIT DOWN!" That's what it says in 1 Corinthians 14. This is not popular with those who "love to be

first” and love to be in charge and viewed as the “most spiritual” and take the money of the saints.

We must be a Kingdom of priests. We must admonish one another every day. If we won't, the Bible says we will be hardened and deceived. Our conscience will be seared and we won't have conviction about things in our lives that are sinful. If I don't have you or several dedicated followers of Jesus involved in my life every day, and others are not in your life every day, then we will all become deceived. We won't know what is true anymore. This is what the Bible has always said. We must live life together, helping each other every day. If you want to ignore the Bible and say this is not true, you may start your own form of religion. Many people have. But all of you have shown by your sacrifice that you will do anything for Jesus, so let's go on to the highest places with Him now!

Every Single Day

Jesus is building His Church against which the gates of hell will not prevail. Jesus is bringing the gifts out of people and allowing them to all be priests—not just in meetings, but every day. The Bible says, “Confess your sins one to another and pray for one another that you might be healed.” Wait! Do all of God's people do this?!! When was the last time you confessed sins to your brothers or your sisters? Do you want to be healed? Do you want to see the power of God in your life? The Bible says, “Confess your sins one to another.” Why do we not do this? We often don't do this because we are afraid. We don't do this because the traditions of men have swallowed us up. We stopped being real because we have so much pride. God has said to you and to me, “Open up your hearts, become soft and humble. Confess your sins to each other so that you can pray for each other and be healed.”

This is one of the ways we help each other be filled with the Holy Spirit. We open up our hearts to each other. “Admonish one another DAILY, every single day, so that none will be hardened and deceived,”

thus saith the Lord. God has said we must open our lives to each other every single day. If we build in such a way that we only meet on Sundays and then we go back to our houses and live separately with our families, we will disobey God.

God has given very clear words about how we should walk together and help each other be filled with the Holy Spirit. God said, “Admonish one another every single day.” God said, “I put My Spirit and My Gifts inside of you, now lay down your life for your brothers every day.” God said, “Confess your sins to each other every day.” God said, “Bear one another’s burdens—and so fulfill the law of Christ.”

You can see this is a daily thing. How can you bear someone’s burdens in a meeting? To fulfill the very law of Christ, we must bear each other’s burdens. And where are these burdens? Are they in a Sunday meeting? No. The burdens of life happen with our children, with our wives, with our husbands, in our workplaces. The burdens of life are when we don’t have enough to eat or when our child is sick. The burdens of life are when our Islamic or false religion physical family hates us because we have turned to the real Jesus. It breaks our heart, and we don’t know what to do. I need you to help bear my burden when my baby is sick. I don’t want to hear your sermon on Sunday, if you won’t be there when my baby is sick. I don’t want to hear your expert knowledge, and expert speech, if you won’t help me when I’m having a difficulty with my wife. It is a daily thing—it is not about meetings. ***Bear one another’s burdens every day, and so fulfill the law of Christ.***

We have often built the Church wrong in many nations for many years. God is calling now to a people who have enough courage and humility and self-sacrifice to build properly. If we will build God’s House according to the pattern that He has laid forth, the gates of hell will no longer prevail against God’s people. “Greater works than I have done, you will do,” says the Lord. When we look like Jesus as a Church, we will have the same Life and Power and Love as Jesus had when He was here. Jesus didn’t just talk; He lived the Life.

John 1 says, “The life became the light of men.” It is the same now. The daily life becomes the light of men. If we want people to see the love of God... if we want them to come to Jesus instead of the money and power of Islam... if we want to see people come to Jesus instead of their own selfishness and pride and worldliness, then we must live the life of Jesus together every day.

Part of Each Other

We have talked about being like a cup of water being totally filled and then immersed into Jesus. We can also talk about another picture—a bowl of potatoes, or a bowl of uncrushed maize. This is how we have built the church for the last 2,000 years: people come together in a bowl on Sunday like a bunch of individual potatoes, or individual kernels of maize. God’s heart is not to have a bowl of potatoes, or of individuals in a bowl together for a day or two or three each week. And being in a home, instead of a religious facility, is no better if we do not change our hearts and how we function with each other every day. Meeting together does not make us a Biblical Church. That is only what the Bible calls “a lecture hall.” A bowl of individual potatoes is not a Church. You can throw all the potatoes, or all of the kernels of maize in the bowl every Sunday and it will still not be the Church—not really. The True Church is like a bowl of *mashed* potatoes, or maize flour—all melted together as one. “Contending as ONE MAN for the Faith.” “One heart, one mind.” “All together” and “of one accord.” “We being many, are ONE.” “Baptized by one Spirit into ONE body” where “NO ONE says to another, ‘I have no need of you’“ until next week.

A bowl of mashed potatoes or maize is your life becoming part of mine and my life becoming part of yours. When we are ONE as Jesus and the Father are ONE—that is the true Church. Others can be saved of course, without this daily life, but are not benefiting from Jesus’ Plan for a local assembly showing the world His Life and experiencing His Power. “I will build my CHURCH that the gates of

hell can no longer prevail against!” For your growth! For your wife and children and neighbors! A local “joined and knit together” true Church is God’s Plan!

When your life is part of my life every day, and my life is part of yours every day...when your gift in Jesus is part of me and my gift in Jesus is part of you every day...when I confess my sin to you, and you confess your sin to me, and we pray for each other that we might be healed...when I know you well enough every day to know how to bear your burdens and you know me well enough so that you can see in my eyes when I am hurting, and you bear my burdens—*that’s when the Church is really beginning to become the Church of Jesus*. Jesus said, “This is how all men (Muslims, Jehovah’s Witnesses, Mormons, and the many weak and lukewarm in denominations) will know that Christianity is truly from Heaven. All the world will know that we are truly His by how we love each other.”

You can say words about the Blood and words about the Word of God, but until you begin to *live it* and *truly love each other*, they are only words. When the world sees us truly loving each other because our lives are totally lost in each other’s lives, then the power of God will fill us in extraordinary, immense, and powerful ways (and we will be persecuted and hated and lied about, according to Jesus!).

The Father loves the Son and we will begin to look like the Son, shining like stars in the universe, a city set on a hill that can’t be hidden. *That* is Jesus’ intention for His Bride, the Church. We must not just attend something and say some words. We must stop just sitting like little robots in chairs listening to someone give a speech. We must truly be involved in each other’s lives deeply every day, brothers amongst brothers. This is not about meetings, but about you offering your gift to me, and me offering mine to you, every day in our homes and in our workplaces, in the fields and in our families. This WILL require a change in how you choose to use your “spare time.” And you will need to change the things that you have previously considered “first” in your life, to instead “*Seek first the Kingdom.*”

True Family!!

Jesus said, “If you truly give away your life and become a Christian, you could have one hundred mothers, one hundred brothers, one hundred sisters.” That means one hundred *intimate* relationships. That’s the very definition of Biblical Christianity! You will have hundreds of relationships that are as close as a mother with a son, or a brother and sister together. Close, close, close relationships. He didn’t say one hundred third cousins or one hundred far distant relatives. He didn’t say one hundred friends or one hundred next door neighbors. Jesus said, “My Church means one hundred relationships that are as close as a mother is to her child.”

A good mother knows a child’s cry. She knows her child’s cry when he is hurt, or when he is hungry—those are two different cries. She knows her child’s cry when he is tired versus when he is angry. A mother knows her child intimately—everything about that child. Jesus said, “In my True Church, you will have hundreds of relationships that are so close it will be as a mother with a child.” You will be able to see in my eyes, and I will be able to see in your eyes when you are tired, when you are hungry, when you are angry, when you are sad. That’s not really about meetings, is it? That’s not about a Sunday morning service, is it? *That’s about a daily life together, like a mother with a child.*

Can you imagine a mother only seeing her baby every Sunday morning?! That would be a very bad mother, wouldn’t it? What would happen to the child? The child would die. That is what has happened to many Christians. We have built wrongly for so many years, with a man preaching and everyone listening, and we sing and dance, and then we go home and live separate lives. Because of this, many babies have died. Many mothers have broken hearts.

Jesus’ intention for His Church is that we have one hundred mothers, brothers, and sisters. Our lands and possessions and our time and money are not our own. We ourselves are not our own. We were bought with the price of the Blood of Jesus. So we make

decisions to lose our life into each other's lives every day. "Oh, I'm tired. I think I will go to bed." No. You go see your brother and love on your brother. "Work while it is daytime; night comes when no man works." "I think I will go do something that is fun for me." Bring a brother with you; bring several brothers with you. Do it with other people. "Well, I have to go to the market; I don't have time to be with my sisters or my brothers." Yes, you do. Bring them with you. Do it together. And then you can talk to people about Jesus in the marketplace together. Along the way you will see what your brothers' or sisters' needs are and what things they like and what things are important to them, because you're involved in their life. And their Gifts will be available to serve Jesus in the marketplace and events—not just your gift, which is too one-sided by itself. TOGETHER we have the Giftedness of Jesus and express His Life. The angel said, "Go together into the marketplace and tell everyone of this NEW LIFE that you have in Jesus!" "THIS is HOW all men will know: By them seeing you LOVING ON EACH OTHER!" "The LIFE became (and becomes) the Light of men."

If we wait until we have all our busy things done in order to be Family, *we will never be Family*. Family does all the busy things together. We wash our clothes together, and we go to the market together. We go on trips together to talk to other people about Jesus. While we are together, we confess sins to one another. We say, "Sister, would you please pray for me? I am very tired from my young children, and I even got angry with my baby yesterday. I have asked God to forgive me, but I want you to forgive me, too." Or, "Brother, would you please pray for me? I was at work, and I got angry with another man who tried to cheat me, and I said harsh words to him. I went to him and asked him to forgive me, and now I'm confessing my sin to you. Please, would you forgive me and pray for me, so I will be stronger next time?" Of course we will have time to go into our closets and pray in secret, and have time for quiet and simple things. But somewhere we have lost the Heart for Jesus' Way of lives melted together. Jesus even took three brothers with Him when He went to

pray in the Garden, at the most painful and delicate time of His life! And so should we. “Anyone that claims to be in Him, must walk as Jesus walked.” It is a Good and Wonder-ful way that has been lost in our modern culture of busy-ness, nuclear “family,” selfishness, laziness, and pride. Let’s reclaim it for Jesus, that the world may know and that we may grow!

Open Our Hearts

This is very key. We must crack open our hearts and let other people come into our hearts. This is absolutely essential. There is no way around it. We must open our hearts to one another so that Jesus can come in and our brothers and sisters can come in. “The Kingdom of God is neither here nor there,” Jesus said, “The Kingdom of God is within you.” If you really want the Kingdom of God, it’s not just about believing the right things or going to a meeting. “The Kingdom of God is neither here nor there; it’s within you.” This means if I want the Kingdom of God, I have to get inside of you and you have to get inside of me. That’s where the Kingdom is. This takes courage, humility and obedience. Amen? We must be mashed potatoes or maize, not separate. We must be one hundred mothers, sisters, and brothers—not just one hundred good friends or acquaintances.

If we will begin to live this way more and more every day together... if we will get out of our homes and get into people’s hearts and lives and welcome them into *our* hearts and lives, then we will see a Church that the gates of hell will not prevail against any longer! We won’t need all the artificial divisions anymore of Baptist, Pentecostal, or Nazarene. We won’t need division anymore *because Jesus will fill us!* We will see the Glory of God descend into our lives in a wonderful way. We won’t need all these labels anymore. Now people will be filled with the Holy Spirit—all of them, and we will be immersed together in Christ.

We’ve seen these barriers broken down in many places. The Church that we are a part of has people from many different backgrounds

that have put those backgrounds aside because we have fallen in love with Jesus, together, and we are helping each other grow to be like Him every day. Have that vision for your city. Jesus wants His people to be ONE. We won't become one because we decide to throw away our doctrines. We will only become one when we decide to throw away our sins. Not everyone *WANTS* this—but *YOU* can live or even die for it!

A Kingdom Disarmed?

Suppose there were two kings—a good king and an evil king. The good king was much more powerful than the evil king. The army of the good king had weapons that could defeat the evil king. These weapons were extremely powerful. The evil king knew he could not stand against the good king. So the evil king called a meeting of his generals.

He said, “I have three plans. We cannot stand against these weapons, so let's first convince the good king's army that they do not need to practice with their weapons. Let's have them just meet together and *talk* about their weapons. Their leaders can talk about how wonderful the weapons are. They will feel good about the weapons, but they will forget how to use them.”

“Here is my second plan. We will divide the good king's army. We will sow seeds of dissension among them. So then, instead of one army, we will have one hundred little groups. They will not know how to fight together. We will divide them and defeat them.”

“And here is my third plan. We will convince the good king's army that they should let anyone join their army. We will tell them that a big army is glorious and that anyone who is willing to put on a uniform can join. We will secretly send some of our soldiers to join their army. So, they have powerful weapons, but they won't know how to use them. They will be divided against each other. And their army will be full of people who are loyal to me, their enemy.” In this way, the evil king was able to stand against the good king.

That is what has happened with the Church. The song is right, as we have just sung—the Blood of Jesus will never lose its power. The Word of Jesus will never lose its power. The Name of Jesus will never lose its power. Those are our weapons. Satan cannot stand against the Name, the Blood and the Word of Jesus. But the Church of Jesus has lost its power. Instead of being a priesthood of believers, we have become listeners or do-ers of programs and gimmicks. We have forgotten how to use the Name of Jesus, the Blood of Jesus and the Word of Jesus. We are satisfied with just getting together and listening to someone talk about those things. We are also divided against each other. There are hundreds of denominations, each with its own traditions. We let these divisions stand in our way so that we cannot join together and fight the enemy. We have also become impure. Many people in religious assemblies do not even know Jesus as their Savior and Lord. They are confused. They think they know Jesus, but they are not even in the bucket, because they have never truly given their lives to Him.

A Testimony of Jesus' Life

So, in all these ways the Church has lost its power. But Jesus said that the Church that He builds would be able to overcome the gates of hell. What we have been talking about today is the answer to this problem. If we build God's way, we will be pure. Not because we are so good, but because many people are helping us each day. THIS is God's Way. If we build this way, we will be unified. And if we build this way, each member will be using his gifts or her gifts for the good of the whole. We won't just be listeners—we will be soldiers, and intimate Family. TRUE Family, according to Jesus in Mark 3:33-35. This is the way that the Church of Jesus can regain its power.

We rode here in a taxi this morning. The driver was saying, in pain, that Islam has been gaining much power in this country. Well, I personally don't care who has the most money. I don't care who has the greatest numbers. What I care about is that there will be a

testimony of Jesus Christ on this planet. A testimony that is pure, that is strong, and that is powerful to defeat satan in the lives of men, women and children. That can only happen if the Church of Jesus regains its power. We must help each other. We must build our lives together, every day. If we will live this way, then the name of Jesus will be held in high respect and honor. People will begin saying to us, "Tell us about this Jesus that you know." This is our destiny, if we will have the courage to build this way. Amen?

Take the Basket Off the Plant!

Hebrews 3 says that we must encourage one another every day. We must warn each other every day. We must help each other every day with our children, with our wives, with our jobs, in the fields, in the marketplace... helping each other every day! Hebrews 3 goes on to say that if we don't do that, then two things will happen. We will become hard, and we will become deceived. If you have a cup of water and you pour it on soft ground, the soft ground soaks up the water. But if you pour that same water on this concrete, it rolls on the top. The ground is soft; the concrete is hard. Concrete is hard; it can't receive. If we don't live with each other every day as Hebrews 3 describes, we become hard. God's Word, God's Rain, God's Water can't get into our hearts. It can't penetrate. Our heart has become too hard.

We were just in another city one hundred kilometers from here, near Lake Malawi. The ground by the lake is soft because the water is always on it. Far from the lake, the ground that doesn't get much rain is hard. We have to be in each other's lives every day or we get hard. We can't hear God. We can't grow. If you put a plant under a basket, the plant will die. The plant needs sunshine. Water is not enough, and fertilizer is not enough. The plant needs light. Just like us! Reading our Bibles is not enough. Praying by ourselves is not enough. Attending a meeting on a Sunday is not enough. Like a plant under a basket, we can die. We need Light. Together we live this way.

We provide Light for each other. Without that Light, we die. Without the Light of each other in our lives every day, we become hard.

The second thing that happens is that we become deceived. That means we don't *know* we are hard. We are deceived. We think we are soft, but we are hard. We like to sing and we like Bible stories. We might even like to speak a lot about Jesus. But we are hard and we don't know it, because brothers weren't helping us to be soft every day. This is very dangerous! If a person is blind, but he thinks he is a good driver for a bus, he is deceived. You wouldn't get on his bus, right?! That is dangerous! Scary!

In the same way, we can become deceived. Without the light of God's people in our lives every day, not only will we be hard, we will be deceived. We won't see the part in us that is not like Jesus. Our minds will be deceived. This is a bad place to be. God's Light can't get in, and the bad stuff can't get out. We won't even know the bad stuff is there, because we are deceived. If you haven't been living every day with each other the way the Bible describes, then you are hard and deceived. That's what the Bible says. God does not lie. Everyone who is not building daily with other people, with the Word of God, becomes hard and deceived. But there is hope! If we will admonish and encourage each other daily, our hearts will soften and we will hear God more clearly through our brothers and sisters, and as well as through the Scriptures as we read them. When we live God's way, we soften. God's Light can come in. God's Rain can come in and finish filling us, and get the bad air out. There is much hope if we live God's way! There is no hope if we don't live God's way.

We have built the wrong way for many, many years. Most churches around the world are like plants under a basket. They may have heard good teaching, but they don't have much Light in their lives. Many are dead, others are shriveled. We need to take the basket off the plant. *One big way to do that is to be involved on a heart level with each other, to help each other, to encourage each other, to love each other—every day.*

He is building a People of Power
He is building a People of Praise
They are walking along with God
And they're growing by His Precious Name
Build Your Church, Lord,
Make us one, Lord,
In the Kingdom of Your Son
Build Your Church, Lord,
Make us one, Lord,
In the Kingdom of Your Son.

Take the Journey

The Bible is 100% true all the way through. It is about Jesus and His followers. These are Stories of how they hurt and how they learned in their experiences with God. We can definitely learn from their stories, but we can also learn the same way they did: by facing God together in our daily lives. In that sense, we too are “living letters.” All the reading in the world could never change us the way the together-experience of Life can change us. Deep things we want to know never get all the way down into our hearts when they're just read from paper. As we work things out together every day, Jesus teaches us the deep lessons of life that we could never learn from all the Bible study in the world, though these truths are in everyone's Bible. “The pillar and foundation of Truth is the ekklesia—the church.” “The LIFE becomes the Light of men.”

Life was not meant to be like a grammar school where we learn ideas and then believe a certain list or “creed” of things. Instead, God has called us to become the same men and women of God as those who went before us—connected to the same God that they were—deeply

in love with the same Jesus that they were. In order to do that, we not only need to know what they knew, but we need to feel what they felt. In order to feel what they felt, God has to take us on a Journey similar to theirs. So we take that journey in applying the Word of God together to our lives. We take that journey with tears in our eyes, with our weaknesses and our strengths, loving each other, and helping one another—in the bad times and the good times—with our eyes on our Hope, our Messiah. We are always moving forward, trusting that God will be our provider, helping us as we stay together.

Peter denied Jesus after walking with Him for three years, but when he heard the rooster crow, it broke his heart. And immediately he was back with his brother John. It is the same with us. There are times when we will do bad things and times when we will do good things. But whatever we do, we should do it together with our eyes together on Jesus and let Him make us deeper and deeper and more and more dependent on Him as the days go by. “The Life becomes the Light of men.” We must learn much about Jesus by living together and helping each other. God, help us to open our eyes.

Anointing On All— Jesus is Family

Mzuzu, Africa 1996

“In order to speak the word of God you must be ordained.” Is this what most of you have always thought? I have good news from Jesus for you about this. It says in 1 John 2 (speaking to all true believers) that you have an anointing on you that is real and not counterfeit. The Spirit of God, Jesus, the Great Teacher, lives inside of you. Jesus is a wonderful and great Teacher and Counselor. Paul says that if you don’t have the Spirit of Christ inside of you, you don’t even belong to Him. So, if you are a Christian, then Jesus Christ—the most ordained man that has ever lived—lives inside of you. That means that if you are a Christian, you are ordained. Hallelujah!

Not a Position or a Title—Just a Job to be Done

There are times among God’s People when certain jobs need to be done. There are jobs such as caring for children, distributing food, caring for financial matters, helping to care for widows and orphans, helping to care for people’s homes and property, plumbing or electricity, helping to sew clothing or do gardening. There are many jobs in the Body of Christ.

In Acts 6 there was a job that needed to be done. This account in the scripture is not about “being ordained to be a priest.” The seven men described there were men that were full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. They were already doing a good job for Jesus. They already had a reputation of being humble servants of God. No one had ever laid hands on them, yet they were already speaking for Jesus. Then there was a job that had to be done in feeding the widows. So the laying on of hands described in Acts 6 has to do with doing a job, not speaking for Jesus.

Also, according to the Bible, these men were not truly “deacons,” as is the normal thought. What they were is actually even better than that. We read in 1 Timothy 3 that the deacons were to be married, but, as far as we know, these seven men were not married. The qualification needed in Acts 6 in order to feed the others was to be full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom; it was not to be married or have children.

Later on in his life, Paul went to visit Philip, who was one of the seven. Do you remember that Philip had four daughters who prophesied? The Holy Spirit describes Philip as “one of the seven,” not “one of the deacons.” There were deacons in many churches by that time, but the Holy Spirit did not say, “Philip, one of the deacons.” The Holy Spirit said, “Philip, one of the seven.” This is an important point. There is a difference between a deacon and someone who is chosen for a task.

A deacon has ongoing tasks, but the seven who were chosen in Acts 6 were chosen for a *specific* task. We even see that the job changed later on as things changed in Jerusalem. We see that Philip goes to Samaria, and Stephen goes and proclaims in a synagogue where he is stoned and killed, but we see no further discussion of them feeding widows. Sometimes we will lay hands on men or women to do a specific job, and when that job is over or changes, then they are no longer in that position.

It is a different sort of situation, though, when a Church is mature enough to have deacons and elders. Those are ongoing jobs that involve many things and taking responsibility to help in many ways.

When you become a Christian, Jesus lays hands on you, and you become a priest. You become a speaker and a lover of God’s word. As the Church grows and changes, there are jobs to do and perhaps the Church will choose from among themselves two men or four men that are full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom. Maybe, if the job is very large, the Church will choose seven men full of the Holy Ghost and wisdom and will lay hands on them together and appoint them for the work. As long as that work exists, and they are faithful and obedient in that responsibility, then they will have that responsibility.

If they are not faithful in that responsibility, it should be taken away from them. But if they are faithful, they will work that job until it is done. For deacons and elders, this is a longer job. But it is also true that if they are not faithful and obedient, then the church should together perhaps take away that responsibility.

The Gift of Apostle

The apostle Paul said that he was a slave chosen by God. It wasn't because he was someone special, but it was because God wanted to demonstrate His mercy. This is true for all apostles. They are not chosen because they are special. They are chosen as a trophy of God's mercy. Paul said the responsibility of the gift of apostle is to be very faithful every day as a slave to tell others about the very great riches of Jesus. Paul said to the Corinthians that if he did not do this, a terrible curse would fall on him. So he became a slave to the Good News of Jesus, and he spent his life, no matter what it cost him, to tell others the Good News of Jesus.

There are many gifts in the Body of Christ and each one is special. Paul said that the gifts that everyone else had were very special, and that each person would function as a priest and tell others about Jesus. He said, though, that when others tell about Jesus, they receive great rewards. But the apostles, Paul said, are cursed if they don't tell others about Jesus. The gift or privilege of apostle is one that is very special and rare. But it is also very costly, according to Paul. He said apostles are like janitors in the House of God. In Ephesians 3, Paul spoke of two things he would do in his responsibility as an apostle. He said one thing (v. 8) would be to tell others about the great riches of Jesus. In verse 9 Paul speaks of the second thing that he is called to do, and that is to make clear to everyone how to *live* in the great riches of Jesus. He said he is going to teach them how to live in the mystery of Jesus—how to work out the mystery of Jesus in their personal lives.

In 1 Corinthians 3, Paul called himself a wise master builder. He wasn't saying this because he was prideful but because God put

it in his bones. God had given him great mercy and kindness and put inside of him the ability to see things that others could not. In 1 Corinthians 15:10, Paul said that he had been a terrible man, but God had shown him mercy by not only forgiving him all of his many sins, but also by giving him a particular gift. Jesus gives many, many different kinds of gifts. All the things that Jesus was, all His different parts, He gave to His Body. In one sense all gifts are equal because they are all Jesus. But the gift that God gave to Paul was the gift of apostle. Paul said, “I did not even deserve to have my sins forgiven. But because He forgave my sins and gave me a gift, I will work very, very hard with this gift in order to say thank you to Jesus for forgiving my sins.” That gift was to tell others about Jesus’ great riches.

Because Paul had the particular gift of seeing what others could not, he needed to help all of God’s people see how to walk together. That’s what the gift of apostle does, and that’s why this gift is very important in the churches around the world. If you put 100 dedicated Christians in one place, they could all love Jesus with their whole hearts and could all *want* to obey Jesus very much. But without a relationship with apostolic natured gifts somehow from somewhere, it would be very difficult to know *how* to live together. Committed, loving Christians can hurt each other, but the gifts that Jesus gives helps them to work together better.

Putting the Parts Together

We could take all the parts of a car—a steering wheel, a bumper, a motor, a door—and pile them in a room. They could all be very wonderful parts, but you could not drive very far in that car if all the parts were not put together. In fact, you couldn’t go anywhere in that car. The gift of apostle puts all the good parts together. In the churches, we need the gifts that can help put the car together. This is what Paul says in Ephesians 3. He tells people about Jesus’ great love and helps put the church together so that it will be the house of God.

All the wonderful gifts and all the committed Christians need the gift of apostle to help them put the House together.

In Ephesians 4, Paul said that God gave gifts to the church—apostle, prophet, and the other gifts so that we can all grow together. Those gifts don't *make* us Christians, but they do *teach us how to grow together*. They teach us to no longer be infants, help us grow into the full measure of the stature of Christ, and help us to be compacted together. Paul says that this gift is very important to the church in helping good people to build together properly.

Many of Paul's letters talk about very practical things. He does talk a lot about Jesus, but mostly he talks about how the Believers should live with each other. He gives them practical teaching about money, their marriages, children and widows, and about how to build in the Church with authority matters. He teaches them about their worship together, their meetings, and how to share with one another.

Teaching all the good parts (the way to become a car) was most of what Paul did with his gifts. In other words, he taught them how to build together so that they could go somewhere; we don't want to be a bunch of parts sitting in the middle of a room. We want to be a bus for Jesus to go somewhere. We want to build together and learn how to do our work together in love.

Paul said it was okay to have practical questions. In 1 Corinthians 1, we read about how some from the household of Chloe traveled hundreds of miles to ask Paul a question. They asked him questions about divisions they were having, questions about marriages, or about what to do when sin was in their midst. And because his gift was that of an apostle, he could see what to do. God's people needed Paul to be able to see and help. Paul was not a "superstar". He knew he had weakness in his heart, and had fallen into sin in the past. But because God loved Paul anyway, Paul wanted to say "thank you" by using his gift for God's people.

Some Practical Questions

About Men's and Women's Roles

"I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God. A woman must learn in quietness and full submission. I do not permit a woman to have authoritative teaching over a man. She must be silent. For Adam was formed first, and then Eve. And Adam was not the one deceived. It was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. But women will be kept safe through childbirth if they continue in faith, in love and holiness with propriety" (1 Timothy 2:9-15).

This is similar to 1 Corinthians 14, and Paul wrote both Scriptures by the Holy Spirit. So we want to understand what the Holy Spirit was thinking when he wrote these things. The Holy Spirit is a person and He has thoughts and feelings, just like with you and me. If you say something to me, you are probably thinking and feeling more than you are saying. So we want to understand what the Holy Spirit is feeling and thinking since the Holy Spirit is a Person, not just words.

The heart of the Holy Spirit is that He loves men and women just the same. In Galatians 3, He said that there is no male nor female; we are one in Christ. There is no Jew nor Greek, male nor female, slave nor free. If we have faith in Christ, we now wear Christ. We have the clothing of Jesus—not Jew, not Greek, not male, not female, not black, white nor yellow. Hallelujah?! But now we *all* are Jesus. What color is Jesus? ***Who cares? He is wonderful!*** And so, if we have faith in Jesus Christ, we all put on Jesus, and there is no more Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female. This too the Holy Spirit has said in Galatians 3.

Precious Thoughts on Authority

There are many things that the Holy Spirit thinks concerning male and female. These things are precious, and we must understand them together. As we consider all the teachings about man and woman, we

see that the Father is the head of Christ. Christ is the head of man. Man is the head of woman. But, is not Christ the same as God the Father? Jesus said, "I and the Father are one." Yet the Father is over Christ, though they are one. Thomas said to Jesus, "My Lord and my God." The Father and the Son are one.

Certainly Christ is head over the man. But if we have been clothed with Christ, we are one with Christ. So there is still authority between Christ and the man, yet they are one in another way. There is authority between the man and the woman. The man is over the woman in the same way that Christ is over the man. Yet the man and the woman are one in Christ. So, in one sense, the man and the woman are very equal. And yet there is authority between the man and the woman.

These things are very precious and you must try to understand. The man can serve the woman with a whole heart. A man can love the woman and cherish her deeply. A man, in a way, can make himself a slave to the woman as Christ has come to serve the Church. But even though Jesus washed our feet as a slave would, He still has authority. And likewise, as a man cherishes and loves a woman, even becoming a slave to her in some ways, he still has authority over her, and she must respond to that.

Because Christ is so kind to us and loves us, we shouldn't forget His authority, should we? There is an order in God. There is authority in God. And when the Holy Spirit speaks these things to us in 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2, He is not saying that men are dictators, ruling over the women with an iron fist. Women are not slaves that have to hide in the corner in the darkness. We must celebrate the wonderful gifts God has given our women, and even submit to the gifts that He has put into their hearts. But women must still recognize the authority that God has placed in man. So all of these things are *matters of the heart*. All of Christianity is a matter of the heart, not a matter of rules and laws. Jesus did not give us a set of rules. He taught us how to have His heart. He teaches us to

think like He thinks. Therefore our goal with 1 Corinthians 14 and 1 Timothy 2 is to have the heart that He wants us to have about these matters. The Bible is not a rulebook, but a way to have a heart.

Now how does that look in a practical way? In a relationship between a man and a woman, the man will feed, care for, and cherish his wife. He will lay down his life for her in every way possible, even so far as to become a slave as Christ did for the Church. At the same time, the woman will listen very carefully for the voice of the man because that is her heart, just as is the Church's heart to hear Christ. The woman's heart is to hear the man's voice and respond to it. This is not a law, but this is the way Jesus wants us to live in our hearts. The more a man lives that way towards a woman, the more he can hear God. The more a woman lives that way towards a man, the more she can hear God. The Scriptures say, "*How can two walk together unless they be in agreement?*"

Authority Sets Us Free!

All of these matters are very, very important. When the whole church is together, if our hearts and our minds are right, then the man will be very respectful and loving towards all the women (who will not disappear like the furniture). The men will deeply love the gifts in the women and will not want them to bury their talents. The women will respect the men and, as they are in the gatherings of the saints, will understand the authority of the men and never come over the top of that authority. Paul said, "*I do not permit the women to teach with authority over the men.*" And yet they can *offer* their gifts.

A practical example: If one of the women has something burning in her heart to say, she must not bury her talent. She must not ignore the gift of God that is within her because the men need that gift. We need *all* of Jesus desperately. So if a woman has something burning in her heart that she wants to speak, she can respect the authority of the men by asking permission to say this thing. She should turn first,

perhaps, to the authority over her personally. If there is a man in her life that has special authority over her, then she should, perhaps, turn first to him and ask him if it is okay. Perhaps then that man should ask the assembly if it is okay if the woman speaks. If the man does not think it is a good idea for her to speak, or if the assembly does not think it is a good idea for her to speak at that moment, then she should be happy to be silent. She should not resent that or be angry. She should not say, “Well, then, I will never share anything.”

This is how the woman can be Jesus to everyone, with the man still having the authority. The man draws the gift out, but the woman does not push herself to the top. When you look at all the teachings of the word of God together, what you see is that God has a wonderful heart towards women. A woman is not like a chair or a table in the room. She is alive with Jesus and we need her very much. But she must also understand God’s order and not be proud or arrogant. She must be humble in order to offer her gift. This is the order of the angels, the order of God the Father and Christ the Son, and the order of man and woman. We are all one, but there is an order in God that helps everything to work smoothly. We are equal, and a wife’s gift may be even better than her husband’s, but God made him a man and so there is order. Maybe he doesn’t deserve to be in a place of authority. But God chooses things that we must honor, so we must all work together to draw out the gifts and also to love the order that God puts us in so that we can work together.

Where I live, we have some very, very gifted women. The Church there has been blessed by several women who are very, very strong in Jesus. They will all tell you the same thing about functioning within God’s Order—it does not press them down; it sets them free. There is great freedom in offering their gifts rather than just taking authority. It is a very precious thing to be in submission. The women will tell you that it frees their hearts and makes them sing inside to offer their gifts rather than to take. So, while we do not desire to push down any gifts at all, these gifts come as an *offering* from the women, and that

is true in the home or in a gathering of the saints. This is a heart that is precious to Jesus—a heart He will bless.

Do you remember when Jesus spoke to the Centurion, the Roman guard? He said to that man that in him, He saw greater faith than was in all of Israel. The greatest faith Jesus had ever seen was in a man who said he knew how to be under authority and how to have authority. The Roman guard said that he would say to his servant “Go”, and he would go. He would say to another servant, “Come”, and he would come. He said he too knew how to respect authority and go and come under authority. Jesus said this was a man of the greatest faith He had seen because he knew how to respond to authority. It was something that set him free, not something that pushed him down.

When Christ is head of the man, the man is set free. Jesus said if we are not His slave, we are a slave of sin. When we choose to not let Jesus be our Master, sin becomes our master. But when the Son sets us free, we are free indeed. Do you feel these things in your own heart? When you obey Jesus, are you free? When you don’t obey Jesus are you dirty inside?

The same is true with a man and a woman. When we respond to God’s order, we are not slaves—we are free. But when we don’t, we become slaves to the wrong thing. A woman that is not under authority with faith will feel dirty inside. She will be confused and frustrated. God gives order and authority in the family and in the Church—*not* so someone can be better than another person or tell them what to do and order them around. He gives order and authority so that we can all be set free in love and God’s order.

Talking to Daddy as Family

We speak of a way to live, not a way to have meetings. The answers to many practical questions are easier than they seem at first. The more we become a family in truth, the more things begin to make sense. Most people are caught between being a family and being a religious

organization. Some groups of people are totally just a religious organization. Others are somewhere between being a religious organization and a family. But, as God brings His Church more and more toward being Family, then more and more things begin to make sense. When we view ourselves as a family, the answers to different questions begin to make sense. Because we love each other so much, we share every part of our lives with each other every day. Now it's no longer just about meetings. Rather, because our lives are so wrapped together everyday, men know how to treat women and women know how to treat men. If we know how to do it in our homes and in the streets, we will know how to do it in the meetings.

In all things, we must recognize God's order, but we must also not quench the Spirit. We must recognize order, but we must not bury our talents. So, if all the Saints are together and God puts a prayer in my heart, as a man I might ask if it would be okay for me to pray. If I'm a woman I would probably ask a man if it would be okay for me to pray, and he might ask the whole assembly, "Would it be okay if this woman prays?" If that man and the assembly think it's okay, then *she is under authority*. She is covered by authority if we ask her to do it. If she just decides to do it, then that could be out of order. But if we all want her to pray because she is our dear sister, then she is under authority and at that moment it's okay. These things are true.

We should understand something about prayer. The word "prayer" sounds very religious to our ears. As we become more like family, then the way we work together makes more sense in the meetings. As we all become closer friends of God, then prayer makes more sense. In false religion, people "say their prayers". In Jesus' Christianity, we have a friendship with our dear Father. So, what then is a "prayer meeting"? I'm not sure I know what a "prayer meeting" is anymore. I know what it is to have God's family together. I know what it is to have God's family talking to their Father together from time to time. But I'm not sure I know what

a “prayer meeting” is in Christianity. Can you see the difference? One is religion, and the other is relationship.

We don’t “say prayers,” we *talk to Father*—just like a young child would talk to his daddy. Does a young child have a prayer meeting with his daddy, or does he just enjoy talking to his daddy? Does he need a meeting to talk to him, or can he just talk to his daddy because he loves him? Well, what if all of God’s little children are in the same room and they want to talk to Daddy? That would not be a prayer meeting. That would be a family being a family with their Daddy. So now you can see perhaps how corporate prayer works. It doesn’t *work*, per se! What we can do, though, is if a brother loves Daddy and wants to tell Him that, when he gets done, I say, “My turn, my turn, I want to talk to Daddy!” That is how we pray together. That is how we talk to God together, as God stirs in our hearts. A special sister might ask a man, “Would it be okay if I talked to Daddy now?” And so she is still in order because the man has authority over her. But she still has the freedom to talk to Daddy if she has worked that out. This is how we can be with teaching, with prayer, with singing, and with everything because we are family together with our Daddy.

We want to continue to brush all of the traditions of men and religion out the door and just be simple children with each other. We don’t want to be religious, holy men with titles and rituals. We want to be loving children with each other and with our Daddy every day. Meetings take care of themselves because we are family all the time. We talk to Daddy together all the time. We bring the teachings of Jesus to each other all the time. If we all happen to be in the same room, that’s great. But that’s not any different than outside the room 30 minutes later.

A Question About Women

Question: But the Bible says that when we pray, the men raise their hands, but the women do not. So the women can also raise their hands? Can that be right?

Good question. 1 Timothy 2: 8- 9 says, *“I want men everywhere to lift up holy hands in prayer, without anger or disputing. I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes...”*

He says, “I want men everywhere to lift holy hands in prayer.. I also want women to dress modestly...” Does that mean that men should not dress modestly? Men must dress modestly also, even though he speaks to women here. And he does not say, “The women should not lift up hands in prayer.” He does not say, “Men must not dress modestly.” Men must dress modestly. Women must dress modestly. If a man lifts a hand, he should lift a holy hand. The key word is “holy.” He should lift a hand that is dedicated to God and wants to serve God. Unless a woman violates authority, if she has a hand that wants to serve God, it might be okay for her to lift it. God did not say that men should *not* dress modestly, even though he *does* address the women to dress modestly. God did not say that women should not be able to lift hands in prayer; so maybe it’s okay, if they are *holy* hands, just as it’s okay for men to dress modestly.

Baptism of Jesus

September 1996, Mzuzu, Africa

Understanding Baptism

What was meant by God to be a precious and wonderful gift has become a point of war. As the Body of Christ grows and becomes more one with Jesus, and with each other, we should definitely come to understand what baptism is. We see in the New Testament how John the Baptist came baptizing people for the forgiveness of sins. There was no scripture in the Old Testament about John baptizing people. When John came and took people and dunked them under water in the Jordan River, it was a surprise to many people because there were no prophecies about baptism, and no one really knew what baptism was until John came.

So it would be easy to say that John was wrong. Because where does the Bible say I have to be baptized in the Old Testament? But because John was a friend of God and was sent by God with a message for God's people, he brought baptism to them, and they came from cities and villages far, far away to be baptized. Some of the church leaders in John's day said, "We don't want baptism. Prove to us in the Bible, John, that we should be baptized." John could not prove that to them in the Bible because there was no teaching about that in the Old Testament.

But John listened to God and he heard God's voice about baptism. Many of the leaders and the Pharisees said "No" to baptism. The Bible says very clearly that they rejected God's purpose for their lives by refusing baptism. I will repeat it so you can understand for sure: The Bible says that men who rejected baptism *rejected God's purpose for their lives*.

Perhaps we don't understand baptism perfectly, and somehow getting all wet may not make that much sense to us. To some, it may

seem like something extra, but even John's baptism was so important that men who rejected it rejected God's purpose for their life. We may not understand why this is, but it is very important to God, so it must be very important to us also.

The Importance of Baptism to Jesus

As you look into the New Testament and the teachings of Jesus, some of the very last words that Jesus said before He went back to heaven on the clouds were, *"Go into every nation. Make disciples. Teach them all of my ways. Baptize them in the Name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost."*

If I were lying in bed, almost ready to die, and I told you something in your ear—maybe some of the last words I'd ever say—these last words would be very important, wouldn't they? Some of the very last words that Jesus said were, *"Go make disciples. Baptize them. Teach them to obey everything I commanded."* These words are so important to Jesus that they must be just as important to us. The original word for "baptize" in the Greek language, *"baptizo"*, means to "immerse" or to "submerge". When people heard Jesus speak, they did not hear, "Go make disciples... baptize..." In their language, they heard Jesus say, "Go make disciples... immerse them... submerge them."

"Baptize" was not a religious word back then. When we hear the word "baptize" now, we usually think of something religious. When people washed the clothing, they put it in the water, all the way underneath the water, and washed it. That was to "baptize". When they washed the dishes, they put them under the water and washed them. That was their word for "dunk". "Baptism" was not a religious word, so when Jesus said, "Go make disciples... baptize..." He was telling us clearly how He wanted us to do it.

There is much questioning in many people's minds about this matter, but the words of Jesus say that it is important that we be buried with Him. These things are important because Jesus says they are.

“Who can be baptized?” is a good question. Peter said that baptism is the crying out of a pure heart towards God. A heart that wants to live for Jesus, cries out for God, believes that Jesus is the Son of God and wants their sins washed away can be baptized. A person who does not really believe in Jesus, is not really crying out towards God, and has not decided that they want to live for him with all their heart to the best of their abilities perhaps is not yet ready to be baptized.

We will never understand everything about baptism; we will never understand everything of what it means to live for Jesus. But our hearts must at least *want* to follow Jesus as far as we understand. We must know that we have crucified Jesus with our sin, and it should break our hearts that we have killed the innocent Son of God. And we must want to say, “I’m sorry. Please take my life.”

Romans 6 says that we die to our sin, we are buried with Jesus and we rise to walk in newness of life. We would not want to bury a man who is living; burying is for dead men. It is also true spiritually. We must want to die to our sin. Otherwise, we are not ready to be baptized. We bury dead men. And it’s only as we give our life away that we can rise to walk in newness of life. Baptism is a celebration of us giving our life away and Jesus giving us His Life.

Like everything else in Christianity, it is more *a matter of the heart* than it is the form or the externals. By that I mean that it is more important that we really do love Jesus the Son of God and want to give our life away for Him. That is more important than the words we say over the baptism. Jesus wants to give us His Holy Spirit and forgive all our sins. Jesus wants us to be baptized by one Spirit into one Body. He wants us to be part of the Father, part of the Son and part of the Holy Spirit. But do we have to *say* all of those words, like a formula, in order for Him to keep His promises?

The answer is that it’s not the *words* that we say, it’s *the heart and the lives that are given to God* that matter the most. If we understand and believe in our heart that Jesus is the Son of God, that our sins have murdered the Son of God, that Jesus died so that all of our sins

could be forgiven, that to the best of our understanding we want to live for Jesus rather than for ourselves and obey him and give our lives to be baptized, then we are participating with heaven. It's as if Jesus is reaching His hand down from heaven and touching us as we are baptized. Baptism is very, very special. There are many promises of God that are associated with baptism. Satan opposes baptism; he hates it.

We have seen this in India, for example. A person can say, "I think I will become a Christian," and his neighbor will say, "Okay, okay." The first man then says, "I want to be baptized," and then someone burns his house down. Satan hates baptism. Anything Satan hates, I love.

Baptism is a place where God meets man. It's a very special place. It's not just something that you *do*. It's not some way to just join a group of believers. It's bigger than that. God is in baptism in a very special way. That's why Jesus spoke about it in His last words. That's why Peter spoke about it in his first words to the new church. "*God has made this Jesus, whom you killed, both Lord and Christ,*" he said. And they were cut to the heart that they had killed Jesus. Because they were cut to the heart, they said, "Well, what should we do? What should we do?" Did Peter, by the Holy Spirit, say, "Join a church"? No! Peter, by the Holy Spirit said, "Repent! Turn away from your sins! Every one of you be immersed and you will receive the forgiveness of all of your sins. Though your sins were red like blood, they shall be white as snow, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit living inside of you. This promise is for you and your children, and all who are far off, as many as call on the name of the Lord."

These things are very, very special. If a person has given his life to Jesus and is sorry for his sin, and he knows that Jesus forgives sin, and so wants to live his life to the best of his understanding for Jesus, then he should desire to be baptized.

In Acts 8, Philip went to a man on the road. That man was a high official in Ethiopia. He was a very, very intelligent and well-schooled man. He was reading the scriptures out of Isaiah. Philip came to

him and asked, “Do you understand what you are reading?” He was reading about the Savior, about the Messiah, Jesus. And the man answered, “How can I understand unless someone explains it to me?” So Philip went on to tell him all the good things about the wonderful Savior. He told him about our friend and our King Jesus. He told him about our Jesus who walks on water. He told him about our Jesus who tells storms to be still. He tells about Jesus who raises dead men and gives sight to the blind. He tells him about a Jesus who takes broken hearts and makes them whole again. And as this man from Ethiopia heard all these things about this wonderful Jesus, he said, “Here’s water. Baptize me now!” He knew that the teaching about Jesus and baptism were connected. And he didn’t even want to wait one minute. “Here’s water. What hinders me?” He said. And they went down into the water. Phillip immersed him into Jesus, and they came out of the water rejoicing. But his heart’s desire was to participate with Jesus in baptism.

There was a keeper of a jail in a city called Philippi where some of our brothers had been locked up. There was an earthquake, and our brothers were set free by the power of God. The jailer saw the doors were open, and he wanted to kill himself. Our brothers told him how he could be saved, and even though it was after midnight, he wanted to be baptized right then. Something about the teaching of Jesus made him want to be baptized right away. It was midnight. It was not convenient; it was not easy. But his heart’s desire for Jesus was that he wanted to be baptized, immersed. If we were to have God’s mind about baptism, we would be very excited about it, the way the man from Ethiopia, the jail keeper in Philippi, and 3,000 people in one day in Jerusalem were very excited about it.

Now what is the difference between John’s baptism and Jesus’ baptism? John’s baptism was for the forgiveness of sins (Mark 1) and Jesus’ baptism is also for the forgiveness of sins (Acts 2). Later in the book of Acts Paul met some men who had to be baptized a second time, because they had only received John’s baptism and

they needed the baptism of Jesus. So, baptism isn't about just getting wet. Baptism isn't just about going under the water. Those men with John's baptism had been baptized to do good works and to stop sinning. **The baptism of Jesus is to come into the Holy Spirit of Christ, to be clothed with Jesus of Nazareth.** John's baptism was about a good work. **Jesus' baptism is about faith in the blood of the Savior.** John's baptism was a pledge towards God, to obey God. **Jesus' baptism is a crying out for the filling of Jesus.** John's baptism was to do righteousness. **Jesus' baptism is faith in Jesus, taking our sin and exchanging it for His righteousness.** It is about the good works of Jesus, not about the good works that we do.

The Father loves the Son of God, Jesus, who made a covenant with His Father and obeyed Him in everything. The baptism of Jesus is our calling out to God and asking Him to hide us in Jesus. So now the covenant, or the 'deal', that the Father made with the Son becomes *our* covenant—not because of *our* good works, but because of *Jesus*'. This is very good news, because our good works will never please the Father. But the Father loves the Son, and in Him the Father is well pleased. So as the believers hide themselves in Jesus in His baptism, because the Father loves the *Son*, then in *them* He is well pleased. This is the baptism of Jesus, where the Father gives us the Spirit of the Son, and He clothes us with the Son that He loves. This is very good news.

There have been people who have come to us with a desire to be a part of the church, and perhaps they were never immersed into Christ. Perhaps they believe Jesus is the Son of God and have said, "I give my life to him," but they have never been baptized. There are two ways this might be handled. One way is with externals... with form or law; that is, "We can't walk with you until you are baptized." Or, we can say, "We want you to love Jesus and totally give everything to Him, and baptism is something that is very important to Jesus. Please think and pray about these things very much. Here are the teachings about baptism from Paul and from Peter, from John and from Jesus."

The Bible says that a Christian is one who craves the pure spiritual milk of the word of God in the same way that a newborn baby craves his mother's milk. So we could say, "We can't walk with you unless you are baptized"... **or** we could begin to feed them with the pure spiritual milk of the word of God and see whether they love or hate that food. This takes a little bit of time. But if they love that food, having just never heard it before, then they will soon be baptized. If they don't love the Word of God, then it doesn't matter if they are baptized. We cannot walk with anyone who does not love the Word of God. So then the test is not whether or not they are baptized but whether or not they love the Word of God.

Obviously in the Scriptures, baptism is a very precious thing to God and to everyone who knows God. As soon as the man from Ethiopia heard about baptism, he wanted it right away. As soon as the 3,000 new believers in Acts 2 heard about baptism, they wanted it right away. The jailer in Philippi wanted it right away, even after midnight. It didn't matter what time it was. Why was this true? It was true because all of these people *loved* the word of God. When you love your wife or husband and they ask you for something, you want very much to give it to them. If you love Jesus, and baptism is important and precious to Him, then you will love to be baptized, because Jesus loves it.

So it takes a little bit of time to offer the Word of God to people, but whether we can sit together and talk or not isn't based on whether they are baptized. If they don't understand baptism, we can still fellowship a little bit, because if they love God and love His Word, they will grow and will be baptized.

We are all growing in many things, aren't we? The test is not *what we know*; the test is *whether we will change*. We are all at different places. The test is whether we love the word of God and want to change. Sometimes change is very hard, and we need to be patient with and love each other. If a person doesn't want the word of God, that's a problem. But if they do want the Word of God and it's difficult for them, we should help them.

God's People are Family

If we are all walking together as a family every day, then we can work these things out pretty easily. If the church is just a place to meet on Sunday morning, we have a big problem, because then we have to decide who is a member and who is not a member. But if we are a family every day, then when a person doesn't love the teachings of Jesus it becomes obvious. We find out in the course of living every day in our neighborhoods whether or not they love the Word of God.

If a person says, "I've been baptized," but they don't love their wife or their husband, that would be very bad. If we are living as a family every day, we'll *know* whether a person wants to live for Jesus or not. If we live as a family every day, we will have time to talk about things like baptism. It won't be a "sermon" about baptism; it will be friends among friends talking about baptism. Maybe if one person can't explain baptism very well, he will bring the person he is talking with to someone who can. There are different gifts in the body of Christ, and some can explain things better than others. As we live as family, we can work out all of these things together every day.

It solves many problems to be a family instead of having something to attend, because now we have the time to work out our differences and understand each other. When you just come to a meeting house and that's all the church means to you, then you pretty much have to believe all the same things at the same time in order to be there.

But if we are a family, we have time to work out our differences, because we love each other. Not with "sermons," but with family discussions. This makes life very exciting and very peaceful. This is why the Bible says that the Church is the pillar and foundation of all Truth, because together, as a family, we can find God's Mind. When all the gifts are living together and sharing their lives together, our God will help us understand His mind about different areas of Truth.

Together, We Find the Answers

This is good, because no *one* of us has a perfect mind. Many, many great scholars disagree on every major point, and most of them are not really a part of a living church. They go someplace on Sunday morning and that's all. They don't have the other gifts talking to them and challenging them every day. So they have very weak knowledge, even though their minds are strong. They have many great *opinions* based on their studies, but their opinions are very different than other people's opinions. So who is right? God said the Pillar and Foundation of Truth is the *Living Church*. Together we can find the answers!

In Acts 15 the believers didn't know whether a new convert should be circumcised or not, so various brothers came together to try to work out a solution. One brother said, "I saw God do miracles with the Gentiles." Another brother said, "I remember something the prophet Amos said in the scriptures." They worked together as the People of God and the Family of God to find the answers *from* God. *They worked together to find the answers*. It was not one "superstar" with a brilliant mind, but it was the Family of God working together. And as one brother spoke and then another, James said, "It seems good to us and to the Holy Spirit that this is the answer." The Church is the Pillar and Foundation of Truth. Together we can find the answers. You don't have to be a great scholar for God to use you this way.

Baptism of Jesus—A New Promise

Like the baptism that John taught, Acts 2 says that the baptism of Jesus is also for the forgiveness of sins. The difference between Jesus' baptism and John's baptism is that Jesus' baptism is a baptism unto the gift of the Holy Spirit and of calling out to the Messiah.

John was baptizing before Jesus was crucified, before the blood of Jesus was shed. So, you could say that John the Baptist was an Old Testament prophet. He was participating in the Levitical law. When he was baptizing, it was the blood of bulls and goats that brought

forgiveness of sins. John's baptism had ended by the time Jesus died on the cross. John's head had been cut off before Jesus died, so he could not baptize anyone into Jesus. When John was baptizing, Jesus' blood had not been shed.

You could say, then, that John's baptism was a baptism of good works and Jesus' baptism is a baptism of grace into His blood. The new baptism, Jesus' baptism, is into the blood of the New Covenant and the forgiveness of sins by Jesus. When Jesus died, a *new* promise came into effect. John could not baptize us into that new promise, but now that Jesus lives, He baptizes us into the New Promise.

Peter said in Acts 2 that in the New Covenant our sins are forgiven in baptism. "Repent and be baptized, every one of you, and your sins will be forgiven." So, part of giving our lives to Jesus involves baptism and part involves the forgiveness of sins. But there is something John could never give us that Jesus can. Jesus also baptizes in the Holy Spirit. *"And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."*

In Acts 19, men were re-baptized. Paul asked them if they had received the Holy Spirit and they said, "We don't even know what the Holy Spirit is." This is what caused Paul to think that they needed to be re-baptized. Paul said, "You can't have baptism into Jesus and not have the Holy Spirit. You must have the wrong baptism." If you are baptized into Jesus, it also includes the Holy Spirit. John baptized only with water, but Jesus baptizes in the Holy Spirit. This is a very powerful promise.

Are My Children Judged for My Sins?

The Holy Spirit said in Ezekiel 18 that God looks at each of us individually, and the soul that sins is the one that shall die. God judges the man who makes the choices to rebel against Him. In one sense, we are all under a curse because of our father Adam's sins. If you are a drunkard in your home, then God will judge your home. That is the meaning of the scripture in Ezekiel 18. God takes away His presence

and there is a penalty paid in your home for your sin—there is a breakdown of peace and a breakdown of love. Your children will not respect you and love you. There are many judgments for the sins in our homes, but Ezekiel makes it clear that the judgment that sends a man to hell is not what his father does but what he himself does.

There is a judgment from God because of my sin that will make my children's lives very sad. There is a curse on all of planet Earth because of Adam and Eve's sin. Women have pain in childbirth now. Men must work by the sweat of the brow, with sore muscles and backs. The ground now grows weeds and thorns and thistles. The water in the stream can now make us sick. There are many curses because our father Adam sinned. If I am a drunkard, there are many curses and judgments on my family. My son will be very sad because of my sin, which can make his life very, very hard. So, in that sense, there is judgment from God on my son because of my sin. But my son can go to hell only for his own sins. He cannot go to hell for mine. Jesus said there are four kinds of soil. If my son loves Jesus and His Word, and he obeys Him... he will be saved. Ezekiel is very clear about that.

Children and Baptism

There comes a time in every child's life when they begin to make choices from the heart to rebel. Because of Adam's sin, children sometimes have behavior problems. Probably all children have behavior problems, but those behavior problems will not send them to hell. Jesus said, "Unless you become as a little child, you cannot go to heaven."

Another time, while pointing at the children He said, "The kingdom of God belongs to such as these." Those children have not been baptized. The people that were baptized were ones that came confessing their sins. There is no record of any children being baptized. There were many, many children, but we have seen no accounts of children being baptized. I can understand why someone would want to baptize a child. But the scriptures are clear that baptism is only for those who

truly believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Only people who give their life to Jesus can be baptized. Because Jesus said the kingdom of God is for people like these little children, then we must believe that God will protect a little child's soul. There were many children in Jesus' day, yet there is no record of any of them being baptized. So, Jesus must protect our little children. And, when they become old enough to either decide to rebel against Jesus or give their life to Him, a decision must be made.

The Jewish faith is a shadow of the Christian faith (Hebrews 10). In the Jewish faith, there comes a day called Bar Mitzvah. It is a day when a boy becomes a man. The Jews teach that the children are just like slaves in the house until they get old enough for their Bar Mitzvah. After a Bar Mitzvah, a child becomes a son. This is a shadow of what is true for us as well. There comes a time when our children must decide if they will live for Jesus or live for themselves. Most five-year-olds could never decide that. A baby cannot decide if it will live for Jesus or for itself. Maybe a ten-year-old or a twelve-year-old could decide if they will live for Jesus or for themselves, but probably not a five-year-old, because they don't understand who Jesus is.

In Acts 2, it says that in order to be baptized, you must repent. You cannot be baptized unless you repent. I think that in most cases it would be hard for a five-year-old to understand what sin is. If you tell them that they have killed the Son of God, would they understand? They probably would not. Only a person who can understand that they have killed Jesus with their own sin can be baptized. Jesus said that the children have angels that stand in the very presence of God. Jesus Himself has taught these things, so we must trust Him for our children...until they are old enough to decide.

Waiting on God in Our Lives

September 1996, Mulowe, Africa

A few nuggets shared over the course of a few hours together with some folks in Malawi.

Together!

Let us Exalt His name together forever!

I sought the Lord,

He heard me and delivered me from my fears!

Let us Exalt His name together forever,

O sing His Praises, magnify the Lord!

In this song taken from Psalm 34, the word “together” stands out in the chorus. “Let us exalt His name TOGETHER forever.” There are many other special things in that song about praising God, about God hearing our cry of prayer and His angels protecting us from harm and fear, and about God providing for our needs and feeding us good food from His earth. All of these things are very special. Yet God means for us to do these things TOGETHER. That’s the most special of all.

The Life Becomes the Light of Men

It is a common thought that we must wait on God to know how to be in a meeting of God’s people together, and that we must really seek His face to see what it is that *He* wants. This is very true. But I

think more often it is not that we are waiting on God for what to do in a meeting; instead, we are waiting on God on what to do *in our lives*. Many things that are taught when the saints are together come out of times the saints walk together and cry together when there is no meeting. Then, when the saints gather, we talk about what came out of the time together. When God is making our relationships with one another deeper, He brings His teachings from heaven to us. Sometimes He brings those teachings to us through pain of relationship, sometimes through pain of failure, sometimes through pain of sin. Other times God teaches us through great victories, sometimes through miracles that He uses to surprise us. But all of these things happen *in daily life* and as we wait on God about our daily lives together.

We speak to each other about Jesus every day and work out our problems together to learn of Him every day. We lift each other's arms up daily when we are weak. Because our lives are prepared and waiting on God, it could happen that when all the saints are together, someone will say, "I have a problem." And perhaps someone else has also just been hurting and has found the smile of God through pain. So when the Saints are together, this brother or sister would be able to speak up and share what they've learned with others. As you can see, the teaching did not come from waiting on God in a closet and asking for what "to teach," although that could happen. Instead, it came from waiting on God in our daily relationships, obeying God with the small things in our lives, and lifting each other's arms to help one another. Out of daily life the teaching emerges in our gatherings. The things that God taught me this morning as I'm walking down the road with a sister or brother, as we laugh or cry together—somehow those things come up in the gathering. *LIFE makes the meetings.*

It is the Same Now

In John 1 it was said about our Jesus that **the Life became the light of men. The light for others to see came from the life that He led.**

It is the same now. As we live our lives for Jesus in the right way and we help each other with all of our hearts, then the life becomes the light of men. So, we do wait on God in gatherings, but mostly we wait on God before each other every day. The gatherings become the TOTAL of everyone loving each other. The deep teachings of Jesus come from the deep aches of the heart sometimes. We learn the magnificence of the patience and love of Jesus as we encounter situations in our lives and must experience His patience and mercy. Then we are able to share together.

These things are very important to understand, because most of us have thought that meetings are the center or the focus of Christianity. Did Jesus have a meeting every week with the disciples? No. Every Tuesday night, every Sunday morning? He did not. He still is not. It is the same now as it was then. *He teaches us as we rise up, as we sit down, as we walk along the way together.* The gatherings are just when the family is together, rising up, sitting down, walking along the way... TOGETHER. The Life becomes the light of men. That's why it's so important that we look at each other and love each other outside of our "meetings". We spend our lives for each other out there every day. In I Cor. 11, the apostle Paul said that if we don't truly love each other and lift each other's weak arms every day, then our meetings do more harm than good. Let's decide together that **our lives**, instead of our meetings or teachings, would become the light of men.

Asking Father Together...

You are a dear Father. Please let us only listen to the things that are true, not the things that the enemy yells into our hearts. Satan is called the father of all liars. He wants to lie to us constantly, to tell us untruths. We know our enemy is a liar. He is also a murderer. He wants to find ways to kill us. But we know that You love us dearly and You want to bring us precious truths that set us free. We beg You, Father, to give us eyes that see through the lies. We know we can make it because You are on our side. Thank You for that promise. Thank You for that

Hope. The scriptures say and we know that HOPE will not disappoint us. We trust in You, so we will not be put to shame. We shall live and not die, by the power of Jesus. You are a Sovereign King. You decide when the rains fall and if the soil will yield its crop. You decide if the clouds bring a shade or if the sun burns down hot. You decide if the streams run cool and clear, or if they are bitter and make us sick. You decide if our sons and daughters will grow healthy and old and whether the work of our hands is a failure or a success. You decide if our conversations can bring joy to one another or bring hurt. You decide if there is a peace and strength in our heart, or sadness and weakness. You are the One alone that can forgive all of our sins and bring us to a path that is true. The good news is that You love us very much; while You are a Sovereign King and all things are under Your control, it's good news to us that You are full of compassion, mercy and kindness. A Sovereign King, yes... but also a beautiful lover and friend. Thank You very much for being our friend. You will take us to the other side in victory. Great is Your name.

“Goo-Goo Spirituality”

September 1996, Mzuzu, Africa

A brother's early morning thoughts shared with the saints during a time together in Africa.

After I opened my eyes this morning, I opened my Bible also. The first passage my eyes saw had the words about the shadow of death, the same as Psalm 23. I probably wouldn't have thought to express this to you, except some of those words were the same, and those very first words my eyes saw this morning brought me much joy.

Living Where the Shadows Can't Touch Us

“Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who have been in distress.” *God will remove all of our heartache and trouble. He will wash away our despair. That is His promise.* “The people walking in darkness have seen a great light. On those living in the land of the shadow of death, a great light has dawned.” (Isaiah 9:1-2)

This passage goes on to speak of how God will enlarge our hearts. He will increase our joy. He will make us rejoice like a people rejoicing at the harvest. He will shatter the burdens that are upon us. He will remove the humiliation of our defeat. And here is how He will do it: *“For to us a Child is born. A Son is given. And the government will be upon His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. He will establish and uphold justice, with mercy and compassion in His heart. The strength and the power of Almighty God will accomplish this.”* (Is 9: 6-7)

His name is Jesus: Immanuel, God with us. Jesus will bring us great joy. He will wash away distress and the light will dawn in our hearts. The heart and the mind and the power of Almighty God will accomplish this. The people walking in darkness (that's us) will see a great light:

The Wonderful Counselor. He will help us in all of our trials. As we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, we understand that a shadow cannot hurt us. It is only a shadow of death. Do you know what chases away shadows? A great light will chase away every shadow. Jesus, our Good Shepherd, will chase away all the shadows of death in our life. Sometimes we try to figure everything out in our head, when what we really need to do is just turn our face toward Jesus. He will hear our heartcry and will increase our joy, bringing a great light to our hearts. To us a child is born, a Son is given. He is a Wonderful Counselor, an Everlasting Father. He loves us and will help us if we turn our face to Him.

“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God, for that is what we are! And now dear children, continue in Him, so that when He appears, we may be confident and unashamed before Him at His coming.” (1John 3:1, 2:28) In the Greek language, it says, “Look at that and wonder what wonderful love God has for us.” It is an expression of “open your eyes and look at how big His love is.”

There is a song we sometimes sing. It speaks of how we are more than conquerors.

We are the people of God, called by His name
Called from the dark and delivered from shame
One Holy Race—saints every one
Because of the Blood of Christ, Jesus the Son

With our lips let us sing one confession
With our hearts hold to one truth alone
For He has erased our transgressions (our sins)

Claimed us and called us His own
His very own

Hear us, O spirits of darkness
So you will know where we stand
We are His people, purchased with scars
Bought by the Blood of the Lamb
The Blood of the Lamb

This is why there is such tremendous hope for all of us. This is why satan will lose, and this is why we are more than conquerors: ***We are bought by the Blood of the Lamb!*** So with our hearts we sing this one confession. We hold to this one truth alone. Because our Jesus has conquered sin and conquered death, satan is like a dog with no teeth. Jesus has loved us and made us His own, His very own...

Sometimes we must remind ourselves of these truths. It's hard to have a bad day when we remember these things. We are more than conquerors through the Son of the Father of Love.

What is “Goo-Goo Spirituality”?

There is a way to follow Jesus that is based only on feelings. When our feelings are good, we love Jesus, we are happy, and we sing. But when we don't feel so good, we don't sing and worship Him. I think most people mean well. They have good intentions. But there is a way to follow Jesus that is very strong and that does not have to pretend to be spiritual. There is also a way that is not so stable. Again, I don't mean anything bad. I just think that sometimes we don't understand the rock-solid way to follow Jesus. The rock-solid way does not depend so much on how we feel. When we speak of goo-goo spirituality, we don't really mean that someone has bad motives or bad intentions. Perhaps they've not yet seen Jesus' face in the strong way that they some day will.

The Job Life

We've read that Job was the most righteous man in all the earth. Out of many thousands and even millions of people, Job loved God more than any of them. Job obeyed God more than all the people on earth, and yet there was a deep way that he did not know God yet. There were many bad things that happened to Job. He had much heartache and much pain. His health was totally gone. His precious children were killed. All of his possessions were taken away. His wife told him to curse God and die. She gave up. And so Job's heart was broken. He had three friends who came to visit him, and I believe those men truly did love Job. They left their families and sat with Job for seven days in total silence. I believe that they loved Job and they meant well. But they did not know God very well either. They said many wonderful, spiritual things to Job about how a good person always gets good things and a bad person always gets bad things. Job knew that couldn't be right. He had seen bad things happen to good people and he'd seen good things happen to bad people. So he couldn't accept the things his friends were saying to him.

In one way Job was goo-goo spiritual because he had not let God do a deep work in his heart yet. He was too happy about how much he knew God. He considered himself too good a person. Because he was closer to God than every other human being, he thought he was close to God. He did not realize that a blade of grass is closer to the sun than an ant. A tree is closer to the sun than a blade of grass. But a tree is still very, very far away from the sun. A tree is taller than a blade of grass, but still very, very small. Job did not understand this lesson. He knew that he was close to God compared to some other people perhaps. Job had no idea how very far away from God he still was. His heart wasn't broken about how far away from God he was. It took all of this great pain and all of this loss for Job, the most righteous man of everyone on the earth, to understand these things. After he went through that much pain, he said, *"My ears have heard of You, but now at last I can see who You really are."* (Job 42:5) Job, in

some ways, was goo-goo spiritual. Job meant well and he was a good man. He wasn't faking or pretending, but he was very far from who God really is.

If Job was goo-goo spiritual, I would say that all of us are also. Of course, there are some people who just fake Christianity. They just pretend. They make their faces look very spiritual. They want to impress people around them with how much they love God. They want people to see them loving God. But don't we, in our foolishness and insecurity and pride and immaturity, sometimes fall into those same things? This is goo-goo spirituality. But there is a real way to love Jesus that comes out of great humility, and it doesn't matter if anyone is looking or not. It comes from the heart. Real spirituality comes from being broken before God. It comes from falling in love with a God who forgives our sins. Perhaps the real thing will have some facial expressions too! But it comes from brokenness, not from showing off. The best way to get rid of goo-goo spirituality from our hearts is to humble ourselves before God and ask Him to teach us. Ask Him to refine *us* by fire, so that we can cry out like Job, "*Though You slay me, I will trust You!*"

The problem with goo-goo spirituality is not necessarily that we're pretending, but that we have not yet had God work deeply in our hearts, as He wants to. It's important that we not judge one another, but rather that we help each other to know the true God. We put ourselves before the true God to let Him burn us with His fire in the same way that Job was. There will be a day of rejoicing if we put ourselves before God and let Him burn us. There will yet come a day of rejoicing and strength. It will be real from deep inside—not to impress anyone else or to make ourselves feel good, but because we've seen God's face with our spirit.

The Church is a group of people who walk hand in hand with each other through the victories and the heartaches to help each other become more real. None of us are very real yet. Of course, the tree is closer to the sun than a blade of grass, but we have so, so far to go.

God said to Job, “Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? Where were you when I told the oceans how far they could come? Where were you when I commanded the rising and setting of the sun? Where were you when I gave every star in the sky a name? And you think you know how to worship Me? And you think you know how to obey Me? Be silent; I will teach you.” If we have a heart that will submit to God’s fire, He will teach us beyond how to just be religious. ***Jesus is much better than religion! He will teach us to know Him in His heart.*** This comes with pain, but it is very, very good. Will everyone take this journey with us?

A Question

So, what do you do when there is a situation in front of you in which you see something that you know should be a certain way, but everything inside of you is welling up, “It’s not that way!” How do you change your heart and your mind to line up with what you know? Your heart and your emotions are one way, but you know that this isn’t the right way to think. How do you then whip it around, with faith, to change?

Has anyone ever experienced this war inside? Paul said to the Galatians that the spirit and the flesh wage war with one another. We must expect that there will be wars in our hearts and minds. The day will never come when there are not wars in our hearts and minds. But God has given us supernatural weapons to tear down these strongholds. God does not make the enemies go away. The enemies in our hearts and minds are *part* of the promised land. When God brought His people out of Egypt through the wilderness to the promised land, there were great giants with weapons in that land. Does that sound like a promised land?! Does that sound like a wonderful place to live ... with great angry giants? But this is a very special thing that God does. He brings us into a land that flows with milk and honey that also has great angry giants. The more wonderful the land God wants to give us, the bigger and uglier the giants. God does this on purpose. He does this

to make us stronger. Because He has special things to give us, He also gives us great big giants to oppose us.

In James 1, it says God Himself gives us trials so that we can grow in endurance or strength. If we grow in strength, then we grow to maturity or completion.

James 1:2-8: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance. Perseverance must finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, he should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to him. But when he asks, he must believe and not doubt, because he who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That man should not think he will receive anything from the Lord; he is a double-minded man, unstable in all he does."

In verse 2 it says, "Count it pure joy when you have trials." This is a secret to great power in the Spirit. If you want to experience the power of God in your life, you must decide to have great joy when difficulties come. You have a choice when a giant comes at you with a big sword. You can, like the ten spies, say, "I hate giants and I'm afraid." Or, like Joshua and Caleb, you can say, "Thank you for the giants."

Our God will deliver us from the giants. When they come to your life and oppose you, you can have a negative attitude and be afraid or angry, or, you can take out the sword of the Spirit, thank God for this giant that opposes you, and cut off his head. When trials come, and they will come, count it pure joy. And, if you will count it pure joy, you will grow in perseverance and endurance. As the giants oppose you, if you have great joy, faith, and courage in facing them, making yourself believe God in your heart that you *will* win the victory in Jesus' name, then you will grow in endurance and faith. It is a command to count it pure joy when a giant comes. If you grow in endurance, you will grow in maturity. You will grow in friendship with God and in power in the Spirit. If you want to grow in love and in power of the Spirit, then you must accept these battles.

Run to the Battle!

God brings these battles so that we can have a relationship with Him. There are always giants in the promised land. **The more special the land, the bigger the giants.** Brothers, take up your swords. Sisters, take up your swords and count it pure joy. Decide, like David's mighty men, that if you see a hole in the ground with a lion in it you will jump in the hole and kill the lion. That is the heart of a mighty man of God—to see the enemy and run to the battle. David ran toward the giant Goliath. Joshua, Caleb, Moses, David, Jesus, and every mighty man of God runs to the battle. They jump into the hole and kill the lion. The Kingdom is entered forcefully. Jesus said that the violent take the Kingdom by force. God puts giants in the promised land for us. It's okay if they are there to oppose us. Be happy to have giants that want to kill us, because we will win. The giants make us very strong and mature; they make us like Jesus.

David had to oppose a lion and a bear in order to save a lamb. Then, when he faced Goliath, he had courage. Because David had a small battle with a lion and a bear, he was not afraid of the giant Goliath and was able to kill him. David could set God's people free because now he had courage. This is why James can say to count it pure joy when you face the battles in your heart and mind. When relationships are sometimes very hard, when temptations are difficult, when our stomachs are hungry, when people hate us or slander us, when we lose a job, or when a child dies, all of these things are battles like the lion and the bear.

When those battles come in our hearts and minds (and they *will* come), when God puts giants in the promised land for us, count it pure joy. Be happy about the giants. Those giants will help you have endurance and perseverance. Those giants will bring you to fullness in Jesus. If we will take up our battle positions against that enemy and not run away and hide, God will use these things to make us free and strong. We are not free and strong because God takes away problems. We are free and strong because God makes

us *bigger* than the problems. You must know this. This is the story of Jesus inside of you. We don't want the giants to go away. We want to jump in the hole and cut off the giant's head. We don't want Goliath to walk away; we want him to run toward us so we can kill him. We are not trying to avoid the battle. We are going to win the battle because we want to be like Jesus—free inside, with strong hearts and deep love.

You can make mistakes with corporate prayer, but if your hearts are excited toward Jesus for the battle, you'll be okay.

A Look at Paul's Life

We were speaking earlier this morning about Paul's life. Paul had some very special experiences with God, and God had opened his eyes to see many great revelations. Jesus had appeared to him and had showed him paradise. Jesus had told Paul teachings that no man had ever heard before. So, that means that Paul would have a wonderful life, right? Do you realize, Paul had been an apostle for twenty years before he came to understand the lesson in 2 Cor. 12:8. He begged God three times to make his pain go away. God said something to him that is hard for us to believe. Like Job's three friends, we want to believe bad things don't happen to good people. But God is God. And Paul said, "Remove this pain from me. I'm being punched and punched by a messenger from satan." But God said to His servant Paul, "Because I have given you many wonderful things, I also have to let you hurt inside so that you won't become proud or conceited about the many things that I have told you."

Paul was amazed at these things God said to him because he thought he should be able to pray and the pain would go away. God the Father said to Paul, "Don't you remember? Even My Son was crucified in weakness." Jesus was able to have the power to forgive all the sins of the world. This was because He was crucified in weakness. Not because He was so powerful, but because He was so weak. Not because Jesus never hurt, but because Jesus hurt so much. The more God desires to

use us for His glory, the more He wants us to carry around death in our own bodies so that we can bring life to others around us. When God gives us great revelation to see, when God gives us wonderful gifts to serve Him with, He must also give us some kinds of pain in the heart so that we won't become proud or conceited. So that we will always remember that all good things come from Him.

We are not owners of His good gifts. The wisdom and revelation does not come from us because we are so good. Just as God did with Job and Paul, just as He did with His own beloved Son Jesus in Isaiah 53, He cuts our legs out from under us. The Father knocks our legs out from under us, that we would fall before Him in worship. He does that so we can be used by Him without becoming proud. Here's a very special part in 2 Cor. 12: "Paul said, 'Because I know all these things are for Jesus' good and make Him happy, then I will be glad with my pain. I will even be glad with my weakness. I will not be happy with sin, but pain is okay.'" Because we want to do God's will from the heart, we must choose to be content even in pain. God's power is made perfect in our weakness. If we will accept the pain and worship Him anyway, His supernatural power can work through us in many, many wonderful ways. So we lift our hands open before God and we say like Paul said, "We long to share in the fellowship of His sufferings that we might also share in the power of resurrection life." This is a mystery of the gospel. It is not for selfish people. It's for people who will humble themselves before God. This is true Christianity and *not* goo-goo spirituality.

Jesus is going to come and take us home. And on that day what joy shall fill our hearts! But for now we have a job to do preparing the Bride. It's our job to love each other and help each other, that together as a Church we will be ready for Jesus' coming. Then our personality would be so much like Jesus that when He comes for His Church, it will be an equal yoke. It will be a Bride that looks like Jesus. A Bride that is wise and very strong like Jesus. A Bride that has as much love and compassion as Him, is not easily offended, and keeps her eyes

on the Father, just as Jesus does. If we keep our eyes straight ahead on Jesus, we will be a part of the wedding supper of the Lamb. And what joy shall fill our hearts!

Lives Joined and Knit Together

We should mention that there are saints in many cities who have prayed very much for the Kingdom of God to be Fully Manifested on this planet. And they have sacrificed very much to live for Jesus wholeheartedly seeking FIRST the Kingdom. As you might remember to pray for us, also pray for all those who have not “bowed their knee to baal.” Pray for them because we are part of them also.

Maybe it’s important to understand that if there is anything we are able to serve you with, it’s the product or the outworking of all of their lives together with our lives every day. The things that Jesus shows all of us—here and everywhere—are the products of putting our arms around each other and helping each other. The times when sin is challenged in our lives, the times when our weak arms are lifted up by those around us, those times are what make us who we are. If there is anything we could ever offer, it only comes because others have tried to help us. So, as you read through these “journals” of our lives, keep in mind that you are seeing not a few hundred or a few thousand people, but many thousands who have all contributed mutually to one another’s lives, and ours! May we all TOGETHER continue to change our lives, to the praise of God’s glory. Jesus gets ALL the glory and thanksgiving!

The Priesthood of Believers

In the body of Christ, there are many parts and some parts are more visible than other parts. But we should never mistake the power of a gift that perhaps is not so visible. In the church in the city where you are, you will have those among you who speak perhaps more than others do. But don’t ever underestimate or undervalue the gift that

is inside of you, even if you don't speak as much. The impact or the value that you have on the lives of those who may speak more often helps to make them who they are. Your effect on them makes their gifts stronger and stronger and stronger. Who you are makes them who they are. Perhaps not all of you will be as visible as others may be. But your gifts are *just as important*; make sure that you use them.

A brother or sister sitting here may not say very much in a gathering, but personally, there are those here whose gifts have had more effect on building me into who I need to become, and challenging things in my life that must change, than I could ever tell you in 10,000 words. If I will ever be able to help anyone in my whole life to know Jesus better, I will have to say many, many, many, many thank-yous to Jesus for providing many specific people around me to help me become who I am. I say that because no matter who *you are*, you can participate in changing the world for Jesus. You should not think you are someone special if you speak the most in a gathering. Others may not speak as much, but in many ways they can be bigger heroes because of the impact they have in our daily lives, for which we will always be indebted to God forever for.

I want you to understand how each of you can help change the world by how you live for God and for each other, helping each other become more like Jesus. God doesn't want superstars or heroes. He wants people who will submit to Him and to one another; God wants people who are willing to be used by Him.

A question was asked recently—*“concerning these things of which we have spoken—the Priesthood of Believers, how to be closer to Jesus, and what a church really is—are we far behind other places? Do people in other countries already know these things and walk in them?”*

I want you to know your great responsibility because it seems obvious from the fruit worldwide that there are very few people in any country that understand and walk in these truths of God and Commands from the Bible. God has commissioned you to go forth with His Word also. To all places that are near you, go and

spread the news of God's Holy Kingdom. God has chosen all who would hear and obey His Truths, whatever they may be, to be His "ambassadors." He has entrusted all of His true-hearted disciples with His special message about His Son, and His Church that lives in His Spirit and Life—the Quality of daily Life described in 1Cor.12 and Acts 2:42-47. Against His Love and Together-Life, He said the gates of Hell could not prevail. Very few people in India or Poland or anywhere else on earth know very many of these things that are on God's heart, and have always been in His Bible, because men who want money and power have tried to hide or twist these truths about a Priesthood of Believers so that they could stay in control, rather than Jesus. "God's Intent, now through the church" (Eph.3:10) is not new Truth. It is Truth as ancient as the heart of God and the Scriptures. It is as in Josiah's day when Truth had been buried in the rubble of man's religion. These are Truths that have been forgotten, or ignored, or just rebelled against. Not new truths, but new to most who have had them hidden from them, though they have always been in the Bible. God whispered these things in your ear about His Church so that you can live these things and spread these things. Will you accept this commission to go forth? "The gospel of God's Kingdom must go into every nation. And then the end will come!" You, too, have a job to do preparing the Bride. I hope you will have great courage and great faith to do this, as must all of those who love Him and His Word, no matter where they may live.