

## From Faith Unto Faith III Hungering & Thirsting After Righteousness

Fred R. Coulter—May 4, 2013

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to Sabbath services!

Since there's a lot of trouble and difficulty going on in the world, we'll concentrate on the thing that is most important: *Our relationship with God, and the faith that we need to have!* We are preparing for two things:

1. eternal life
2. to rule the world under Christ

Of course, when you watch anything—such as the History Channel—and we've been following along with the Vikings and Columbus coming over to America and so forth, what was really interesting is what happened with Genghis Kahn and coming west. Then his successors—after they had conquered all of this land—took over. I think he killed his brother, and then the bubonic plague started with them, before Europe had the ‘debouche’ where they fling huge rocks and things like that against castle walls. They had the ‘debouche’—the eastern version—where they could fling things into a village or into a walled city.

What they did, they actually had the very first biological warfare. They took the dead bodies of those who had the plague and hurled them into the cities and it spread—you can't stop it! That's what caused it to keep coming west. When it hit Europe, it killed a third of the population. Then I saw another special on it and it said that after that they had an economic boom because there was a lot of food to eat.

What struck me is that every single civilization, country, empire, fiefdom, community, state or region all fight and they kill. Delores said, ‘I'd rather be shot with a gun than bludgeoned in the head with some of those things.’ The Vikings' weapon of choice was the battleaxe. With one swing they could decapitate someone.

You look at the Scripture, Micah 4, and this is what the world needs—the return of Christ! But they're not going to like the return of Christ, because man is going to develop in such an advanced way, beyond what we even think of right now. Those things are already in the works. They are going to want to fight Christ to keep from being ‘invaded by the aliens’ from outer space and to save the world.

Here is what we are looking to do; here is what we are going to usher in after the resurrection,

Micah 4:1: “But it shall be in the last days *that* the mountain of the house of the LORD shall be established in the top of the mountains...” It will be over every government. Man is going to come up with his own world government. He hasn't had one, yet. Everything is there. The groundwork is being laid. It's going to end up being the greatest thing that has ever happened, and the worst disaster that men have caused—both!

But concerning the Lord and His government, “...and it shall be exalted above the hills; and people shall flow unto it. And many nations shall come and say, ‘Come and let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, and to the house of the God of Jacob. And He will teach us of His ways... [we need a massive educational program; re-educate] ...and we will walk in His paths’—for the law shall go forth out of Zion, and the Word of the LORD from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among many people, and will rebuke strong nations afar off; and **they shall** beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation shall not lift up a sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore” (vs 1-3).

The toy industry is going to be out of business! It's going to be replaced with real animals! Which would you rather have, Legos or a pet lion? That is coming! We have to prepare for it by understanding the evil of human nature beginning with our own, beginning with what we need to do to be converted.

Romans 1:17: “For therein *the* righteousness of God is revealed...” We just saw a little video of some of the sayings of Ronald Reagan. He said that the Bible—and I'm sure he believed it, though he didn't understand a lot of it—contains all the answers to our questions as human beings, and we need to read it. We haven't heard that since he has passed on. But here, from the Bible, it tells us how:

“...revealed **from faith unto faith...**” (v 17)—or *faith into faith*; your faith and belief in God and God sending His Spirit and faith back to you as one of the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love, joy, faith, etc.

“...according as it is written: ‘The just shall live by faith.’” (v 17).

Let's continue with *faith unto faith*, and let's finish off the section concerning *hungering and thirsting after righteousness*, and the kind of righteousness that we need.

I got a letter from a woman and she said, ‘I was listening to your sermon and I was greatly offended when you said that all the saints will be born again at the resurrection.’ She needs to learn a little more about the Bible, because Jesus was the firstborn of Mary in the flesh and He was the firstborn from the dead. Therefore, being raised from the dead is being born again. In the meantime, what God does is *He is developing the character in us!* It is a process! When you receive the Holy Spirit that is only the beginning. That is not an ending—though it is in a way. It’s the ending of your old way of living and the beginning of a new way of living.

Let’s look at some things concerning the righteousness of God. It’s amazing when you understand that all of the apostles, when they first started, taught Christ from the Old Testament. You probably heard many times that the Bereans ‘searched the Scriptures whether these things were so.’ They didn’t have the New Testament. All they had was the Old Testament.

Isaiah 54:17: “No weapon that is formed against you shall prevail...” That’s part of the faith; no weapon, no circumstances. We have promises from God and faith in God that we will succeed because of God.

“...and every tongue that shall rise against you in judgment, you shall condemn. This is the inheritance of the servants of the LORD, **and their righteousness is from Me,**’ says the LORD” (v 17).

What’s wrong with men is what is *inside!* It’s quite a miracle what God is doing. Let’s see what Jesus said and how human nature is. He ought to know because He’s the Creator—correct? God is doing an absolute miracle by *faith!* Faith also requires action, and *action is obedience!* Obedience begins in the mind! One of the things we need to do, *by faith:*

- through prayer
- through study
- through living
- through controlling our mind

*bringing every thought into captivity to Christ!* This is the way to eternal life. This is how you change what is *in!*

Mark 7:20: “And He said, ‘That which springs forth from *within* a man, that defiles the man.’” I could not help but think of that; just seeing all of the previews of all of the History Channel things that they’re doing with the Vikings and everything is killing, war, hatred.

Here God—*by faith in calling us—is*

developing the leaders for the Kingdom of God to put an end to all of this. But *we* must—with the power of God’s Spirit—overcome. Here is what we are without the Spirit of God.

Verse 21: “For from within, out of the hearts of men, go forth evil thoughts...” That’s just about all there is on television anymore. I mean, even when you watch things like the History Channel you’re still seeing the perpetual evil of men. Evil thoughts—that’s where it starts: *within!*

“...adulteries, fornications...” (v 21). There’s an ad on the History Channel that kind of runs up in the corner, and it says, ‘how sex changed the world.’ Today people are obsessed with sex. As a matter of fact we have a sermon series on that.

{note these series: *Obsessed with Sex* and *The Addicted Society*}

“...murders” (v 21). What are some of the programs that bring the most audiences? *How to solve a murder!*

Verse 22: “Thefts, covetousness, wickednesses, guile, licentiousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness; all these evils go forth **from within**, and *these* defile a man” (vs 22-23).

That’s why **from faith unto faith** is the righteousness of God; it comes from Him! We have to put forth the effort, but it is the power of the Holy Spirit *within* us that gives us the ability to overcome.

Isaiah 51—here is a message for us today, especially living in this wicked, evil world. To find a real true Christians is going to be a harder and harder thing to find. This is why when you look at the way the world is today. This is why the most important thing that we can contribute—there are other people contributing other things themselves—is through ChurchatHome.org. That gets people started on the Truth and knowing what they need to do. Then when it comes to the time of baptism, they can then begin to grow in grace and knowledge and all of that.

Isaiah 51:4: “Hearken to Me, My people... [we are the people of God] ...and give ear to Me, O My nation...” We are a Holy and righteous nation being formed so that at the resurrection we are going to take over the world!

“...for instruction shall proceed from Me, and I will make My justice as a light to the people. My righteousness is near; My salvation has gone out, and My arms shall judge the people; the isles shall wait upon Me, and on My arm they shall trust” (vs 4-5). That’s the only salvation in the world!

Yes, it’s going to get all super high-tech;

more than we ever thought. They are actually going to have things where it will be commonplace to go online and download your videos in holograms, so, you can sit there and walk around every side of the person that is bringing the message. That's already in the works! All the things that we're doing here will look like wooden buckets in pioneer days compared to what they are doing.

Verse 6: "Lift up your eyes to the heavens, and look upon the earth beneath; for the heavens shall vanish away like smoke, and the earth shall become old like a garment; and its inhabitants shall die in the same way. But My salvation shall be forever, and My righteousness... [which we're to hunger and thirst after] ...shall not be abolished."

Every Protestant minister needs to read that. What are you going to do with that? Especially if you believe that Jesus was God manifested in the flesh. Jesus Himself is the one who said it here in Isa. 51, and also said it in Matt. 5:17.

Verse 7: "Hearken to me, you who know righteousness, the people in whose heart *is* My law; do not fear the reproach of men, nor be afraid of their revelings; for the moth shall eat them up like a garment, and the worm shall eat them like wool; but My righteousness shall be forever, and My salvation from generation to generation' (vs 7-8)—*and on into the ages of eternity!*

Isaiah 32:13—this is talking about the Millennium: "For upon the land of my people shall come up thorns *and* briars; yea, *even* upon all the houses of joy in the joyous city; because the palace shall be deserted, the multitude of the city shall be forsaken; instead the mound and tower shall be for dens forever, a joy of wild donkeys, a pasture of flocks; until the Spirit is poured upon us from on high..." (vs 13-15). That can happen in three ways:

1. at baptism
2. when God poured out His Holy Spirit as recorded in Acts 2
3. at the resurrection

Then God is going to take over and the whole world is going to be transformed from thorns, thistles and briars to this:

"...and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is thought to be a forest. Then justice shall dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness remain in the fruitful field. And the work of righteousness shall be peace..." (vs 15-17).

It's interesting, we will come to one of those that it says, 'blessed are the peacemakers.' How do you get peace? *By everyone agreeing to obey God!*

Verse 17: "And the work of righteousness

shall be peace and the result of righteousness shall be quietness and confidence forever. And my people shall dwell in a peaceable home, and in secure dwellings and quiet resting places" (vs 17-18). That's really quite a promise!

Let's seek the kind of righteousness that we need. Not only does this apply to those who are in the New Testament, but this also applies to what we're going to administer when Christ returns.

Romans 5:17: "For if by the offense of the one man [Adam] death reigned by the one... [that's how they got *the law of sin and death*, when they rebelled against God] ...how much more shall those who receive the abundance of grace and the gift of righteousness... [from faith unto faith, the gift of God] ...reign in life by the one, Jesus Christ." *It comes God's way!* Let's see what that does.

Ephesians 4—here is how it is to work within us, and then we will see Paul's great desire for us, and this is the kind of model that we need to seek after, as well.

Ephesians 4:20: But you have not so learned Christ... [that is the licentiousness of the Gentiles] ...if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, according to *the Truth in Jesus*: That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man..." (vs 20-22). Here's the whole process, the continuous work every day:

- growing
- changing
- overcoming
- recognizing the sin within
- asking God to forgive you

The truth is, the older that you get the more you realize how evil human nature really is. Also, that's part of God's Spirit working *in you* to do so.

"...which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts" (v 22). Of course, there are positive things in deceitful lusts—right? Yes! Won't this be good? Won't this be nice?

Verse 23: "And that you be renewed..." This is a constant thing. How many of you have some sort of high-tech device that needs to be re-charged? Everyone!

Sidebar: In this book I'm reading—*The New Digital Age*—they are already devising how you can re-charge your cell phone and other technological things without wires. Remember the hieroglyphics that they find in the pyramids and tombs, where these two men were standing on either side and they had these big things come up? Now they look at them and they see electric lights. They look at the giant pyramids as electrical generators sending

electricity through the air.

What Scripture does that remind you of? *There is nothing new under the sun!* That which has been is what shall be.

We need to be renewed with God's Spirit **from faith unto faith**, because God's Spirit works in our mind to give us a converted mind; reprogram our mind, renew our mind.

"...in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man... [this shows the process] ...which according to God is created in righteousness... [which comes from God] ...and Holiness of the Truth" (vs 23-24). Then it tells us how to do it.

We started out with the mind is deceitful above all things, wicked and evil thoughts, and adultery and fornication. Look at what he is telling those in the Church, showing that as long as we're in the flesh we'd better be busy about overcoming.

Verse 25: "Therefore, let each one put away lies *and* speak the truth with his neighbor because we are members of one another." How about that, here in the Bible is anger management! Right here in this building where we're meeting they have a lifestyle office for all of those who never grew up to learn how to manage their lives; never learned how to control their anger. Here's how to do it, right here:

Verse 26: "When you become angry... [It doesn't say to never become angry; that's impossible. Even Jesus healed in anger—righteous anger!] ...do not sin...." Don't carry it to the extreme. Why? *Because human nature likes to go ahead and take that and just keep pushing and pushing!*

"...Do not let the sun go down on your anger... [Want to have a good night's sleep? *Go pray about it and get rid of it!*] ...Neither give place to the devil" (vs 16-17).

Philippians 3—this is one of the reasons that God called the Apostle Paul. He was a Pharisee of Pharisees, super-zealous! A lot of ability! He brings out some very important things. He's making a comparison of what he was before he was converted and what he is now doing in seeking the *faith unto faith* and the righteousness of God; seek to hunger and thirst after it. He is the model on how to do that.

Philippians 3:1: "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord. Indeed, for me to write the same things to you *is* not troublesome, but for you *it is* safe. Beware of dogs..." (vs 1-2). Who are they? *Those are the vicious ones who will come after you!*

"...beware of evil workers, beware of the

circumcision" (v 2). That's an interesting term because it means the cutoff ones. He said, in Galatians, that those who come around saying that you need to be circumcised, 'I would that they would cut themselves off!'

Verse 3: "For we are the circumcision, who serve God in *the* spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in *the* flesh." All the activity of conversion goes on in your mind and heart. This is a challenging thing to the Jews.

Remember, at this particular time in Judaism—there are still some Jews today who practice this—this is what they did: You cannot come near, go into a house or be with someone who is not a Jew. You can't fraternize with them. That's why the Pharisees and the scribes and priests did not go into the judgment chamber when they brought Jesus to Pilate. They stayed outside, because they wanted to keep the Passover later that day and they would defile themselves if they went in where the Gentiles were. Understand this with what Paul is writing here; this is really revolutionary. Remember, Paul was one of the leading advocates of circumcision.

Romans 2:17—there's an awful lot in here because this is the whole basis, and is built upon Rom 1:17. He's talking to the Jews: "Behold, you are called a Jew, and you yourself rest in the law, and boast in God." Yes, they do! They even call their traditions *the Law of Moses*.

Verse 18: "And know *His* will, and approve of the things that are more excellent, being instructed out of the Law... [they went synagogue every Sabbath] ....and are persuaded *that* you yourself... [chosen people of the world] ...are a guide of *the* blind, a light for those in darkness, an instructor of *the* foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of the knowledge and of the Truth *contained* in the Law" (vs 18-20). Notice how Paul shifts the emphasis. You have all of these things and you say, 'You stand on this. We can learn something from this for ourselves, as well.'

Verse 21: "You, then, who are teaching another, do you not teach yourself also?...." That's the best way to avoid hypocrisy.

- You learn from the Word of God.
- You learn from your errors that you need to correct.
- You let the Word of God correct you.

Someone will come along and say, 'Hey, you're doing this and this isn't right.' What are you going to do at that point if they're speaking Truth. Well, you better say, 'Yeah, that's true.' You better repent of it! God even used a jackass to talk to

Balaam—right? If God sends a person to you and says, ‘You know, what about this... You need to think about that this isn’t right.’ *You need to repent!*

He says, v 21: “You, then, who are teaching another, do you not teach yourself also? You who preach, ‘Do not steal,’ are you stealing? You who say, ‘Do not commit adultery,’ are you committing adultery? You who abhor idols, are you committing sacrilege?” (vs 21-22)—by having idols in your mind?

Verse 23: “You who boast in law, are you dishonoring God through your transgression of the Law? For through you the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles, exactly as it is written” (vs 23-24). Notice God’s solution to this whole thing. It’s not who your ancestors are today, it is the calling of God and God becomes your Father today. Remember what Jesus said to those who said, ‘We’re Abraham’s seed.’ There’s no protection in that any longer.

Verse 25: “For on the one hand, circumcision profits if you are observing *the* Law... [Whoa! Teaching by Paul!] ...on the other hand, if you are a transgressor of *the* Law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision. Therefore, if the uncircumcised...” (vs 25-26).

- those people over there that you hate and despise
- those whom you will not keep company with
- those whom you will not assemble with
- those whom you say are the goyim

If they are “...keeping the requirements of the law... [or righteousness] ...shall not his uncircumcision be reckoned for circumcision?.... [now he gets really nasty]: ...And shall not the uncircumcised, who by nature is fulfilling the law...” (vs 26-27). Keeping the Law, according to Paul is a good thing.

“...judge you, who, with *the* letter and circumcision, *are* a transgressor of *the* law?.... [Yes, indeed!] ...For he is not a Jew who *is one* outwardly, neither *is* that circumcision which *is* external in *the* flesh; rather, he *is* a Jew who *is one* inwardly, and circumcision *is* of the heart, in *the* spirit *and* not in *the* letter; whose praise *is* not from men but from God” (vs 27-29).

How do you become a Jew inwardly?

1. You have the Spirit of the Father by begetting!
2. You have the Spirit of Christ!
- Did Christ come from the tribe of Judah, of the house of David? Yes, *He did!*

- What did Jesus tell His apostles? *You dwell in Me, and I dwell in you!*

If Christ is dwelling *in you*, you are a spiritual Jew of a higher caliber and quality than the physical Jew.

This will help us understand a little more. Philippians 3:3: “For we are **the** circumcision...”—of God. Our hearts have been circumcised through the baptism of Jesus Christ and receiving the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we are spiritual Jews.

“...who serve God in *the* spirit and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and do not trust in *the* flesh.” Now then, he reminisces and looks back upon his life before he was converted:

Verse 4: “Though I might also have *reason* to trust in *the* flesh. If any other thinks he has *cause* to trust in *the* flesh, I *have* much more: Circumcised on *the* eighth day; of *the* race of Israel, from *the* tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews; with respect to law, a Pharisee; with respect to zeal... [I did my job] ...persecuting the Church; with respect to righteousness that *is* in law, blameless. Yet, the things that were gain to me, these things I have counted *as* loss for the sake of Christ. But then truly...” (vs 4-8).

Here’s counting the cost. Remember when we talk about baptism, we’re to count the cost (Luke 14).

“...I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things... [everything he had physically] ...and count *them* as dung; that I may gain Christ and **may** be found in Him...” (vs 8-9). Notice it is *may*—conditional! Subjunctive in the Greek.

“...not having my own righteousness... [We’re to hunger and thirst after the righteousness of God] ...which *is derived* from law...” (vs 9). You can have a certain amount of discipline and obedience and things like that if you keep the law in the letter; you have letter of the law righteousness. That’s good! That’s better than living in evil. But the change has to come from within—heart and mind—not the discipline from without.

“...but that *righteousness* which *is* by *the* faith of Christ—the righteousness of God *that is* based on faith” (v 9)—**from faith unto faith!**

(go to the next track)

Let’s review v 9 again. This becomes important! This is the epitome of hungering and thirsting after righteousness. The promise is that they shall be filled. What is that filling going to be? *Eternal life!*

Verse 9: and may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which is derived from law, but that righteousness which is by the faith of Christ—... [from faith unto faith] ...the righteousness of God that is based on faith.” Isn’t that a tremendous thing that God does? That He gives us the strength and the power to do this through His Holy Spirit? Yes, indeed!

Verse 10: “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.” Notice that the hungering and thirsting is epitomized right here:

Verse 11: “If by any means... [the ultimate righteousness will not come until we’re spirit beings] ...I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead; not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected; but I am striving...” (vs 11-12). He brings out that it is a process. So, all of those who believe in ‘once saved/always saved’ and once you have so-called been converted, now you’re born again.

- Why all the striving?
- Why all the requirement of perfecting?

“...so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained... [That knocks into a cocked hat ‘once saved/always saved’—doesn’t it?] ...but this one thing I do...” (vs 12-13).

- single-minded
- single-purposed
- always focusing on the goal
- always changing and overcoming

“...forgetting the things that are behind...” (v 13)—everything of your past life; everything that happened. There’s a very interesting quote that is in this book that I am reading—*The New Digital Age*:

“We should all be concerned about the future because we will have to spend the rest of our lives there.”

—Charles F. Kettering

Not the past. If you live in the past—could-a, should-a, would-a; all those things—forget all of those things:

- forget all the mistakes
- forget all the difficulties
- forget all the sins

Ask God to cleanse your mind of it. Especially today! People have had their minds bombarded by things that just never existed even 30-40 years ago. Though we had movies; you watch some of these oldie but goodie movies; they know how to speak! They didn’t swear and curse! And they were all thin!

Forget all those things that are behind. What you do is you remember the lesson!

- Do not relive it emotionally.
- Do not bring up past anger and hatred!
- Do not bring up past sorrows and difficulties!

Forget those things behind! It comes with the ‘washing of the water by the Word.’ The thing is that spiritually speaking we are to be perfected, but we are also like children. We make a lot of mistakes! God is not going to remember those. That’s why we’re told to forget them! Concentrate on what you need to concentrate on; hunger and thirst after righteousness.

“...and reaching forth to the things that are ahead” (v 13). That’s the best way to overcome all the evil in the world, and all the bad news that’s going on. Keep your mind focused on:

- why you are called
- why we are here
- where we are going
- what you’re doing
- how Jesus is working with us
- how God is working with us from faith unto faith

that we may have the righteousness of Christ! Keep focused on that! Don’t waste present time, and future time, with pollution from the past and sin. If you’ve repented, wipe it away.

Verse 14: “I press toward the goal... [that is driven by spiritual hungering and thirsting] ...for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus.” Think of it!

Next time you see all these big important mucky-mucks on TV, or say like the G-20 when they all get together, or presidents and prime ministers get together, or all of these elite financial people. Think of this: *by the grace of God, God is going to exalt us over them!*

Think of that! Not because we’re great, but because of Christ! It is a *high calling*! What is it going to be like to be told, ‘you be ruler over this city: you over ten cities, you over five cities. You do this or that.’ There are going to be so many jobs to do, so many things to fulfill. Remember, after the Kingdom of God is setup there is going to be an explosion of people multiplying and bringing forth babies. It’s not going to be painful like it is today. There will be a little bit of pain.

But God, in creating the heavens that are so great with trillions and trillions of galaxies, is going to make His Family so great! God doesn’t do anything in vain. He’s made the universe for a purpose. He has called us for that purpose. That’s a

tremendous thing to keep in mind. Always have it at the forefront of your mind.

Then when the Kingdom of God is setup, there are going to be many children. The health is going to be so good that women are still going to be strong and virile and vital. They won't be all haggard out and beaten up and worn down.

They will live their life to the full and one day they will come to church and on this Sabbath we're going to have a 'going out' party. Really, all the little kids are in the back: 'What's going to happen, mommy?' *You just wait and see!* 'What's grandma doing up there?' *You just wait and see!* Then it's going to happen. Whatever the ceremony will be then they'll be changed from flesh to spirit, enter into the spirit world. You talk about inspiring kids. Won't that be inspiring? Then momma looks down and says to the little boy or girl, 'Did you see what happened to grandma?' *Yes!* 'Wasn't that a fantastic thing?' *Yes!* 'Would you like to do that someday?' *Yes!* 'Well, you be a good boy/girl.' *I will!* Everything is going to be changed!

Verse 15: "So then, let as many as *be* perfect... [you cannot be perfect in the flesh, but you can have a perfect attitude a perfect motivation] ...be of this mind.... [*from faith unto faith*] ...And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you."

Now, let me stop here and explain something very important that you need to understand. You're baptized, you received the Holy Spirit, everything is going along fine, everything is good, everything is wonderful, and then all of a sudden you find out that you still have evil thoughts in your mind.

What has happened? How is that you go along and all of a sudden here's this evil thought that comes into your mind? Maybe it's been there a long time, somewhere buried deep in your mind. How did that happen? I wasn't thinking anything along those lines like that!

Here's how it happened: ***God will reveal even this to you!*** What is part of the work of the Holy Spirit in your mind? ***If it's going to lead you into righteousness, then it has to also lead you out of sin***—correct? So, through the power of the Holy Spirit, God is revealing the sin to you so that you may repent of it. When you do, then you understand how sinful sin really is. "...God will reveal even this to you." Keep that in mind! Don't think: Was my baptism valid? *Of course it was valid!* Why do I have this evil thought? *Because you need to get rid of it and God is revealing it to you!* That's a good proposition—isn't it? So, *go repent!*

Verse 16: "Nevertheless, *in regard* to that

which we have attained... [we have attained to a certain degree—haven't we?] ...let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. Brethren, be imitators together of me, and bear in mind those who walk in this way, as you have us *for an example*" (vs 16-17).

We've all lived through v 18: "(For many walk *contrary*; I have often told you *of* them, and I tell you now *with* weeping, *they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ." And the only thing we can do is ask God to bring them repentance.

We've been in the Church a long, long time. I was baptized Oct. 19, 1960; so this coming October will 53 years. When we first come into the Church everything is wonderful, everything is good. At that time the Church was doing a whole lot better than it's doing nowadays. They were actually following what God said. But later things came in, because they didn't have this kind of hungering and thirsting after righteousness to keep on the track that they needed to be on.

We all thought how wonderful this is going to be, what a great thing it's going to be. Right after Delores and I were married, we looked at each other and said, 'Oh, isn't it going to be wonderful, we're not going to get old.' We thought Christ was going to return in our lifetime. We remember that when we go up and down the steps.

We have seen those people, and some of them are a real astonishing surprise—right? Some of them, even ministers you heard them speak.

- How could they give up on the Truth?
- How could they turn their back on the Sabbath and go back to Sunday, Christmas.

One wife of a local elder said, 'Oh, I was so glad when they said it's all right to have Christmas, because I really missed having the Christmas tree in the house and the smell of the evergreen.'

I hope that they repent; otherwise, "...*they are* the enemies of the cross of Christ, whose end is destruction, whose god is *their* belly... [everything that's fleshly] ...and whose glory is in their shame; *for* they mind earthly things.) But for us, the commonwealth of God exists in *the* heavens... [that's the whole plan and working of God] ...from where also we are waiting for *the* Savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body..." (vs 18-21).

The next time you attend a funeral, and you look at the person there in the coffin, and you think about this person's life—however long they lived. Maybe they were faithful, really righteous, really

good, and if you can in your own mind sort of roll back the time and see if you can remember when this person was young and vibrant and all this sort of thing. Then you look in the coffin and here's the person old, withered, dried up. That's just like it says concerning human life. We're like a flower that fades away. The wind comes along and the blossom drops off. Let's not mind the earthly things, but let's look at what God is going to do. We'll come back to 1-Cor. 15, even though this comes a little bit on Pentecost.

"...according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself" (v 21). That is the end result of righteousness.

How much of you does God need to reconstitute you? The resurrection is not going to be the same physical body. Can't be! Think about the next time you see a documentary on the horrors of human cruelty to other humans, and you have racks of skeletons and bones and skulls. Think about all of those who have been eaten by sharks, who have died in the high seas. It's not going to be the same body.

How much does God need to reconstitute you? Even physically, all your genes and chromosomes are on every single part of you: a piece of skin, a little saliva, a little bit of the brain. You only need just a speck. That's why when we die the spirit goes back to God. God takes that spirit that now needs a new mind, a new body, and that's how you're going to be resurrected, or reconstituted.

1-Corinthians 15:42: "So also *is* the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption..." I don't know how an undertaker can handle what he does. I could never be an undertaker.

Let's say here comes a normal death, not one all mangled up from an accident or blown up with a bomb, or whatever. Here's this body. What does he have to do? *He has to take all the inner fluids out of it!* Otherwise, if he didn't, the body would explode; all the things they do to embalm a person. They do this so that they won't make any mistakes of burying people who have been alive.

The Egyptians used to have an instrument that they would reach up and pull out the brain, and reach in and pull out the heart and all the innards. Guess what's on the inside? *The worst kind of corruption you would ever want!*

Just think about how bad it is when you are really sick and you've got to vomit and you've got to run to the bathroom, taking your temperature, trying to cool down. You feel miserable and rotten, your breath is horrible, your eyes are terrible, your hair is all standing on end, and you look in the

mirror and think what a horrible thing I am. All the women are there trying to make themselves beautiful when they're not sick—right. Just think of the guy who works in the mortuary, the undertaker.

"...It is sown in corruption; it is raised in incorruption. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory.... [to shine as the sun] ...It is sown in weakness... [if you die, that's weakness] ...it is raised in power. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body. There is a natural body, and there is a spiritual body" (vs 42-44). The very body that you have, that you walk around with, if you're converted and faithful to the end, that's a guarantee that you will receive a spiritual body.

Just think how great that is going to be. We don't know how that is going to work. If our physical body works good and last so long, don't you think that the next product has got to be so far superior to last forever? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 45: "Accordingly, it is written, 'The first man, Adam, became a living soul; the last Adam *became* an ever-living Spirit.' However, the spiritual *was* not first, but the natural—then the spiritual. The first man *is* of the earth—made of dust. The second man *is* the Lord from heaven. As *is* the one made of dust, so also *are all* those who are made of dust; and as *is* the heavenly *one*, so also *are all* those who are heavenly" (vs 45-48).

What is it going to be like to be a spirit being and be able to walk through walls? For all you women, in the resurrection you're not going to have to stand there and let a man open the door for you. You just walk through it.

Verse 49: "And as we have borne the image of the *one* made of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly *one*. Now, this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God, nor does corruption inherit incorruption. Behold, I show you a mystery... [It is! God's secret! How is He going to do it?] ...we shall not all fall asleep, but we shall all be changed, in an instant, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (vs 49-52).

That's how our bodies are going to be transformed. Isn't that going to be great? For all of those of us who have all the pain and agony of trying to lose weight all of our lives, it will be gone at the resurrection. That's why when you're resurrected you're going to say, 'Hallelujah!' Isn't that true? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 53: "For this corruptible must put on incorrumpability, and this mortal must put on immortality. Now, when this corruptible shall have

put on incorruptibility, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall come to pass the saying that is written: ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’” (vs 53-54).

*This is why we need to hunger and thirst after righteousness! This is the goal! This is the end!*

Scriptural References:

- 1) Micah 4:1-3
- 2) Romans 1:17
- 3) Isaiah 54:17
- 4) Mark 7:20-23
- 5) Isaiah 51:4-8
- 6) Isaiah 32:13-18
- 7) Romans 5:17
- 8) Ephesians 4:20-27
- 9) Philippians 3:1-3
- 10) Romans 2:17-29
- 11) Philippians 3:3-21
- 12) 1 Corinthians 15:42-54

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Matthew 5:17
- Acts 2
- Romans 1:17
- Luke 14

Also referenced:

Sermon Series:

- *Obsessed with Sex*
- *The Addicted Society*

Book: *The New Digital Age*

Websites: churchathome.org

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