

## Have You Been Saved?

Fred R. Coulter—August 21, 2010

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services. Since we are reaching a lot of new people now through Church at Home and other means—and we are re-doing the book, *Lord, What Should I Do?* The first edition was geared to those who were coming out of problems in the Churches of God. That doesn't fit those who are coming out of worldly Christianity. So right now Phil Neal is helping update it and we're expanding it, and we're asking the question from the point of view as a Christian in the world would look at his or her church and see what's happening and ask the question: 'Lord, what should I do?'

So we're trying to get the cover where we'll have sort of a blend of different people with a quizzical look on their face, 'Lord, what should I do?' And I think we need to have from Ps. 11:8, 'what will the righteous do if the foundations are destroyed?' I think we need to have that as kind of the little quote behind the meaning of the book.

With that then, you have seen how that we are developing many sermons in coordination with Church at Home that are going to help those who are coming out of that Christianity and into the Truth. For many of them the Truth seems really strange, because they've been told that anyone who keeps the Sabbath belongs to a cult, where it's really the other way around.

Anyone who doesn't believe in the Bible and has the wrong kind of leadership even if they believe in the Bible, they have certain aspects of a cult that is working within even a Church of God, though it is not a cult. But you'd have to say every single religion of this world is a cult, every single one! And you would have to say, if you saw the picture of this poor little boy in Iran who got caught stealing.... Now little kids are going to steal. If I asked when you were growing up, did you steal something? Yeah, you'd all raise your hand—right? Well, he got caught, and you know what the punishment for him was. I saw the pictures. They wrapped his arm. Made him lay down on the pavement and took the front tire of a truck and rolled over his arm. That is the height of evil and a cult.

You believe that you can bring about righteousness by doing evil. *That'll never happen!* And that's the same problem—not quite as vicious, not quite as hateful—that is in all religions, and that's the problem that's in Protestantism. You believe that you're better off not trying to keep the law, because no one can keep the law. And so you end up just kind of in an ethereal mindset, that you're doing the will of God.

I talked to a man in the New Leaf Community Market. They have a little place where you can get some tea and get some snacks, so I got some peppermint tea, and I was sitting down there reading a book and drinking the tea. And here comes this man, he's all happy, he sits down and he starts talking with me, and he tells me what he's doing. That he's with a group and it's a religious group, as well, and they take care of the homeless, they take care of the poor, they take care of the widows, and oh, what a wonderful job that they are doing.

And I said, 'Well, that's nice. That's good. What you're doing is what God wants you to do.' *Oh, yes!* So I said, 'Now let me ask you a question: Since you believe it's important to love your neighbor and help them, what do you think that your relationship with God ought to be? Don't you think it's important'—and I listed off the first commandment, have no other gods, no idols, don't take God's name in vain, and remember the Sabbath to keep it Holy.' As soon as he got there, he says, *I'm not going to argue about that, I'm not going to argue about that.* It's good to take care of your neighbor, but if you don't love God.... What did Jesus say about the greatest commandment? 'Love God with all your heart, and mind, and soul, and being'—right? And 'love your neighbor as yourself, and on these two hang all the law and the prophets.'

Well today, a lot of people believe in Jesus for salvation, so let's see what Jesus, and let's see as we ask the question: Have you been saved? First of all come to John 14:6. We all know this—don't we? Where Jesus said: "**I am the Way**... [Now that's interesting, because there's the way of man, there is the way of Satan, there is the way of Hinduism, there is the way of Islam, there is the way of Catholicism, there's the way of atheism, there's the way of agnosticism, there's the way of Protestantism—and they think that they're right, because they have the name of Jesus. But it is a *specific way* that Jesus laid down. And what did He say of *this way*? 'Oh, it's easy, doesn't cost you anything, it's very nice to do.' *No!* He said, 'Straight is the way and difficult is the way that leads to life.'](So He): ...is the Way, **and the Truth**... [Which means that if you're going to come to God and if you're going to have Jesus as your Savior, you cannot believe in lies, because the truth is this: you cannot worship the God of Truth with lies. Doesn't work. He is the Truth.] **...and the Life**..." And there is no life without Jesus Christ.

Now let's come to Acts 4, and let's see what the Apostle Peter said here. Now after they healed this man who had laid at the gate Beautiful for years,

and he was raised up so he could walk, not only did he walk, he leaped and sang and praised God right there in the temple area, right in front of all the scribes and Pharisees and leaders and people. The religious leaders of Judaism were having a problem because this thing of what is now in the Bible or the *way of the Lord*, as it was called then, was getting out of hand. They didn't like it that they were losing power. People don't like it when they lose power, when they lose control, so that is what was happening.

They went out and they brought him in to question him, how they did it. Now let's pick it up here in Acts 4:6: "And Annas, the high priest, and Caiaphas and John and Alexander... [Now who were they? *They were those who condemned Jesus—right? Yes!* 'By all means we must stamp this out.'] ...and as many as were of *the* high priest's lineage. And after placing them in the midst... [That is bringing them right into the middle of the Sanhedrin.] ...they inquired, 'By what power or in what name did you do this?'.... [How did this happen?] ...Then Peter, filled with *the* Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders of Israel, If we are examined this day as to a good work *done to the* infirm man, by what power he has been cured, be it known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that in the name of Jesus Christ the Nazarean, Whom you crucified, but Whom God has raised from the dead, by Him this *man* stands before you whole" (vs 6-10).

And then he quotes the Scripture, which Jesus also quoted to them, remember, when they came and said, 'By what authority do You do this?' What was Jesus' answer? 'Well, you tell Me by what authority John had, was it from heaven or men, and you answer Me and I'll tell you by what authority I do this.' And they said, after conferring, 'We don't know.' So then Jesus said, 'Neither will I tell you.' Then He told them about the stone, which was Himself.

"This is the Stone... [or the Rock. You go through the Psalms—the rock, the rock, the rock.] ...that was set at naught by you, the builders, which has become the Head of *the* corner.... [So when you ask the question, 'Have you been saved,' this has to be a fundamental starting point]: ...And **there is no salvation in any other, for neither is there another name under heaven which has been given among men, by which we must be saved**" (vs 11-12). And 'must' there in the Greek means *mandatory, obligatory*. So right at the first here you eliminate every other religion in the world and yet all of them say, 'Oh, we're worshipping the same God and we're all going to the same place,' which to them is a true statement. *But is a lie because the*

*Bible tells us differently*, so they believe a lie hoping that through their lie they're going to have salvation.

Let's come to Mark 16, and let's see what Mark says. Some places in the Bible it sounds very easy. All you have to do is profess the name of Jesus and you're saved. But what they're talking about is a start. What salvation is about is

- the start
- the way along the way
- and the finish

Because remember, Jesus said, 'The one who endures to the end he shall be saved.'

Mark 16:15: "And He said to them, 'Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole creation. The one who believes and is baptized... [Now we've already covered that—haven't we? Baptism is what? ***Your covenant death with Christ and you enter into the New Covenant through baptism upon repentance and repentance of sin.***] ...and is baptized shall be saved... [This doesn't tell us *when* it is finished. The Protestants falsely believe that if you profess the name of Jesus, you confess your sins, 'Yes, I've been a sinner, Lord, save me,' you have been born again. And as you will see on one of the Church at Home that I did, it'll be a while before it gets to you, I went through about born again. What I did, I said, 'If you're born again, let's give you a test.' I used to say the hatpin, see if you bleed. Then I also said, 'Walk through the wall.' This time I said, 'No, no, let's do it right, run through it. See if you're like the wind, no one can see you.' It doesn't stop there.] ...but the one who does not believe shall be condemned'" (vs 15-16).

All right, let's come here to Ephesians 2 and let's come to the very Scriptures that are used to help lead people to Christ. It's kind of like this: If you lead someone to Christ, but you never really reveal Him, because you don't go through all the Scriptures, have you led them to Christ? And if they confess their sins and they are forgiven, and God does not impute sin to them, does that mean that they have no more sin ever imputed to them? What are you going to do with 1-John 1, which says, 'If we confess our sins,' that is to God, now notice it is 'we.' John is including himself—isn't he? 'If we confess our sins He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.' Now was that after conversion or not? Well, probably in the case of John, well over sixty years after conversion. So you have to have all of it, you can't take part of it.

Now just think, if they launched a rocket to go to the moon and they forgot one vital part—remember what happened when they had the mistake? They were sending a teacher up into space and they got up two minutes into the air, exploded,

and all died, because something was not right. So likewise with salvation.

- you have to have all of it
- you have to have the name of Jesus Christ
- you have to have baptism
- you have to have repentance

Let's see where we all start, and then what we are to do, Ephesians 2:1: "Now you were dead in trespasses and sins, In which you walked in times past according to the course... [or the way] ...of this world... [That's why we're not to love the world.] ...according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience" (vs 1-2). So Satan is there, deceiving the whole world. And it is so intently deceived that now you even have to question what you see as being real.

Some of the politicians are so professional at lying and they've gotten away with it for so long. Now they exposed one politician, it was a black woman running for Congress. She had her picture taken supposedly with this famous white man who was supposedly endorsing her. Well, when that got up on the television, because some people are looking for the truth, they found out that that was not a real picture. What she did, she took a picture of the man and his wife and replaced herself in the picture through what is called photo-shop. Ever heard of photo-shop? You can create reality. So we have to be very careful, because this world is filled with lies. You can't believe anything any politician will tell you. It gets the same way with any religious person. You can't believe what they say, because even though they quote the Scripture, they are not going to quote all the Scriptures.

Verse 3: "Among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the children of wrath, even as the rest of the world.*"

There comes a time in your life when *God begins to deal with you*. Something happens in your life and you want to know why, you want to know about God. And generally that comes through trials and difficulties that we are going through and we find ourselves helpless and inadequate in everything that we try and do, and we suddenly realize, we don't have the answers and we turn to God. That's when God begins dealing with us, so you need to have the sermon, *From Your Calling to Eternal Life*. That's the beginning of your calling and you have to answer that call.

But notice what happens when you do, v 4: "But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we... [He's including himself; Paul is including himself.

Notice how many times the apostles include themselves in their writings.] ...when we were dead in *our* trespasses, has made us alive together with Christ. (*For* you have been saved by grace.)" (vs 4-5). And everyone, 'Oh, yes, by gave you have been saved. Oh, you don't need works. If you try and keep any commandments, you're trying to justify yourself by law.' *Not so!* as we have seen with *God's Grace and Commandment-Keeping*.

Now he repeats it down here in v 8 and this becomes important. "For by grace you have been saved... [Now that is passive perfect meaning 'have been saved.' Now does this mean 'once saved, always saved'? Does this mean that when you were called and in this position, that now it is complete?] ...For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this *especially* is not of your own selves; *it is* the gift of God.... [And 'gift' is another word for *favor* or *grace*.] ...Not of works... [There it is, you're not to have works.] ...so that no one may boast" (vs 8-9).

Let's see why most Protestants leave off v 10, because this changes the whole equation. What kind of works is he talking about here in v 9? *Our works*. Now let me ask you a question. If we don't have to have any works, why does God judge us according to our works? You read Rev. 2 & 3 and to every Church He says, 'And I will give to every one according as his works shall be.' What is the conflict? The conflict is not works, the conflict is whose works, what kind of works. If you're doing your works like Cain, and Cain brought an offering that he thought God should accept, but not according to God's instructions. Whose work was it, though he brought it to God? *It was his.*] (So this has to be your own works): ...so that no one may boast" (v 9).

However, *if* you are walking in the way that you ought to be walking according to Jesus Christ, whose works are you doing? *The works of God!* Because as we're going to see, the greatest work that is being done is the work of God in each one of us, so that we will complete salvation, because *being saved from our sins is only the beginning*.

Now let's add in here one other thing. Come over here to Colossians 1, and let's see what has to happen. Remember what Jesus said when He prayed for the disciples and apostles, and even for us. He said, 'I pray that you take them not out of the world, but that you keep them from the evil one.' Now how is that done? Now notice how this is going to help explain Ephesians 2:10.

Colossians 1:9: "For this cause we also, from the day that we heard *of it*, do not cease to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding.... [You have to know what you're going to be doing—correct? And once you know

what you need to be doing, which you have learned, been taught from the Word of God, what are you to do?] ...That you may walk worthily of the Lord, unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work... ['Good work' refers to the works that God wants us to do.] ...and growing in the knowledge of God... [We're going to see also that salvation is a process. Salvation is creation, because God is doing something in you.] ...Being strengthened with all power according to the might of His glory, unto all endurance and long-suffering with joy; giving thanks to the Father, Who has made us qualified for the share of the inheritance of the saints in the light" (vs 10-12).

So the Father is the one Who qualified us. And how many times have we heard in the past, 'Well, you better do this, brethren. You better do that, so you may qualify.' Well, we qualify

- through the Father
- through the Spirit
- through walking in the way of the Lord

just as we've seen here. Now notice what God has done, and this ties right in with Eph. 2. We *have been saved* from what and who?

Verse 13: "Who has personally **rescued us**... [that's the word in the Greek] ...from the power of darkness... [What is the power of darkness? *Satan the devil*—right? If you're under the control of the prince of the power of the air, you're walking in darkness, are you not? *Yes!*] ...and has transferred us unto the kingdom of the Son of His love."

Now back to Ephesians 2:10: "For **we**... [All of us together. God is doing something with all of us.] ...are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto the good works... [There it is again. That's why the works in v 9 have to be human sinful works or works that are originating from our own thoughts. The good works in v 10 are what?

- *commandments* of God
- the *love* of God
- the *faith* of God
- the *hope* of God

—all of those combined.] ...that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them." So, all of this answers the question that we have to walk in the way of Jesus Christ—right? *According to good works*, and God is working with us. Let's see that salvation is not completed when you repent and believe and are baptized.

Let's come to 1-Corinthians 15; let's see what else Paul writes about here, because what I've just described there is only a beginning. That's a start.

So here in 1-Corinthians 15:1 Paul explains something very important for us to understand: "Now I am declaring to you, brethren, the same gospel that I proclaimed to you, which you also received, and in which you are now standing... [Now in Rom. 5 that *standing* is under the grace or within the grace of God. You're *standing in it*; you're *walking in it*.] ...By which you are also **being saved**... [Showing that it is a process, it is a work. Now the *King James* does not say that, because it was not faithfully translated from the Greek. This is present tense passive, 'you are also being saved,' a process.] ...**if**..." (vs 1-2).

Now here's one of these '*ifs*.' When I go down south I'm going to do a sermon on '*if*.' May end up being several of them. What was it, last week or the week before, I mentioned, 'Oh, wouldn't it be nice to have all the '*ifs*' of the Bible all together, capitalized '*if*' and bold. So Harry Curly got on his computer and zip—and did it and sent it to me. I was amazed! Amazed, that the very central foundation of '*if*,' is found in Gen. 4 referring to Cain. 'If you do well, you'll be accepted. If you do not well, sin lies at the door.' That's the whole basis of every '*if*' between man and God throughout the whole Bible, right there in Gen. 4. How many times have we read the Bible? How many times have we gone over that? Yet, it's just like everything else in the Bible, the more you study it, the more you learn. The more you learn, the more you study it, and the more you see it's all together in one big package. You can't separate it from the other.

Let's come to 1-Corinthians 1:18—it's talking about the cross of Christ: "For to those who are perishing, the preaching of the cross is foolishness; but to us who **are being saved**, it is the power of God." Showing a process and a creation.

Let's come to 1-Corinthians 3; let's see what we are to do. We have to be working, going to be judged by our good works—right? We have to be building. 1-Corinthians 3:11: "For no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now if anyone builds upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay *or* stubble" (vs 11-12). So we have to

- grow in faith
- grow in works
- let God shape us and mold us.

Remember how He says that He is the potter and we are clay, and how dare the clay say to the potter, 'What are you making?' *No!* We're going to be judged by our good works and our bad works—right? Or by our good works that are zealous, or by our works which are supposed to be good, but are complacent. And we really don't build with the materials we need to build with. And you will notice

that gold, silver, precious stones, those all endure heat and get better. Wood, hay and stubble are burned up. If you get iron wood, it's going to take awhile for that to burn. But if you get some of the wood that likes kindling, it's gone. And hay, it's over with. Stubble can explode and disappear on its own on a hot day. That's why in the Midwest they have to be careful about static electricity when they're putting the grain into the elevators, because if there's too much stubble in the corn or the wheat, could explode.

Verse 13: "The work of each one shall be manifested; for the day *of trial* will declare *it*... [That's not the day of salvation, the day of trial. We are going to be tried. What did Peter say? He said, 'Beloved, think not it strange of the fiery trial that you are being tried with.' You're walking in the footsteps of Jesus.] ...the day *of trial* will declare *it*, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one's is." So not only are we going to be judged by our works, but we're also going to have our works tried.

- Do we believe God, and do we really mean it?
- Do we love God, and do we really mean it?
- Do we hope in the promise of the resurrection, and do we really mean it?
- Do we keep the Sabbath, and really mean it?
- And the Holy Days and really mean it?

All of those things are the good works that God has given us to walk in, to do, and it's all going to be tried.

Now v 14: "If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a reward. If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet as through fire" (vs 14-15). So we have those fiery trials. And I'd have to say that every one of us here have had them—right? And where did most of the fiery trials come from? From those who crept in unawares in the Churches and began to lead people astray. We had to be tried. Do we believe God *or* Do we believe a man? Do we believe the true Word of God and the Scriptural interpretation of Scriptures *or* Do we believe the interpretations of men?

Verse 16: "Don't you understand that you are God's temple, and that the Spirit of God is dwelling in you?.... [That's the whole heart and core of true Christianity and the heart and core of salvation. The Spirit of God coming from the Father. Can't be anything greater—right? *Nothing greater!*] ...dwelling in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy him because the temple of God is Holy, which temple you are" (vs 16-17). And

that why, then, we need to be diligent. That's why need to be constantly working the good works of God:

- doing the things of God
- loving God
- believing God

(go to the next track)

We need to go back and add to what we are doing, so that we know and understand what God is doing in us and through us. This also tells us what the ministry is about partly, not completely. But we'll see that in a little bit.

1-Corinthians 3:4: "When someone says, 'I am of Paul,' and another one *says*, 'I am of Apollos,' are you not carnal?.... [Just looking at the physical things.] ...Who then is Paul? And who *is* Apollos? *They are* but ministers through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to each one" (vs 4-5). It's not that the man comes between you and God. Whoever is going to be a teacher is going to be an overseer like a coach on the sidelines and everybody's involved in their own growth and overcoming. Christ is the one and the power of the Holy Spirit from the Father is working in us to accomplish. But what we are to do is to teach and help God facilitate what He's doing. He's chosen to do it that way, but that doesn't make ministers above anybody.

What Christ always showed, like I mentioned when we ordain elders, it's a demotion, not a promotion. And Paul verifies this. "...ministers through whom you believed, even as the Lord gave to each one. I planted *and* Apollos watered, but **God gave the increase**.... [That's the key: **God gives you the growth; God gives you the increase**. You need to work, you need to do the things that God says.] ...Therefore, neither is he who plants anything, nor he who waters; for *it is God Who gives the increase*... [So he says it twice.] ...Now he who plants and he who waters are one... [We're doing the same thing.] ...but each... [one who is being taught] ...shall receive his own reward according to his own labor. For we are God's fellow workers; and you are God's husbandry..." (vs 5-9). Now this becomes a very important thing because teaching and ministry and salvation all come together in a way where God uses all of it to do His good works.

We're the dwelling place of God. Now think how special that is. That's why receiving the Holy Spirit of God is so important. That's why Paul said in Rom. 8, 'If you do not have the Spirit of Christ and the Spirit of the Father in you, you are not His.'

Verse 17: "If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy him because the temple of God is Holy, which temple you are. Let no one deceive himself. If anyone among you thinks himself to be wise in this world, let him become a

fool, so that he may be wise in God's *sight*. For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God for it is written, 'He entraps the wise in their own craftiness'" (vs 17-19). Sounds a little bit like our current President—doesn't it? And a little bit like all of these scientists, you know, and all of the atheists. He entraps them in their own craftiness. They think they're so smart. You know, the super elite of the world. They think they're going to run the world. Nope! All those they despise are going to do it, that's us. If you think they despise Sarah Palin, because she's not of them politically, think what they would think of us if we went up to them and said, 'We're going to replace you.' But that's the whole theme of the Feast of Tabernacles, 'What will we be doing?'

Verse 20: "And again, 'The Lord knows the thoughts of the wise, that they are vain.' Therefore, do not let anyone boast in men; for all things are yours, Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come—all are yours; and you *are* Christ's, and Christ is God's" (vs 21-23). So it's all together.

Now let's see what God accomplishes. Here is how it is done. It is the operation of the Spirit continually working that is not observable by any man. But the change and the growth will be observable over a period of time. Or, if they're building wood, hay, and stubble, that would be apparent over a period of time, too, as well.

1-Corinthians 2:9: "But according as it is written... [this all comes together with 'not of works lest any man should boast'] ...'The eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for those who love Him.'" So when that resurrection occurs we will need a spirit mind and a spirit body in order to handle it. It can't enter into this physical mind. We can have part of it and earnest of it, but the whole thing is going to be fantastic.] ...But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit... [That's how we know—*God's Spirit*.] ...for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God" (vs 9-10).

Just like I wrote in my letter, 'God, open my eyes that I may see wondrous things out of Your law.' Well, now we have the whole Word of God, so that needs to be our prayer 'that we may see the wondrous things that You have in here, that You have inspired, that You have made possible, that You have given to us, that You will reveal to us.'

"...revealed *them* to us by His Spirit... For who among men understands the things of man except by the spirit of man which *is* in him? In the same way also, the things of God no one understands except by the Spirit of God" (vs 10-11). It's not going to be because you have degrees.

Listen, you can know for sure, if you go to any university of this world, you're going to learn something of the world. And anything that is taught in any seminary may have a measure of what the Bible says, but unless you're keeping the commandments of God and have the Spirit of God, you're not going to understand it. It's very simple. "...no one understands..."

Verse 12: "Now we have not received the spirit of the world... [Isn't that something? Those who love the world are part of the world, live in the world, uphold the world. They have received the spirit of the world. And guess who that comes from? Eph. 2:2, 'the spirit of the power of the air,' Satan the devil. We haven't received that spirit.] ...but... [we have received] ...the Spirit that is of God, so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God." Isn't that something?

And I'm seeing this more and more all the time, because having to do Church at Home for new people, I have to start from an entirely different basis. For years what have we been doing? *Rescuing those who are in the Church of God*, helping them grow in grace and knowledge. Now is the time we're reaching out new people, I've got to understand—Where are they? Where are they coming from? How do I approach them?

Let's see something else here. Let's talk a little bit about the ministry since there are some troubles in one of the Churches of God today. I read a memo from a woman who emailed me and said, 'Well, we're looking to see what kind of governance they're going to set up.' They had committees—committee here, committee there, committee everywhere. Who's in charge? *All of us!* A little confusion. So I wrote her back and I said, 'The government is not the question that is primary. The real question is: the Spirit of God. Do you love God with all your heart and mind and soul and being? If you don't love God, if you don't follow the Word of God, it doesn't matter what kind of government you're going to set up because that's not the question.' That shows a lack of understanding of what the purpose of the ministry is.

Now we get part of it here in 1-Corinthians 4:1: "So then, let every man regard us as ministers of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God." A steward is someone who is given charge of someone else's property to increase it, to manage it and give back to the owner. So that's why when you read the parable of the talents, 'Look, Lord, your five pounds has gained five, here it is, it's Yours.' That's why we also need to understand that no man can say, 'These are *my* people.' If God called them and God converted and God led them and God brought them to repentance and He gave them His Holy Spirit, *they belong to God*. Now then, a steward then, of the

mysteries of God. You better know and understand the Word of God, because the secrets of God are buried in here, and let's use a little vernacular—*He ain't going to reveal anything to you if you're out there serving yourself*. You serve God and you serve the people.

“Beyond that, it is required of stewards that one be found faithful.... [We're going to see: What is it of the goal of teaching? The goal of teaching is not that you have the good mechanics in how to speak. Paul didn't have that. We don't know what his speech problem was, doesn't tell us. But they said, 'Woooo, his writings are powerful.' And he's going to be very surprised that much more has been done with his epistles through the centuries after he died, than was done during the time of his ministry.] ...But to me it is an insignificant matter that I am judged by you, or by man's standard; and neither do I judge myself” (vs 2-3). What does he mean by that? Of course he has to judge himself. How? *By the Word of God*. If he judges himself by the Word of God, he's not judging himself.

“Now I am not conscious of anything against myself, yet I am not justified by this; for the one Who is judging me is *the* Lord. Therefore, do not judge anything before *the* time; *wait* until the Lord comes, Who will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the motives of *all* hearts; and then shall each one receive praise from God. Now these things, brethren, I have applied to Apollos and myself for your sakes; that in us you may learn not to think *of men* beyond what is written...” (vs 4-6).”

And this has been the problem within the Churches of God, right here. How do you think Paul would have addressed HWA with the claim that he was God's only apostle on earth? I think if we read Gal. 2 and the encounter between Paul and Peter, I think those would be pretty strong solid words of condemnation, because look what he's saying here.

“...learn not to think of men beyond what is written... [especially you thinking of yourself. Like one man said when there was trouble, he said, 'Who is the elder here?' Well, the question is: What's really right, *not who you are*. Isn't that true? *Yes!*] ...so that no one among you is puffed up on behalf of one *of us* against the other.... [He's referring back to 'I'm of Paul, I'm of Apollos,' etc.] ...For what makes you superior *to others*? And what do you have that you did not receive?... [And I think of that every day. Paul wrote in Acts 17 that *in God we live and move and have our being*. What do we have we didn't receive? And if we receive it, what are we supposed to do? We're supposed to preach it and share it and teach it—correct? *Yes!*] ...But if you also received *it*, why are you boasting as if you did not receive *it*?.... [Then he ridicules them a little bit.]

...Now you are satiated. Now you have been enriched. You have reigned without us....” (vs 6-8). ‘You've already made it into the kingdom of God, wonderful! Show me your crown.’ *No, won't work that way!*

Now I'll have to say this in defense of HWA. If that would have happened and Paul would have corrected him, I believe he would have repented. But once you get into the habit of puffing up, and once you get in the habit of believing your own propaganda, then what takes hold? *Vanity and self defense!* Now also I know that in first-person testimony, that Herbert Armstrong finally admitted that everything he did overseas was not of God. He confessed that God didn't open up a single door, we kicked them in with money. So I take that as repentance on his part. So I think he would have repented, so let's not say, ‘Oh, touché! against HWA.’ Because remember, most swords are fingers. Whenever there's one going out, what do you do with this, this goes up and three go back, so you need to realize that.

Let's come to Ephesians 4 and see about the whole purpose of the ministry and how that fits in our growing and overcoming, because see, we are being saved, and *we are being saved* with

- God's Spirit in us
- how we are living
- our personal relationship with God on a daily basis
- what we're being taught by those who are to be teachers.

You ought to know that if you're a teacher and those you are teaching know more than you, you're in trouble. And that has happened in too many cases.

So Paul is clarifying it here and he's showing how we need to act, how we need to respond, and the goal. What is the whole purpose in all that we do? We talk about the mind of Christ—don't we? *Yes!* ‘Let Christ be in you, the hope of glory.’ *Yes!* We talk about that it's the Father in us that *gives us the will* to do what is right and to do what is good—correct? And are those not the good works that God gives us? *Yes!* All right, now notice. Sometimes when you're really in a trial, you being to really understand the very basis of everything—don't you? You forget about all the vanity. You forget about all the fluff-fluff. You forget about all that stuff.

So Paul was in prison, Ephesians 3:1: “For this cause I, Paul, *am* a prisoner of Christ Jesus for you, Gentiles.”

Ephesians 4:1: “Therefore, I, the prisoner of *the* Lord, am exhorting you to walk worthily of the calling to which you were called.... [Now remember,

this is still the book of Ephesians, and where did we start? *Eph. 2*—right? *Yes!* How are we to do it?] ...With all humility and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love.... [Try this for a change. Instead of judging all the brethren, compared to what you think is your standard of righteousness, why don't you forbear and pray for that person? Like Paul said, 'If you see a brother sin a sin not unto death, pray for them,' and God will help them. Pray that the person can change. They will. Is it possible with God's Spirit? *Yes!*] ...Being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (vs 1-3). That cannot come unless the Spirit is being exercised every day.

"*There is one body and one Spirit, even as you were also called in one hope of your calling... [We're all headed in the same way. That's why Paul wrote in Hebrews, 'Looking to Jesus the Author and Finisher of our faith.] ...One Lord... [Who's also called God.] ...one faith, one baptism.... [Can't be done without baptism, because you're not in covenant in God unless you've been properly baptized. Anything else that was called a baptism was a dunking. At least you're a little better than Dunkin Donuts, they got fried.] ...One God and Father of all, Who is over all, and through all, and in you all"* (vs 4-6). Everything is completely different—isn't it? So you see how then we are to grow in grace and knowledge, grow in overcoming.

"But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (v 7). We need to always keep this in mind. The question was asked: What is the gift of Christ, is that the Holy Spirit? *The gift of Christ, these are the gifts that He gives to each one of us.* To one is given wisdom, to one is given knowledge, to another is given the gift of healing, to one is given the gift of speaking, etc., but we all have gifts. To another the gift of encouragement, to another the gift of helping, you see, but these are all related to the Spirit of God.

Verse 8: "For this *very* reason, He says *that* after ascending on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.... [To all of us! It says, v 7, 'But the grace was given to each one of us,' all of us.] ....Now, He Who 'Ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He Who descended is the same one Who also ascended above all the heavens so that He might fulfill all things" (vs 8-10).

Now you go clear back to Matt. 5:17-18, 'Do not think I have come to destroy the law. I did not come to destroy the law or the prophets, but to fulfill.' And is it continually being fulfilled? Is the will of God being fulfilled in you every day? *Yes, with His Spirit, sure!* Now notice the ministry, the whole purpose for it. It's not a self-exaltation.

"And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers for the perfecting of the saints... [It's not a promotion; it is not an exaltation, but God has chosen to use men and His Spirit and His Word all combined together:] ...for the perfecting of the saints... [That's the workmanship—right? 'We are His workmanship.'] ...for the perfecting of the saints, for *the* work of the ministry, for *the* edifying of the body of Christ? (vs 11-12). Now edifying means to build up, and this is the same word that is used for a noun for a builder, to build up.

"Until we all come into the unity of the faith..." (v 13). He says here there's one faith, but also we are to come to the *unity of faith*. How do we come to the unity of faith? *Through the Holy Spirit, through the study of the Word of God.* We cannot keep people in the faith by any form of church government to rule brethren. You're not developing spiritually. You may keep them in an organization, but the question is, are you keeping them in Christ?

Now let's analyze here v 13, showing it's a continual work. "Until we... [So it might be interesting. Go through the epistles and look at the 'we' and 'us.'] ...Until we all... [Paul's including himself.] ...come into the unity of the faith... [Now what is the absolute perfection of the unity of faith? When does that come? *Resurrection!*] ...unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ." Now put in your margin there, 'perfect man' (Matt. 5:48). You are to 'be perfect as your Father in heaven is perfect.' And so that is the goal of growing and changing and overcoming, so it cannot be that 'once saved, always saved,' because Jesus shows that you also have to *endure to the end* and you *shall be saved*. So:

- we **have been saved** from Satan the devil and the world and ourselves
- we **are being saved**, as we're growing in grace and knowledge
- we **shall be saved** at the resurrection

***And all of this is the work and creation of God.***

"...unto a perfect man, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ; So that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness, with a view to the systematizing of the error" (vs 13-14). And that's been completed now—hasn't it? You ever read a catechism?

"But holding the Truth in love... [Not hold the Truth in contempt and judgment against others.] ...holding the Truth in love, may in all things... [*all things*] ...grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ From Whom all the body, fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint



supplies... [Everyone has a part to supply in the body of Christ.] ...according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love” (vs 15-16).

When you reach that point, and attain to your *place of safety* in the grave, because there're going to be a lot of *place of safety* in the grave—I was thinking about that the other day, because I have a funeral coming up this week. I was thinking about what Jesus said. He told the disciples, He said, ‘Don’t say there are four months to the harvest. Lift up your eyes and look on the fields, they’re all white to the harvest.’ And I was thinking, ‘Look at all of the white heads in the Church. We’re getting ready for the harvest.’ And the harvest happens every time someone dies in the faith. That’s something!

***We are to be faithful unto the end.*** Jesus said, ‘***If you are, I will give you a crown of life.***’ So that’s the whole purpose and that’s the ultimate in salvation—***attaining to the resurrection of the dead.***

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 14:6
- 2) Acts 4:6-12
- 3) Mark 16:15-16
- 4) Ephesians 2:1-5, 8-9
- 5) Colossians 1:9-13
- 6) Ephesians 2:10
- 7) 1 Corinthians 15:1-2,
- 8) 1 Corinthians 1:18
- 9) 1 Corinthians 3:11-17; 4-9; 17-23
- 10) 1 Corinthians 2:9-12
- 11) 1 Corinthians 4:1-8
- 12) Ephesians 3:1
- 13) Ephesians 4:1-16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Psalm 11:8
- 1 John 1
- Revelation 2, 3
- Romans 5
- Genesis 4
- Romans 8
- Galatians 2
- Acts 17
- Matthew 5:17-18, 48

Also referenced:

- Sermon: *From Your Calling to Eternal Life*
- Sermon Series: *God’s Grace and Commandment-Keeping*
- Book: *Lord, What Should I Do?* by Fred R. Coulter