

Love & Fellowship of God

Fred R. Coulter—October 6, 2009

What I'm going to bring today, on this the fifth day of the Feast of Tabernacles—I'm going to bring something a little different than what I did on the videos and the audios. I'm doing this because I think we are beginning to see the need for an awful lot of spiritual healing among those people who have been

1. in the world's churches
2. in the Churches of God

because, unfortunately, a lot of difficulties and problems have ensued because of the way that the Church was run. One of the biggest problems we had was this: we read the Scriptures, and we stood in the pulpit, and we condemned all the scribes and Pharisees for their heavy-handedness. So while we condemned the Pharisees and religionists—what happened, the Church turned around and did exactly the same thing as they accused the other ones. We said, 'Oh, the Catholics are wrong because of this,' then turned around and had a hierarchy just like they did. We ended up doing the same thing that all men's religions always do when they forget God. They end up creating problems with people because they become interested in numbers, interested in money, interested in control. And so what happens? They end up with a lot of control. Instead of teaching people to have a relationship with God, they end up having a relationship with an organization and, in many cases, in fear of the men who were running it. So what happened to the people of God turned out to be in many cases, and in degrees, the opposite of what God really wanted.

The same thing happened to the Churches of God that happened back in the closing days of the apostles, which was this: God had to correct the Church. It got infiltrated with people bringing false doctrines, etc., etc.; and so finally God had to scatter it to weed out all of those problems and all of those difficulties before He could begin adding back again later on. So this is what we're seeing now. What ends up being missing, most of all in these situations, is this:

- the love of God
- the grace of God
- the hope of God

and all of those things that we really, really need. That's why we have said: one of the things we want to do is:

- **walk in faith**
- **believe in hope**
- **live in love**

We have to work at this love, because the love of God is contrary to human nature. But the love of God and the things of God, is what really heals the problem with human nature. And that's what has not been preached. So we end up in the Church with people who have sickness they shouldn't have, hang-ups they shouldn't have, fears they shouldn't have, because they have not been taught to have a personal relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ. We've all done it and we've all lived through it.

Not only did it happen in the Church, where else did it happen? *In private lives, in the marriages, in child rearing.* So it was kind of a cascading event that took place. Well, we know that when the Kingdom of God comes on earth, it's not going to be that way. So let's see then how from the book of 1-John—and we're essentially going to do a study and overview of the book of 1-John. Some of the things we know, some of the things we don't know the way we ought to, and many of the things we need to understand. This is what John was trying to get to, because the love of God becomes the cure for the problems of human beings. The love of God and the application of the love of God, and the grace of God, becomes the cure for marital problems.

And also this is something we need to realize. We're going to see: yes, we need to keep the commandments of God; yes, we have fight the world; all of those things are there. But here is what's going to be the inner working, as we are going to see, and what John emphasizes right here in the first, is the relationship with God. This comes:

- from prayer
- from study
- from living God's way
- from overcoming our personal faults and difficulties
- through having to go through trials and let God lead us out of it

—and *to come from a state of human nature where we're hostile to God, to come to a state of conversion with the mind of Christ*, so that

- we love God
- we love our neighbor
- we love each other
- we even love our enemies

That's the hard thing to do, the last part, of which Jesus set the example for us.

Now remember, the Apostle John has often been referred to as the *apostle of love*, because he wrote more about love than any of the other apostles. Yet we will see one chapter that the Apostle Paul wrote, 1-Corinthians 13, is also called the love chapter. We'll look at that and we'll analyze that and we'll see that chapter tells us specifically how to overcome the focus of self and to have our relationship with God, and to let nothing stand in the way of that relationship of loving God, loving our neighbor, loving each other, and loving our enemies.

So let's begin here in 1-John 1: "That which was from *the* beginning... [Isn't it interesting, there are three places in the Bible which talks about the beginning: Gen. 1, John 1, 1-John 1.] ...that which we have heard... [That's the whole message of Jesus.] ...that which we have seen with our own eyes... [Because they were to be eyewitnesses of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ, and of His resurrection.] ...that which we observed for ourselves... [Now it's a little different than seeing with your eyes. This is to observe, to intently gaze, and to learn from seeing what was being done, so that it really makes an impression upon your mind.] ...and our own hands handled..."

For forty days they saw Jesus, but they also handled Him, because He wanted them to know that it was He Who was resurrected from the dead, so now you've got all of these first-hand experiences talking about Jesus Christ: Who He was, where He came from, what He did, His life and His teachings, all summed up here in v 1: "...concerning the Word of life... [That's what we really need to understand. This is a way to live, this is a way to eternal life, etc.] ...(And the life was manifested, and we have seen, and are bearing witness, and are reporting to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us;)" (vs 1-2).

Now hold your place here and let's go to 1-Timothy 3:14 and let's see what Paul wrote concerning Jesus manifested in the flesh. So Paul wrote of it in a little different way. There was a time when the apostles really began to understand that Christ wasn't returning in their lifetime. As I explain in some of the commentary, that's how some of the writings were different from before, because when they really grasped the fact that Jesus wasn't going to return for a long, long time, they couldn't say, 'The Lord is going to return right away.' So here's what Paul was instructing Timothy.

1-Timothy 3:14: "These things I am writing to you, hoping to come to you shortly; But if I should delay, *you have these things in writing*, so that you may know how one is obligated to conduct

oneself in *the* house of God, which is *the* Church of *the* living God, *the* pillar and foundation of the Truth.... [Now that's something—isn't it? Isn't this a nice verse you can use to separate out the false teachings? You have to first know the Truth.] ...And undeniably, great is the mystery of Godliness:... [God has revealed the mystery of His will to us and continually reveals more and more. As we will see tomorrow, the greatest mystery of Godliness is through the power of the Holy Spirit, Christ in us. That's something! Now notice what he says about it, because it also involves God. In the beginning God made man, and we still are, by procreation, in the image of God after His likeness. That was so that we could become like God and Christ could become a man, so that He would be manifest as the Creator to solve the problem of sin.] ...God was manifested in *the* flesh, was justified in *the* Spirit, was seen by angels, was proclaimed among *the* Gentiles, was believed on in *the* world, was received up in glory" (vs 14-16). So that's quite a thing.

John also writes of this, back here to 1-John 1:2: "...which was with the Father, and was manifested to you;)... [notice his emphasis here in v 3, because this is the foundation of what he's talking about in the rest of the book, and why he talks so much about love, and why he talks so much about overcoming. He even talks about how we can please God.] ...That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for **the fellowship**... [Now this is a literal translation from the Greek: *the fellowship*. That's what our lives have to be. The fellowship with God the Father and Jesus Christ is of primary importance. The fellowship that we have with each other comes after that, and loving our neighbor comes after that, and loving our enemies comes after that.] ...for **the fellowship**—indeed, our fellowship—*is* with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ" (vs 2-3).

Christ came to personally reveal the Father, so that we may know. I think one of the most important things that we need to really, really grasp, to get our lives, our minds, emotions, relationships with each other, fellowship with God, really focused in the right way, is to understand this: ***God the Father, the Supreme Ruler of the universe, has dealt directly in each one of our lives.*** And giving us His Spirit through repentance and baptism, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, puts us in a relationship with God that He wants us to grow in and develop through the rest of our lives. So don't think: 'I'm unimportant.' ***You are important to God.*** Now maybe to the world, the world doesn't care less about us, but we're important to God. So important, that He individually has called you and

drawn you, so that you can have a relationship with Him.

Now is that not much better than a temple? Is not the priesthood of Christ better than the priesthood at the temple? Then what should the ministry of the Church be but to glorify that. To teach brethren how to have the relationship with God; to teach them: *Yes, the greatest Being in the universe does really personally care for you!* He loves you, wants to have a relationship with you, through His Son Jesus Christ; wants to give you His Spirit, wants you to overcome. And *the greatest thing He wants you to learn and to know and to live by is the love of God.* So this is what John is writing about. What we're going to see when we understand this even more, and you study on this, and pray on it, and develop it in your life, you're going to understand that love of God, with God's Spirit and our interactions with each other in our daily lives, those are the things then which become important to handle the way God wants them done. So let's just ask the questions as we go along:

- Is God perfect? *Yes!*
- Is His way perfect? *Yes!*
- Is His Word true? *Yes!*

God can't tell a lie, impossible.

- Did God give us grace? *Yes!*
- Did Christ die for us? *Yes!*
- Does He forgive our sins? *Yes!* on an ongoing basis.
- Does He watch over us with His angels? *Yes!*
- Does He deal with us in kindness, in spite of our faults and mistakes? *Yes!*

—all of those things are important. When we're going through this, that in your own mind you can contrast that with your experience in whatever church you may have been in.

Years ago someone sent me this hat, I still have it at home—I think I'll show it to you tomorrow. It says: *The No Hassle, Recycled, Last Resort Church of God.* That was given to me because that was the experience that this woman was going through when she understood the difficulties she had in the other churches, even Churches of God she was in. So I'll show that to you tomorrow.

Look at this again. "...for **the** fellowship... [This then becomes the most important thing in your life.] ...indeed, our fellowship... [He's including all. Remember this: the prayer, even the basic prayer that you find in Matt. 6, it doesn't say, 'forgive *me* my sins,' it says, 'forgive *us* our sins as we forgive others.' Which we'll see a little later on becomes very important.] ...our fellowship—is with the

Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ" (vs 3). Now, you've heard about people in the world who get things done because they have connections—right? Let me just tell you this: This is the greatest connection that anyone can have and God freely gives it.

Here's why he's writing this epistle—v 4: "These things **we**... [Now who's the **we**? We'll see a little later on he talks about **I**, but I've got a section in it about how the New Testament was canonized, and there was probably Philip and Andrew with him. So the **we** includes them. So this was added at the beginning, because we see that it changes in 1-John 2. So this was an edit that they saw was needed to complete the Word of God, and God inspired them to do so.] ...These things we are also writing to you, so that your joy may be completely full"

Now you contrast that to how it has been, even within the Church, you end up in woe, misery, difficulties, and traumas within the Church that should not be—right? So he's going to show the way to maintain that, so we can have joy. Thanks to Dolores, after going through all these prophecies and doom and gloom and everything; the world's coming to an end, the economy's collapsing, you may have to eat cardboard mixed with water, and all that sort of stuff, she said, 'Can you please give a sermon on joy?' So I gave two on joy, so we can add this one to it.

Notice v 5, not changing the message: "And this is the message that we have heard from Him and are declaring to you: that God is light... [This is fighting Gnosticism. So we'll see some of the problems they had there.] ...and there is no darkness at all in Him.... [Because, you see, Gnosticism says that there is a hierarchy of spirit beings and Christ was not God before He became flesh. That's why he had this here, and that there are varying degrees of angels and demi-gods who created the world from good to almost good, to evil to totally wretched evil. So there's a mixture of it. Here he's declaring this:] ...that God is light... [And Jesus said, 'I am the Light of the world. He also says we are to be the light of the world to reflect Jesus Christ.] ...and there is no darkness at all in Him."

Now here's what he wants us to have here, getting back to the fellowship, relationship with God. "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness... [We're going to see that's from Satan the devil.] ...we are lying to ourselves... [Now that's an interesting expression in the Greek, because the worst kind of lying is *not to tell a lie*. The worst kind of lie is to lie to yourself and believe the lies that you tell yourself. The ultimate result of that is the ultimate in

narcissism. You end up worshiping yourself, because your greatest idol is in your mind about you.] ...we are lying to ourselves... [And what does that lead to?] ...and we are not practicing the Truth” (v 6)—which then tells us also what? If we are going to follow God, we’ve got to practice the Truth and on an ongoing basis—*practicing*. Now this brings up a question: What is Truth?

- The Word of God is Truth
- The commandments of God are true
- The laws of God are true
- All the precepts of God are true from the beginning

Who also else is Truth? What did Jesus say? ‘*I am the way, the Truth, and the life.*’ What are we to do? *Follow the Truth, believe the Truth*, let that be part of our hearts and minds and lives and being—right? That’s how we overcome. That’s part of the mystery of Godliness.

Now v 7: “However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, *then* we have fellowship with one another... [So then here comes the fellowship as a result of our fellowship, first with God, which is *the* fellowship. Now we have fellowship with one another. We’re going to see this becomes a very, very important thing. This also relates back to what Jesus first taught, which is that we are to love one another as He loves us. That’s the whole point of our relationships with each other that we learn to do that. Not come into a congregation of God, and it’s really not a congregation of God, it’s a congregation of Pharisees and judgmentalness and separateness and cliques and groups and hierarchy power down, and difficulties and problems instilled in the hearts and minds of people, rather than learning the love and grace of God. That’s what happens!] ...*then* we have fellowship with one another... [Notice what this does, because we will tie this in here in just a minute.] ...and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.”

Now hold your place here and come to Matthew 6, because I want you to see how this follows in sequence. Everything that John wrote, though it is written in simple Greek and easy to understand, the depths of the spiritual meaning extend far beyond just the words there, even in English and Greek. So let’s come back here to Matthew 6, and let’s see what we are dealing with, with each other, as Christ brought it out.

After He gave the model prayer—I think it’s interesting when you go back here, v 10, we’ll just summarize this. ‘Your kingdom come.’ Then He ends up by saying the same thing in v 13, ‘For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever.’ So this tells us we’re always to have our

mind on the Kingdom of God, and all that that means in our lives in growing and changing and overcoming.

Now this becomes critical, critical in our fellowship with one another and our fellowship with God. Matthew 6:14: “For if you forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” (vs 14-15). Now notice He didn’t say just brethren. He didn’t say just those who are in your group, He said *men*. That means any one, male or female. I get a kick out of these feminists who don’t like the word *he*, but yet it’s in the word *she*. They don’t like the word *man*, yet it’s in the word *woman*. From the creation of God, it’s inseparable.

Now let’s notice the sequence back here in 1-John 1:7: “However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light, then we have fellowship with one another... [That means you have fellowship with God, fellowship with one another.] ...and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.... [Based upon what? *Forgiving others so that you may be forgiven*—right? That’s the greatest thing to overcome difficulties and problems in your lives and lives with one another, and your relationship with God.] ...If we say that we do not have sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us” (vs 7-8).

And I talked to a man who came up to me one time and said, ‘Well, since I’ve been baptized, I have no consciousness of sin. I don’t sin.’ I said, *Really!* I didn’t ask him to take the *walk through the wall* test. No, because what is God doing with our minds? *The washing and cleansing with the water of the Word*. That means the Spirit of God and the Word of God to program our minds spiritually with the Spirit of God and our spirit and our minds *to create in us the mind of Christ*. That’s what God wants. And how did Christ live His life?

- to love us
- to die for us
- to forgive us
- to give us His grace

—that’s how we are to live and teach each other.

Now notice, then here’s a guarantee. Notice the way it’s listed again. It doesn’t say, ‘If *you* confess your sins,’ it’s if *we*. See now, he’s talking to the whole collective body. “If we confess our own sins... [Let’s understand this: does that not include a church? *Yes!* Does that not include the church’s so called ‘leadership’? *Yes!* Does that not include apostles and evangelists and pastors, and so forth? *Yes!* That includes everyone—doesn’t it? *Yes.*] ...If we confess our own sins... [That is to

God. Also if we offend each other, to each other, to have those things healed and brought together.] ...He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness” (v 9). Now that’s quite a promise—isn’t it? So, take these verses and if you’re having

- difficulties in overcoming
- difficulties in forgiving
- difficulties in putting things in the past

you take these verses and you study over them, and you pray about them on your knees before God, and ask God to help you understand it. Ask God to help you apply it in your life. Ask God to lift the burden off your heart and off your mind and the things that have come against you. We all have that to do. We can’t have it this way: ‘God forgive me all my sins, but this guy over here, I will never forgive.’ Doesn’t work that way, and especially when we have the example of Jesus. And what did He say after they had done all these things to Him? Just before He’s ready to expire and give the Spirit back to God, He said, ‘Father, forgive them for they don’t know what they’re doing,’ right while they were standing there jeering him and shaking their fists and saying, ‘If You’re the Christ, come down off the cross.’ He didn’t say, ‘Father, boy, zap these guys before I die.’ That what we need to do.

Sometimes you think, ‘Oh, that’s so hard to do. I was so offended.’ I’ve done it that way before. I’ve had things happen to me and I’ve said how could they do that?! How dare they do that?!’ Later I came to myself, and I said, ‘Stupid, they did.’ So you have to go on. This is what John is talking about here.

Now let’s notice 1-John 2:1 and we see a transition from *we* to *I*. “My little children, **I** am writing these things to you so that you may not sin.... [Now isn’t that interesting? This, in the Greek, is in the subjunctive, which means it’s almost like an *if* clause.] ...**may** not sin.... [What does this also say? *That you can still sin*—right? *Yes!*] ...And *yet*, if anyone does sin, we have an Advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ *the* Righteous—and He is *the* propitiation for our sins; and not for our sins only, but also for *the sins of the whole world*” (vs 1-2). This is one verse that the world of Christianity cannot understand without the Holy Days and without the Last Great Day.

How is God going to forgive the sins of the whole world? All humanity from the time of Adam and Eve clear down to the last child that is born. ‘*Sins of the whole world*,’ don’t forget that. Paul is a good example of how God forgave even what he did.

Now that he stated about our fellowship with God, our love of God that we need to have, and so forth, and forgiveness of sin, now then he answers the question: Are we then released from keeping the commandments of God? Human nature is this way, ‘Well, if you do away with the law, then there’s no sin, because the law defines what sin is and we just live by grace. Then nothing you can do is sin, because you’re under grace.’ So he answers the question here. This is interesting all the way through 1-John. I’ll explain it to you here v 3, the first three words, “**And by this standard** ... [Then you see the word *standard* in italics, because the *King James* has, ‘And by this,’ or ‘herein,’ and it comes from the Greek ‘en toutou’—it means virtually, *in this*, but you are required in translating to fill in what does this mean.] (so I translated it): ...By this standard we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments.” John is writing here that the love of God also involves keeping the commandments of God, but how to keep them with love and mercy and forgiveness.

“...if we keep His commandments. The one who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (vs 3-4). Now, clear cut demarcation—right? *Yes*, he wants us to understand that. Now he’s also talking about His commandments, that is the commandments of God, and as I mentioned in one of the sermons for the Feast of Tabernacles, have you ever gone through and studied the Gospels and listed out or categorized all the commandments that Jesus gave? Because He said, ‘If you love Me keep the commandments—that’s a literal translation in Greek—namely My commandments.’ (John 14:15). You can take all the commandments of the Old Testament, because He was the Lord God of the Old Testament. Then you take all the commandments of the New Testament. And I just imagine you have about two-thirds or three-quarters of the whole Bible anyway—right? *Yes!*

Now notice what commandment-keeping, the Spirit of God, the fellowship of God is to do to us. And we’ll see how that comes to pass a little bit later. Verse 5: “On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word... [Now notice you went from what? *From commandments to Word*. Let me explain something here to help you distinguish between *word* and *words*. *Words* means probably what was just said. *Word* means the entire message.] ...On the other hand, *if* anyone is keeping His Word... [or the entire message, what’s going to happen to that person? What is going to be the result of this?] ...truly in this one the love of God is being perfected.... [Because it’s something we have to work at. Love is difficult and takes the greatest amount of work, the greatest amount of forgiveness,

the greatest amount of grace and understanding—right? But, what does this do? This gives you a pure conscience before God, a pure conscience before each other, and you don't have all of these things rolling around in your mind causing you problems. What does this do? That improves your relationship with God the Father, and also it does something else, too, that they now know. It improves your relationship with Him.] ...truly in this one the love of God is being perfected. By this *means* we know that we are in Him." Now that's something—isn't it? *Yes, indeed!*

Now then he gives a contrast. All the way through he's showing Truth and error, light and darkness, love and hatred, all the way through. Verse 6: "Anyone who claims to dwell in Him is obligating himself also to walk even as He Himself walked." That's quite a statement—isn't it? You can ask a Protestant, 'Are you born again?' We'll forget walking through the wall standard.

- Are you walking as Jesus walked?
- What days did He keep?
- How did He treat people?
- How did He stand for the Truth?

Notice, this is our standard to follow. This is why God hates religion, because He hates sin because of what it does to people. And too much religion in the name of God is really a form of sin, because it's really not bringing people to God. Why does God hate religion? ***Because religion comes in the name of God to cut you off from God.*** Isn't that something? That's the conundrum that Satan always uses. Remember this: Satan comes along and if you follow him, you get a benefit from him, which you think is going to be an advantage to you, just like he started out with Adam and Eve. But what does it always end up being? *His benefit ends up being a curse, because it turns your life, your emotions, and everything upside down, destroys everything in your life* and that's why there is Christ and that's the only way out of all of this mess.

And how we are to live our lives is we are obligated to walk as He walked. So he begins clarifying—v 7: "Brethren, I am not writing a new commandment to you but an old commandment, which you had from *the* beginning; the old commandment is the message that you have heard from *the* beginning." Which starts out with repent, believe the Gospel, and be baptized. And the Gospel is what? *The whole message of Christ.*

Verse 9 is a real dagger in the heart, and a real expose on the conscience of people. It doesn't matter who you are; it doesn't matter what you have done, but here it is: "Anyone who claims *that* he is in the light... [What does 'in the light' mean?

Walking as Jesus walked, being perfected in the love of God, having our sins forgiven, and as we saw with the whole message of God—forgiving others.] ...Anyone who claims that he is in the light, but hates his brother, is in the darkness until now."

Because what happens when that occurs? *You create, I call it a vipers mind.* James calls it 'double-mindedness.' You have two ways of thinking: your way to God to receive the blessings of God; your way to other people and you hate them. That creates the problem. That creates instability. That creates problems in the mind, relationships and emotions and really, eventually, problems within your whole body health-wise. It can do that. So this becomes important. It was written there because this was a problem that some of the brethren were having. If we really honestly, before God, ask ourselves, 'Have I done this since I've been in the Church? Have I done this since I've been baptized?' What if someone has really wronged you, I mean really, really wronged you? What if you were totally innocent of something? Does that still give you, how shall we say, the license to hate someone? *Of course not!*

But what it does, it cuts you off from God, because why? You're in the darkness until now, the rest of the verse. Now the contrast again, v 10: "The one who loves his brother is dwelling in the light, and there is no cause of offense in him."

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Now let's continue on here in 1-John 2:8—let's go over that again. "Again, I am writing a new commandment to you, which is true in Him and in you, because the darkness is passing away and the true light is already shining." And that is through the gospel, the teaching, the changing of our lives, and conversion, and so forth.

Now we've already covered v 9 that if you're hating your brother, you're dwelling in darkness until now. Now v 10: "The one who loves his brother is dwelling in the light, and there is no cause of offense in him." That's where we need to come, brethren. Stop and think about the contradiction of this. In the Church of God you have hatred, judgment, condemnation, all of those things when it's supposed to be the love of God, the Truth of God, growing and overcoming. So John was having the same problem back then, because this is what Satan likes to do to get in the Church to cause trouble. After all, the hardest thing to overcome—when you know you're right! and you know the other person was really wrong!—is the problems and difficulties and the hatred that comes because you know you're right. ***Those are the hardest ones to forgive.*** Those are the hardest ones to get out of your lives. Now I'm also speaking from experience.

I have done it, I have gone through it, I have been victimized by it, just like maybe you have. So now what do we do? We let God with His love help us and uplift us and change us and change all of those things. But here's what happens when you have hatred and vengeance and bitterness and wrath, and all that sort of thing, it says: "...and is walking in darkness, and does not know where he is going because the darkness has blinded his eyes" (v 11). Then he goes on showing this has come from Satan the devil. Then he gives a warning.

Verse 15: "Do not love the world, nor the things *that are* in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him." And what happens when you get into a condition like we just discussed here about hatred and lack of love and lack of keeping the commandment of God, and so forth—what happens? *The world doesn't look so bad, and the world's way looks attractive.*

But here is what John says: "...If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.... [Because here is what motivates the world under the power of Satan the devil] ...Because everything that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pretentious pride of physical life—is not from the Father, but is from the world.... [Verse 16, I think, describes 99% of most television and advertisements and things today—right? *Yes, it does*—especially those drug ads. 'Take this, you'll feel better, you'll feel wonderful,' and all of this sort of thing. Then you read the warning, 'This may cause suicidal tendencies, this may cause your lungs not to function, your heart to stop, your brain not to work, but it's really good for you.' Not from the Father, but from the world.] ...And the world and its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God abides forever" (vs 16-17). Then he talks about the last time, the anti-Christ, and things like that, so we won't get into that at this particular time.

Let's come over here to 1-John 3—a very important part of the Gospel of John, because every time that he gets into to condemning sin, what does he do afterwards? *He points you right back to God the Father and Jesus Christ*—right? Now for the Feast of Tabernacles we need to understand, brethren, because all the leaders of the world and those who run the world today have disqualified or are disqualifying themselves from ruling in this world. God has called us, each one of us—particularly, individually—so that we're going to take over the world and we're going to rule the world. Guess what we're going to have to straighten out? *The whole world.* So he wants us to understand this, and he wants us to understand why God called us. He wants us to focus on this because this is how

we keep our perspective in times of trouble and difficulty, and we're going to see a lot of that come down the road.

1-John 3:1: "Behold!.... [That means *look, pay attention, understand.*] ...What glorious love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!" Not only is this important for all of us to know and to understand on an individual basis to be inspired of what God wants us to do, but this is also important for this point of view for those who are teaching the Word of God.

As I mentioned, to be a minister or elder or teacher, you're on the bottom, not on the top. And what we are to do is teach the Word and love of God, not to aggrandize ourselves, not to become important, not to think that we're God's gift to humanity or the Church or anyone else. I'm thankful for my wife, Dolores, that she always tells me with every sermon and when I call her when I'm on the way, she says, 'Fred, just talk.' Because we've had enough vanity—

- we need the Truth of God
- we need the Spirit of God
- we need the love of God

—and this is what is going to help us all grow together. Brethren, we're all in this together. It's not like it was said one time by one man, he says, 'All of you out there are a bunch of dumb sheep. I don't think that many of you are going to make it into the Kingdom of God except me and some of the evangelists. I even have questions about them.' Hey, thanks for the encouragement! That's not the way it is. *We're all in this together, to love God and serve each other.* Because God has given us His love, glorious love, because we're going to, as Jesus said, shine as the stars in heaven at the resurrection. That's a fantastic thing. Isn't that going to be something when we're resurrected and God says, 'Okay, now that you're a spirit being, here's how you turn on the glory.' What's that going to be like? I don't know, but I want to be there to find out.

"...that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him.... [Why did it not know Him? We read it in chapter 2, 'the one who says I know Him and keeps not His commandments is a liar and the Truth isn't in him.' That's what's in the world.] ...Beloved, **now**... [This is what you call in prophecy the *prophetic perfect*. **Now**, with the caveat: if we're faithful and endure to the end.] ...now we are the children of God..." (vs 1-2).

When I was down in Waco, Rachele and her husband Chad were there along with Jeremy and Zachary, and she is eight months pregnant. When I looked at her and I said, 'Rachele, you're at the

watermelon stage.’ The watermelon stage is, ‘Ughhh, gotta get this out.’ Chad said one night she was laying on the couch and the baby—they already know it’s a boy—so anyway, she was lying on the couch and the baby was kicking and everything, and they could hardly stop from laughing, because they could see him kicking, they could see his foot, they could see his head, everything like this. What is that in there? *A child, just like with us. ‘Now, we are the children of God.’* We have not yet been resurrected, but we are still the children of God. What we have to do is let God finish the work in us through His Spirit and through our growing and changing and overcoming and developing the love of God. That’s what God wants. ‘Now we are the children of God.’

Verse 2: “...and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be... [We don’t know really. We’ve been told some of it. It’s like looking through a glass darkly.] (but here’s what he knew): ...but we know that when He is manifested... [that is at His second coming] ...we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is.”

Now let me just tell you this: we’re all going to have troubles and difficulties and trials that are going to come along and we’re going to get depressed and downhearted, and things like that. We’re going to be worrying and we’re going to wondering, especially as things come along, and I just finished reading the book, *A Thousand Shall Fall*. This is a story, an account, of a Seventh Day Adventist family in Germany during World War II. The family and the husband who was drafted into the German Weimar into an engineering company, the one he served in, in World War I. At forty they drafted him back into it. The first thing he mentioned to them was, ‘I am a Christian. I keep the Sabbath, and I will keep it every week.’ And he did for six years of war, except one Sabbath when there were so many things going on. There are some interesting conversations that he had, but I’ll give a couple of sermons on it going down the road. But three things that were very important:

1. God watched over him
2. He took his pistol and when he was in Poland before they had the invasion into Russia, he went to a carpenter and had him cut out a piece of wood that they would put a shelf on, but he took that piece of wood and he carved it into a pistol. That was his official weapon though he was an expert marksman with a rifle, and so forth. He didn’t have to carry that.

So that he would not risk shooting an enemy, because God says love your enemy, he took that piece of wood and carved it into a pistol and put black shoe polish on it. Then one night went out and

took his pistol and threw it into the river and put that wooden pistol covered with black shoe polish into his holster. And no one discovered that it was wood until after they became American prisoners of war and they were to turn in their weapons. And the guy looked at him and said, ‘You mean you had that all during the war?’ And he said, *Yes*.

3. Now his family survived even through the trauma and the bombings. They lived in Frankfort. And all around where their apartment house was, all the houses were destroyed, but theirs was still standing. Yes, the windows had been blown out. Yes, they had to put cardboard up on it and things like that. Yes, there were times when they had virtually nothing to eat.

One time they had one small potato for the whole family, their father was clear over on the eastern front, and so forth. And the mother said after she sliced it into thin slices and fried it, she said, ‘Chew it slowly, this is all that we have.’ That’s a good book to read to answer the question: will God hear your prayers in distress? Will He see you through the tough times, even when it looks like everything in the world is against you? *The answer is yes!* Keep your mind on that. You’re going to be exactly like He is.

Now notice what v 3 says. This become important. “And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure.” That’s what God wants us to do. This is the whole story of life in growing and overcoming and changing. So if you’ve got a problem; you’ve got a difficulty; you have a hang up; you’ve got emotional things you need to work on; you have mental things you have to work on; you have physical things you need to work on—all of those are part of the things that we need to work on, but remember this: ***If you have this hope in you, you’re going to be purified through the Spirit of God, through the love of God, and He’s going to see you through it regardless of how difficult the problem is.***

Let’s come here and see something else that’s important. 1-John 3:13: “My brethren, do not be amazed if the world hates you.... [We’re gong to suffer that. There’s more and more hatred toward Christians and anything concerning God in the world that at any time in our lifetime—right? *Yes, indeed!*] ...We know that we have passed from death into life because we love the brethren.... [Now how important is loving the brethren? He starts out with the love toward God, the fellowship toward God, how to walk in the light, and now loving each other. Not having to come into a congregation where there’s tension, where there’s strive, where there’s hatred, and all of these things.

You've all gone through that—right? *Yes!* And where the Truth should be spoken from the pulpit. Lies and innuendos, story telling, and all of this thing comes from those who are supposed to be teaching you the love of God.] ...The one who does not love his brother is dwelling in death. Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him” (vs 13-15).

So what does this tell you? *This tells you why*—in our experience, and our living through it—*God had to scatter the Church*. Because of this very thing right here, and how it was affecting the brethren, how it was affecting the ministers, how it was affecting reaching out to the world. We made ourselves a laughing stock of the world—didn't we? *Yes!* So it was God's mercy to scatter us, so that God would deal with us each one individually; bring them back to Him. Get us to get our noses in the Bible, to study the Bible, to cry out to God. 'God, why these things?' *'Read the Bible, dummy, keep praying to Me. I'll answer, I'll open the door, I'll make it possible. Keep the faith, love Me, serve Me'*, and all of that.

“...no murderer has eternal life dwelling within him. *By this very act* we have known the love of God because He laid down His life for us; and we ourselves are to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.... [That's the whole message to the Church. That's the whole message to preaching the Gospel and everything.] ...But whoever has this world's goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his feelings of compassion from him, how can the love of God be dwelling in him?.... [Now here's how we are to love, not to be glad-handers, not to be do-gooders. Here's one I'm going to do for Church at Home—two of them:

1. Are you a do-gooder or are you practicing good?
2. Are you a real Christian or a pick-and-choose Christian?

Here's the answer right here to that]: ...My little children, we should not love in word... ['Oh, how wonderful to see you today,' but in the back of your mind, 'I really hate you and I wish you really weren't here.'] ...nor with *our* tongues; rather, *we should love* in deed and in Truth” (vs 17-18).

Now what does this do to us and for us? Look what it did to that German family, who we as Americans would be very willing to kill, and who we prayed, 'God, help us win this war'—right? And who they bombed Frankfurt over and over and over and over and over and over—and God spared that apartment. Yes, there was some damage to it and things like this. It wasn't a shining tower standing

out in the midst of rubble, but it stood there in the midst of rubble and they were able to escape and live.

Now here's what it does for us. Did it help that family? *Yes!* Did it help each of them? *Yes!* Did it help every one that they came in contact with by loving God, keeping the Sabbath, studying the Bible, and he even ended up giving a Bible study to the whole company for four hours in the last days of the war as to why the Bible said Hitler was going to lose the war.

Verse 19: “ And in this way we know that we are of the Truth, and shall assure our hearts before Him... [You get the encouragement and help from God—right? *Yes, indeed!* Now here's something we all go through:] ...That if our hearts condemn us... [Because of sin, because of doubt, because of fear, because of bitterness, because of lack of forgiveness, whatever it may be.] ...**God is greater than our hearts**, and knows all things” (vs 19-20). And He's there to forgive and He's there to forget, and He is there with *the washing of the water of the Word to cleanse these things out of our hearts and our minds*. That's what's important.

And when that happens, then, you will remember the event, but you won't have to constantly, emotionally and spiritually relive all of the difficulties that you've gone through. Because that's too easy to do. So that's why you have to forgive. That's why you have to ask God to help you forgive. What do you do if the person has already died? Well, you still forgive them before God, so that He can cleanse your heart and mind, because He says, 'If you forgive, I will forgive you'—correct? And if you love your brethren, you'll receive the love of God and blessings back—right? Likewise your neighbor, likewise your enemy.

Now here's what it will produce for us. God is greater. He's going to help us overcome those things. Don't think there is one problem or one difficulty or one emotion or one thing that comes along in your life that God cannot forgive you and to help you overcome. Because if you have committed the unpardonable sin, you could care less about God. But if your heart condemns you, that's God Spirit working in you to bring you to repentance. Let that be taken from you.

Then this will happen, v 21: “Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us, *then* we have confidence toward God.” And what does that bring in your life?

- **Joy**, instead of sadness
- **Understanding**, instead of grief
- **Confidence**, instead of depression

—all of those things come.

Now notice, here's another guarantee: "And whatever... [What does that mean? *Anything*, of course, modified by what is the will of God. But if your life is led by the Spirit of God, filled with life, filled with truth, loving God, loving the brethren, loving your neighbor, loving your enemy.] ...whatever we may ask we receive from Him because... [Notice this—never be fearful does God accept you. Never be fearful does God love you. Remember, if you do something you shouldn't do, He'll reveal it to you, so you can repent.] ...because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight" (v 22). ***So you can please God!***

Does it please God when He sees brethren dwelling together in love? *Yes!* Does it please God when He sees all of them asking for forgiveness, not only for themselves, but for other people? *Yes!* That pleases God. You don't ever have to worry, 'Well, I wonder how God looks at me. He looks at me like a fly.' (smack!) Got him! You pick your hand, look at that smashed fly and say, 'Oh, good!' God does not delight in doing that. How many times do we look at our relationship with God that way? 'He's a great God out there and He's going to kill us like a fly.' ***No!***

- He's wanting to see you do good
- He's wanting you to overcome
- He's wanting you to grow
- He's wanting you to pray and study and yield to Him

—all of these things, because those are pleasing in His sight.

"And this is His commandment: that we believe on the name of His Son Jesus Christ, and that we love one another, exactly as He gave commandment to us.... [Now how is this done?] ...And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him, and He... [Christ] ...in him; and ***by this we know***... [this is where we have to come in our point of conversion] ...and by this we know that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit which He has given to us" (vs 23-24). Quite a thing—isn't it? *Yes, indeed!*

Look, is this not what we're going to be doing in a big-time way when the millennium starts? Look at the world that we're going to have to change. Probably 90% of the human beings will have been killed because of the warring and fighting and the correction of God. There are going to be those who survived through. I think it's important to understand this: When you go back to Rev. 7, the 144,000, great innumerable multitude. God gave the warning, shook the heavens and the earth, all the

fighting and warring that was going on through the first five plagues and the martyrdom that took place, and then the intervention of Christ. There are people out there repenting. So God gives a space of repentance and a space of grace, saves the 144,000 and the great innumerable multitude, before He unleashes the trumpet plagues and the seven last plagues; because He wants repentance, He wants them to come to Him. So God does it.

Then I think they are going to be just like the children of Israel in Goshen when the real severe plagues came against Egypt, they were spared. So they will be spared. Now, outside of those that God has saved at the last minute, there are going to be other human beings who live through all of this and they're going to be what? *Traumatized!* having seen all the death and the carnage, and their loved ones and their fellow soldiers, or whatever it may be. Look at what has happened with the earthquakes and tsunamis recently. Look at what these people went through. How do you think a person would feel being stuck under these layers of this concrete building that fell down, but 'I'm still down here alive. Help!'

But what's going to be their minds? What's going to be the experience in their minds because of these things? They're going to remember that. Just like every severe accident you have been in, you remember and you remember it in slow motion—don't you? They're going to have all of these things. They're going to have to have gone through the worst time in the whole history of the world and God is going to tell us, 'Look, you go help them and teach them and bring them to Me.' The only way we're going to learn to do that, brethren, ***is that we learn the love of God.***

We'll finish here with 1-John 4:7. This tells us an awful lot about overcoming and growing and changing. It tells us an awful lot about the grace of God and it tells in particularly the love of God. As I begin to read this, let's remember what Paul wrote in Rom. 5: he said, 'While we were yet sinners...'—and for us before we were even born—'Christ died for us.' And not only for us, but for the whole world! And through His plan He's going to save all who will repent.

1-John 4:7: "Beloved, we should love one another because love is from God; and everyone who loves has been begotten by God, and knows God.... [And this is how we are to be the lights to the world, an encouragement to each other, and a help to each other.] ...The one who does not love does not know God because God is love.... [That defines His greatest character. And the love of God comes to us through His grace.] ...In this way the love of God was manifested toward us: that God

sent His only begotten Son into the world, so that we might live through Him” (vs 7-8). So think about the calling that God has given to us and how important this Feast of Tabernacles really is. Next time you watch stupid things on television that are going on in the world, the nations, the presidency, the Senate, the Congress, the governorships, the state houses, and you see all these stupid things going on, just think: **God has called you to replace them!** That’s why Christ died.

Verse 10: “In this *act* is the love—not that we loved God... [‘So God must reward us, because we came to you, God.’ *No, God came to us and called us.*] ...rather, that He loved us and sent His Son *to be the* propitiation for our sins. Beloved... [Now notice this statement here, tie that in with 1-John 2:7, we’re obligated to walk in His footsteps, even as he walked—right?] ...Beloved, if God so loved us... [And we all:

- desire the love of God—right? *Yes!*
- desire the forgiveness of God—right? *Yes!*
- desire the grace and mercy of God—right? *Yes!*

Notice: ...we also are duty-bound to love one another” (vs 10-11). Ties right in with John 13—right? Wash one another’s feet, we are duty-bound. And that ties right in with the love of God.

Now he makes it clear here. “No one has seen God at any time. *Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us... [Now I’m going to talk about that tomorrow, about the true dwelling place of God. Though it started out in the Garden of Eden, the true dwelling place of God is in your heart of mind, which is part of the greatest mystery of God. The world doesn’t know that.] ...*Yet*, if we love one another, God dwells in us, and His own love is perfected in us” (v 12). That’s the goal where we are going to. ‘And His own love is perfected in us.’ Isn’t that something? And you will come to understand, because I’m going to speak on this even more, that it is the love of God, and the repentance and getting these things that we’ve talked about out of your lives, which then helps you to be in a greater relationship with God, and to overcome a lot of sickness and disease and problems that are a result of spiritual blocks. The physical things you can take care of otherwise.

Verse 13: “By this *standard*... [That the love of God is being perfected in us.] ...we know that we are dwelling in Him... [1-John 3:24, we know we’re dwelling in Him by the Spirit He’s given to us.] ...and He *is dwelling* in us: because of His own Spirit, *which* He has given to us. And we have seen *for* ourselves and bear witness that the Father sent the Son *as the* Savior of the world. Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God,

God dwells in him, and he in God... [And that confession has to include what? *Love and obedience and commandment keeping, and so forth.* Not just to say, ‘Oh, I believe Jesus was the Son of God.’ That’s meaningless as James said, ‘Even the demons believe and they tremble in fear.’] ...And we have known and have believed the love that God has toward us. God is love... [There it is repeated the second time.] ...and the one who dwells in love is dwelling in God, and God in him” (vs 13-16).

Now let’s notice what this is to do, because, brethren, ***the love of God is the greatest healing experience mentally and spiritually that you will ever go through.*** And this, brethren, is a process, of which requires your direct involvement in it with the Holy Spirit of God and God’s direct involvement with you to help you.

Verse 17: “**By this spiritual indwelling, the love of God is perfected within us...** [That is the Christian walk.] ...so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment... [You look forward to the resurrection with joy. You look forward to the day of judgment because the day of judgment is going to be that you loved God and served Him, and He’s going to say, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; enter into the joy of your Lord.’ That’s what God wants us to have and to experience. That’s why we’re going to have confidence in the day of judgment.] ...because even as He is, so also are we in this world.”

Now notice what love is to do. This is a beginning and this is also an ending. This is something that happens immediately, but it’s also a process. “**There is no fear in the love of God;** rather, perfect love casts out fear... [And fear is one of the biggest enemies that you have in your life that causes you the most problems. So you gain the confidence of God.] ...perfect love casts out fear because fear has torment. And the one who fears has not been made perfect in the love *of God*... [So we’re to be perfected in the love of God. That’s how we’re going to save the world. God is not going to save the world by Himself, but through us working with Him.] ...We love Him because He loved us first. If anyone says, ‘I love God,’ and hates his brother, he is a liar. For if he does not love his brother whom he has seen, how is he able to love God Whom he has not seen? And this is the commandment that we have from Him: that the one who loves God should also love his brother” (vs 18-21).

Now he has a couple verses down here in 1-John 5. Let’s read the first few verses and this will bring us up to date in what we need to do. “Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been begotten by God; and everyone who loves Him

who begat... [Which is the Father.] ...also loves him who has been begotten by Him.... [That's your brothers and sisters in Christ.] ...By this *standard* we know that we love the children of God: when we love God and keep His commandments" (vs 1-2).

Now we've come full circle all the way back from the beginning—right? "For this is the love of God: that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not burdensome.... [Notice the conclusion of it]: ...Now then, everyone who is begotten by God overcomes the world; and this is the victory that overcomes the world—our faith" (vs 3-4). Which then is through the love of God.

Brethren, I think living in this world, the things that we're going to face, the things that we've already experienced, and the things that we need to change and get out of our lives, 1-John gives us the way that God wants us to do it.

Scriptural References:

- 1) 1-John 1:1-2
- 2) 1-Timothy 3:14-16
- 3) 1-John 1:2-7
- 4) Matthew 6:14-15
- 5) 1-John 1:7-9
- 6) 1-John 2:1-10, 8, 10-11, 15-17,15-17
- 7) 1-John 3: 1-3,13-24
- 8) 1-John 4:7-21
- 9) 1-John 5:1-4

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 1-Corinthians 13
- Genesis 1
- John 1
- Matthew 6:10, 13
- John 14:15
- Revelation 7
- Romans 5
- John 13

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Books: *A Thousand Shall Fall* by Susi Hasel Mundy

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