

You Can Please God

Fred R. Coulter—March 22, 2009

Let me just cover one question concerning what people call *sacred names*. Now this is designed for a summary, short view. This is not a detailed study. So let's first of all start asking some questions concerning the New Testament. Who wrote the New Testament? *The apostles*. Did they know Aramaic and Hebrew? *Of course*. Matthew was a Levite; it's said that maybe his first one was written in Aramaic, but that's not what God preserved.

Paul was a Pharisee and we find in Acts 21 that he spoke to the crowd in Hebrew. Now this becomes very, very important to understand. Now along with that, the Apostle John was from the Aaronic line, so he knew Hebrew. Now especially with Paul, if sacred names were required and God made it absolutely incumbent that you use sacred names, don't you think that God would have inspired them to insert the Hebrew in the Greek text? Since they knew it, why not? *We don't find it there at all*. Rather come to Romans 8 and let's see something where Paul does use an Aramaic word. Now some people even say if you cannot pronounce the sacred names correctly, you won't receive salvation. Well I guess that will leave everyone out who has an accent. So this is just going to be a very quick summary.

Romans 8:14: "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God... [It's the Spirit that is important. How are we to worship God? John 4, '*in spirit and in truth*'—from the heart] ...led by the Spirit of God... [and we need to let God's Spirit lead us and guide us and help us, let it give us understanding and thinking] ...these are the sons of God. Now you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear... [which comes from Satan the devil] ...but you have received the Spirit of sonship... [family] ...whereby we call out, 'Abba... [which then is Aramaic for *Father*] ...Abba, Father'" (v 15). Now the Greek is *pater*. Now don't you think that it's vitally important then that we have the correct name when we pray to and address the Sovereign Ruler of the universe? Wouldn't you say that would be highly important? *Yes!* But since we are in a family relation and we are to have a relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit, and we are the sons and daughters of God, we call Him *Father*. How did Jesus say we were to begin praying? '*Our Father Who's in heaven.*'

Now, whatever your last name is, think how your father would react to you, being a son or daughter of your father, and you come up to him and say (we'll just use Jack for an example), 'Mr. Linge.' That's not too family, is it?

Let's come to the book of Ephesians. So we are to call him *our Father*. But notice what Paul did back there in Rom. 8 where we just left; he used an Aramaic term, but interpreted it with the Greek word *pater*. *Abba*, which is equivalent to *Daddy*. *Pater*, *Father*. This will also bring us into another easy explanation about why the Godhead is not a trinity. Ephesians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God... [So everything he wrote was by the will of God.] ...to the saints who are in Ephesus, and to the faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace and peace be to you from God... [*theos*] ...our Father... [*pater*] ...and the Lord Jesus Christ" [*Kurios Jesus Christos*] (vs 1-2).

Where is the Holy Spirit? If it is another person then it would have to be there—correct? And if it's so *all* important, which the Trinitarians claim, don't you think that Paul made a mistake in not mentioning that in every opening of his epistles? *God inspired it*. "...Who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly things with Christ..." (v 3).

Now you may have heard me mention before, but my favorite New Testament book is Ephesians, then Philippians, then Colossians. And I did a series on these and entitled them: *Paul's Inspirational Epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians* and we did a verse-by-verse study of it all and I did it in an amplified translation of it.

Let's come to the completion of God's plan, Revelation 21. I'm giving you just a little outline here. And if someone comes to you with sacred names (and I'll come back to another one on sacred names here in just a minute because they kind of overlap) and if there are sacred names and they are required for God and the Holy Spirit is God, what is its sacred name? What do we have here? *New heaven, new earth, the completion of God's plan*—correct? *Yes!* Now let's read this. Revelation 21:22: "And I saw no temple in it..." Very interesting. God is not interested in a temple or cathedral; He's interested in the heart. So in New Jerusalem when His plan is completed and all of those who are now immortal spirit beings are there, no temple. Why?

Because Revelation 22:4 says: "They shall see His face..." So we'll see God face-to-face. Now what's that going to be like? See, you have to become a spirit being through the power of the resurrection in order to see God face-to-face because no man can see God and live; because He is so powerful in His glorified form that you would, as dust of the earth, be incinerated instantly. That's what He told Moses. Moses said, 'Show me Your

face and that will be sufficient.’ He said, ‘No I can’t do that because no man can see My face and live, but I’ll show you My back part.’ And that was only very well shielded.

Now notice, “...no temple in it; for the Lord God Almighty... [Who is the Father] ...and the Lamb are the temple of it” (Rev. 21:22). Now for all the Trinitarians, where is God, so called, the Holy Spirit? If the Holy Spirit is a person, and if the Holy Spirit is God, **where is He? Not there!** So if someone comes along and gives you that, about— ‘Well, there has to be trinity and the Holy Spirit is a person,’ say, ‘Okay, how do you answer every one of Paul’s introductions to all of his epistles when it’s only God the Father and Jesus Christ?’ When you come to the completion of God’s plan, accomplished by the power of God’s Holy Spirit, where is the third person in the trinity? And if They are three-in-one, which it’s claimed, how come we only have two separate ones together? So then you ask them questions to put back on their head and give them something to think about.

Now let’s come to Revelation 7 and we’ll do one more Scripture for sacred names. Now we know that this is half way in, chronologically speaking, to the tribulation period. What do we have? This is modern end-time. Let’s talk about the 144,000 (v 4). They have to be sealed. These are physical people who are on the earth and who are converted because of the events during the tribulation. Because when they see all these things going on, they are going to be a lot of people saying, ‘Oh, God, forgive me, spare me.’ And God will forgive them. And since there are no ministers around to baptize them, how do they receive the Holy Spirit? *They receive it because an angel says that they are to seal them.*

Revelation 7:2: “Then I saw another angel ascending from *the* rising of *the* sun, having *the* seal of *the* living God; and he cried out with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to damage the earth and the sea, Saying, ‘Do not damage the earth, or the sea, or the trees until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads’” (vs 2-3).

Now, one more lesson to learn here. If you have already been baptized and received the Holy Spirit, you have been sealed—correct? *Eph. 1: ‘you are sealed with the earnest of your redemption’*. So if anyone, any minister, any other person says that you physical people sitting in this group are part of the 144,000 and you’re already converted, he doesn’t have a clue as to what he is saying; because you’re already sealed. How were you sealed? *Repentance, baptism, laying on hands, receiving God’s Holy Spirit, you are sealed.* So these are people who are not converted, but are of the twelve tribes of Israel. So this also shows that at the end-

time the twelve tribes of Israel are known—correct? So lots of times when you’re reading Scriptures you have to bring everything into it so you understand it.

“...until we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.’ And I heard the number of those who were sealed: one hundred forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of *the* children of Israel” (vs 3-4). So, if the question is who are the 144,000 of Revelation 7, the answer: of *every tribe of the children of Israel*. So it can’t be the Church. You go back to the fifth seal, and what is that? *The martyrdom of the saints*. So they are dead awaiting the resurrection with the exception of the few who are in the place of safety.

I’ll just say about a place of safety: if anyone thinks they’re going to the place of safety, not going to go. If you think you know where it is and you don’t get there, that information doesn’t do you any good—does it? And when the angels come and take those that God has selected to be preserved in the flesh in a place of safety (now pay attention to this very carefully), ***to fulfill the promise of Jesus that the gates of hell would never prevail against His Church.*** That’s why there are the few in a place of safety. Because under the fifth seal, everyone who does not go is going to be hunted down and martyred; and they can find you.

I mean, look what they can do with the Google search today. You want to know where I live? You can find that on the Google search. Jim Hyles brought it to me and here’s a satellite picture of our house. I thought, *oh, oh*. But they’re even going to have it that you can spy on your neighbor. Aren’t they going to have it that we will sell you a program where you can use the GPS to follow them? And with all the technology that is around today, don’t you think they’re going to find every human being who does not have the *mark of the Beast because they’re true Christians and refuse to take it*, and those who refuse to take it are going to be hunted down and martyred, right? So this leaves us with this conclusion: all of those who were Christians in the flesh and were not taken to a place of safety will have been martyred.

Now God is going to do a greater work by calling the 144,000—first of all to the children of Israel and to fulfill the promise that He made through the prophet Zechariah (Zech. 12): ***He will save the tents of Judah first.*** Pay careful attention. Revelation 7:5: “From *the* tribe of Judah... [First, right? So you see how God’s Word comes together; every part agrees with the other when properly understood.] ...twelve thousand of the tribe of Judah...” and so forth all the way down.

Now let’s come down to v 9. This is very similar for the children of Israel to what we see in

the book of Exo. when the plagues were coming. And remember there was a time when God separated the plagues where they didn't come to the children of Israel who were in Goshen. And the same way with the intense darkness for three days and three nights, they had light in Goshen. So here the 144,000 then are going to be physically protected during the last part of the tribulation, and will be in the first resurrection. Now these will be the laborers of the eleventh hour as we find in the book of Luke, the last ones.

Now what about the rest of the world? This also ties in with sacred names. Verse 9: "After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one was able to number... [more than 144,000—right?] (Now notice): ...out of every nation and tribe and people and language... [They likewise are going to receive salvation because it says]: ...was standing before the throne and before the Lamb..."

Now it also says over here, v 14, when one of the elders told John who they were: "Then I said to him, 'Sir, you know.' [because I don't] And he said to me, 'These are the ones who have come out of great tribulation; and have washed their robes, and have made their robes white in the blood of the Lamb.'"

Now question: how are the 144,000 and the great innumerable multitude going to learn the sacred names of God? *They're not going to.* And if it's a requirement for salvation that you perfectly pronounce it, how are all these multitudes of different languages and tongues and people and everything going to be able to say the sacred names of God? *Impossible.* And I always remember a Texan, who is really deeply involved in sacred names, who has a very heavy Texas accent. Now I don't know the correct pronunciation for YHVH, which a lot of people call Yahweh, but with a Texas accent he's never going to get salvation because he says *Yaah-way*. Because God wants us in a personal, intimate relationship with Him.

Just a couple of sidebars on a few contentious issues that people get involved in and put so much stock in those kinds of things, that it's good for us to have just a very quick—what about this, what about that, what about the other.

Let me ask you a question: *Can you please God?* How many people run around with a guilty conscience and say, 'Oh, I've done this. Oh, I don't know if God can forgive me.' And you work and you sweat and you strain and you do all you can and then maybe you have another failure again and you say, 'Oh, God, this is too much.' And you're always under a guilty cloud or conscience; thinking: 'Oh, I don't know how I can do what God wants me to do.'

So let's ask the question. Can you please God? We'll find out—*yes, you can.*

Now, come back to the prophet Micah 6:6—how are you going to approach God? What's going to impress God? Have you ever watched what the Tibetans do? You watch some of their pilgrimages. They walk a certain number of steps and then they do their little ritual and fall flat prone on the ground. And then pick themselves up, and they walk the same number of steps again, and then they do whatever they do, prostrate themselves on the ground thinking that that's going to get them the favor of God when they get to the temple, wherever the Buddha temple is in Tibet.

So how do you approach God? Micah 6:6: "With what shall I come before the LORD, to bow myself before God the Most High? Shall I come before Him with burnt offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, and ten thousands rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my life?... [People have done that—haven't they?] ...He has shown you, O man, what *is* good. And what does the LORD require of you but to do justice and to love mercy and to walk humbly before your God?" (vs 6-8). How do you do that? Can you please God?

Let's come to Isaiah 66. Let's see where it starts; because it starts with the heart. It starts with your love toward God and your attitude toward God in the way that God chose. Because if you come before God, He's created the heavens! He's created the earth! He's made everything that there is! So this is an awesome thing that God has given us that we can approach Him. And what does God really require? Now as we read this, let's understand that we're made in the image of God, male and female, for the very purpose of having a relationship with God. And He created us to receive love and to love; not only each other, but God Himself.

Isaiah 66:1: "Thus says the LORD, 'The heaven *is* My throne, and the earth *is* My footstool.... [so then He asks the question] ...Where, then, *is* the house that you build for Me?.... [Think of all the temples; think of all the mosques; think of all the cathedrals; all the churches; all the great, grandiose things. And I know if you go to Thailand, they've got these tremendous temples all overlaid on the outside with gold. A lot of work. A lot of labor. Remember the Taj Mahal that was built? The one who built it thought it was so sacred that he had the eyes of the one who designed it taken out so he couldn't reproduce it for someone else. All that sacrifice. *What are you going to build for Me?*] ...And where *is* the place of My rest? For all these things My hand has made, and these things came to be,' says the LORD. 'But to this one I will look...

[here's the key]: ... **to him who is of a poor and contrite spirit and trembles at My Word**" (vs 1-2).

Now in the New Testament we have not only fearing God, but loving God; and so let's superimpose upon this that if you are of a poor and contrite spirit and trembling at God's Word, you also love Him. And the whole purpose, quoted in the Old Testament and the New Testament, is to what? The great commandment is what? '*To love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, with all your strength*'—correct? *Yes*. You can't do anything greater for God than that; except that you reciprocate to Him with His Spirit in you, and let Him mold your character in the image of Christ, to have the mind of Christ. Now other than that, you can have all kinds of great works, even at the temple of God. So this discounts any other temple, cathedral, whatever.

Verse 3: "He who kills an ox *is as if* he killed a man... [that is, even when they had the temple and you didn't have the right attitude, because as we covered this morning, a work of law doesn't make you in right standing with God. It's your heart] ...he who sacrifices a lamb *is as if* he broke a dog's neck; he who offers a grain offering *is as if* he offered swine's blood; he who burns incense *is as if* he blessed an idol. Yea, they have chosen their own ways, and their own soul delights in their abominations."

Now you see this also is very revealing in how do we please God? We don't please God because we determine in our minds we're going to do something great for God, because ***God is going to do something great for us***. Remember when Peter found out that someone was going to betray Jesus on the night of the Passover? What did Peter say? 'I'm going to do something great for you, Lord. I'll never deny You; I'll go to prison and I will go to death!' Jesus said, 'Peter, I tell you this day, in this very night, you are going to deny me three times.' Which was very instructive so that Peter would learn the lesson. 'Peter, you're not going to do anything great for Me.' There we have it.

That's what people like to do. They like to take part of God's Word and then do it their way: add a little here, take a little there, take it away, and create their own version of approaching God. But—

- God wants the heart
- He wants the mind
- He wants you to ***love*** Him
- and He, with His Spirit, will reciprocate back and love you.

And with that love that comes from God you can love your neighbors and you can love each other.

And since love is the greatest, you can overcome all obstacles—can't you?

Now think about that in relationship to the Passover coming up. Do you have an obstacle, that with the love of God, you can overcome it? Is it between you and God? Is it between you, your husband and wife? Is it between another brother or sister within the Church? ***Go resolve it in a loving, kind and forgiving attitude***. You will be blessed beyond measure of what you have ever thought. Because if we do our ways, if we want our ways, we can have it because we are free moral agents; so God says v 4: "I also will chose their delusions, and will bring their fears upon them because when I called, no one answered; when I spoke, they did not hear. But did evil before My eyes and chose *that* in which I did not delight."

So how can we please God? *We can't do it with carnal-mindedness*, as we've seen here. Let's come to the book of Proverbs 16. Now a lot of these promises you can claim. You can use the Word of God to help you grow in character, and knowledge and understanding, and love of God. This also shows us the operation of how God works and how much God has given to us because it says there in Psalm 8 that God has made us a little lower than God. Now think of that! That's something! isn't it?

Proverbs 16:1: "The preparations of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue, are from the LORD.... [But you're a free moral agent, but He has given you the ability to think and to speak and all of this.] ...All the ways of a man are clean in his own eyes... [because everyone knows that his way is best and the Prov. says, 'There is a way that seems right to a man, but ends thereof are the ways of death.'] ...but the LORD weighs the spirits.... [Because God is concerned with the heart and mind and spirit, so here's what to do]: ...Commit your works unto the LORD, and your thoughts shall be established" (vs 1-3).

That's how you overcome sin. You have a sin you're battling in your mind "Commit your works unto the LORD, and your thoughts shall be established. The LORD has made all for His own purpose; yea, even the wicked for the day of evil. Everyone who is proud in heart is an abomination to the LORD... [that ties in with Isa. 66] ...*though joined* hand-in-hand, he shall not be unpunished. By mercy and truth iniquity is purged... [now that ties in with the upcoming Feast of Unleavened Bread—

- purge out the old leaven
- purge out the sin
- by mercy and truth
- be honest with yourself
- be honest with God
- don't live in delusions

- don't hold onto sin and grudges
- purge it away.]

...and by the fear of the LORD *men* turn away from evil.... [Now notice v 7. Notice how it comes down verse-by-verse-by-verse to v 7]: ...**When a man's ways please the LORD...** [so you can please God— isn't that something?] ...**He makes even his enemies to be at peace with him**" (vs 3-7). Now that's quite a thing— isn't it? *Yes, it is!*

Since we are here in Proverbs, let's look at a few other things which are helpful for us. Proverbs 15:8, just across the page here. How about your prayers? Here's a tremendous verse. "The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD... [And I think of that every time when I would watch *Godfather II and III*. Now *Godfather III* was very interesting because it was very historical and factual, though it was done in a novel form. And I think about all these Mafia characters that come to the Catholic Church and bring their treasure.] ...The sacrifice of the wicked *is* an abomination to the LORD, but the prayer of the upright *is* His delight" (v 8).

Have you ever thought about the fact that God delights Himself in His saints, in His people? Think about that. You can please God and He can be delighted with your pleasure. Now all of us who have children, when your children do right and they do something really great, aren't you happy? Don't you have delight? *Yes!* We're the children of God, is that not correct? And when we do the things that please Him, He's delighted. We'll see there are many things that please Him, but loving each other and loving God are the two most important things. Verse 9: "The way of the wicked is an abomination to the LORD, but He loves him who pursues righteousness." That's what we're doing, pursuing righteousness.

Come to Proverbs 11:20. Have you ever thought about this? When we're all gathered together for the Sabbath, whether a large or small group, and Jesus even said, 'Where two or three are gathered together in My name, there I am in your midst.' Have you ever thought that **God is pleased when we love Him and love each other**, and hunger and thirst after His Word, and study His Word? *Yes!* When is it when you are studying that you learn the most? Probably when you've gone through an experience where you really had to rely on God and God has intervened and helped you and you are now in a humble attitude and you're studying and what happens? *You begin to see things in the Word of God you never knew were there.* Have you ever had that experience? *Yes!* Is God delighted in that? *Yes!* Did God give you that understanding? *Yes!* Been in the Word of God all along.

Proverbs 11:20: "Those who are of a perverse heart *are* an abomination to the LORD, but the upright in the way *are* His delight." You can put in your margin there John 14:6. Jesus said what? 'I am **the way, the truth and the life** and no one comes to the Father except through Me.'

Just as a little aside since we are coming to the Feast of Unleavened Bread here pretty quick, and we'll be talking about the Exodus. The words in Greek for **the way** are pronounced as this: 'ex hodos'—that's how you say *exodus*; and for **the way** is 'hodos.' Very similar—right? So just as the 'ex hodos' for the children of Israel was to leave Egypt, the way out of sin for us is Jesus, Who is 'Hodos'— **the way.**

Since we are right here, let's look at one more, Proverbs 12:20: "Deceit *is* in the heart of those who imagine evil, but to counselors of peace *there is* joy."

Now let's look at some other things that help us to understand how we can please God. Let's come to the New Testament, Hebrews. 11:1 (pg 1,213): "Now faith is *the* substance of *things* hoped for..." Now the reason why it says **substance** is because faith, that we are to have, comes from God through His Holy Spirit; which then actually means that we receive from God with His Spirit which is **spiritual substance from God** we have the **faith that gives us the belief**. That's why Jesus said there in Mark 11, 'Have the faith of God'; Gal. 2, 'the faith of Jesus Christ'—because it is a gift of the Holy Spirit, which is **spiritual substance so you can believe**, and **faith** is the noun for the verb *to believe* in the Greek. What does that do? When you have that kind of faith and the conviction of things not seen? And there's one thing we need to have with faith: **conviction when you know things are right and they are from God, and you stand for them.**

(go to track #2)

Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is *the* substance of *things* hoped for *and the* conviction of things not seen. For by this *kind of* faith the elders obtained a good report. By faith we understand that the worlds were created by *the* Word of God, so that the things that are seen were made from *things* that are invisible" (vs 1-3)—which is a true scientific statement today. They still don't know what matter really is, and they just finished building the greatest kaleidoscope in the world in Europe. I think they spent 17-billion doing it to see if they can take the smallest known particle and have them going around the cyclotron and hopefully to collide and to see if for a split second that they can create fusion. And yet, I bet every one of those scientists believe in evolution. You look out at the heavens and how many suns are there out there, stars, all run by fusion continuously. 'Oh, that just evolved.' But yet, how

much work did it take in seventeen years to build to try and get one speck. So we understand that.

Verse 4: “By faith... [which means he did what was right] ...Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain... [because Cain did it his way, Abel did it God’s way] ...by which he obtained witness that he was righteous, God testifying of his gifts; and through it, though he died *he* is yet speaking.” Now that’s something with the Word of God that you need to understand. The Word of God *always* speaks. When Jesus was talking to the Pharisees about Moses, He said that had ‘you believed Moses, for he wrote of Me.’ He also talks in the present tense of *Moses says*.

Now let’s carry that through with the New Testament. Jesus told the apostles the day He ascended into heaven, the fortieth day, He said, ‘You are to be witnesses of Me beginning in Jerusalem and Samaria, and to the uttermost parts of the earth,’ or to the end of the earth. Now they never got there—did they? *But their words did*—didn’t they? So they speak today. And that’s what’s so fantastic about the Word of God, because it’s just not the printed word. As Jesus said, ‘The words I speak to you, *they are spirit and they are life*,’ and are always active and always working. Just like the law of gravity--always active and always working, but you never hear it and never see it, unless you can see the Northern Lights or the equivalent in the southern hemisphere.

Now notice v 5: “By faith Enoch was transported so that he would not look upon death, and was not found because God had transported him; for before his departure it was testified of him, that he pleased God.” Now we can please God, *if we do it His way*, but we have to choose to do so. *To please God*.

Now here v 6 is a key important thing we should never, ever forget: “Now without faith it is impossible to please God... [that’s quite a statement—isn’t it?] ...For it is mandatory... [now if you want to come to God, as we started out] ...**it is mandatory for the one who comes to God to believe that He exists**... [Now not only that He exists, but everything about Him that is revealed in the Bible is true. God exists! Now remember what James wrote about the demons. He said, ‘You believe in one God, you do well; the demons do and tremble.’ But they’re not willing to obey.] ...and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.” Meaning it’s an active, spiritual, ongoing

- way of life,
- and mind,
- and heart,
- and love,
- and service continually.

Now the way we have to look at life is this (and I try and keep this in mind always):

- I have nothing I didn’t receive.
- There’s no goodness apart what comes from God, even in a carnal sense.
- Our lives are totally dependent upon God and His creation.
- We live on the earth; we have to eat food; God is the One who causes all of these things to be.

And isn’t it an amazing thing? Jesus said that a man plants a seed and he waters it, and he watches it day and night as it grows, but he doesn’t know how it grows. That is still a true statement today; so much for the great minds of the world. So our lives are totally dependent upon God. So in seeking to do the things that God wants us to do; what we do today that is good and right we are thankful for; what we do that is not, we repent of. And if you have a problem and difficulty today, don’t carry it over until tomorrow. Why do you want to spoil two days? *One day is quite sufficient*—isn’t it? *Yes!* Likewise, do not look back in the past and relive all of that because that’s over and done, and you can’t change it and you can’t repair it. So, you diligently seek God and *seek His way*, God the Father and Jesus Christ, *with all your heart, and mind, and soul, and being*.

Now every one of these when you go through by faith, every time it says *by faith*--let’s read the next one and we’ll go on from there. Verse 7: “By faith Noah, after being divinely instructed by God about the things *he could* not yet see, was moved with fear *and* prepared an ark for *the* salvation of his house; through which he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness which is by faith.” It’s not like Cosby, ‘Is that You, Lord?’ Remember that? ‘*Want you to build an ark.*’ An impossible thing, but he did it. Every time there is faith, faith is followed by *believing action*, because ‘faith without works is dead.’

Now let’s carry on a little bit further and see what we can do in serving and pleasing God. Let’s see what Jesus said. Come here to John, the eighth chapter. I think this: I think the book of John has so much in it spiritually that after we read the Bible and go through it and read the book of John, study it, come through it, go back through it again and again and again, we learn more and more and more, because it’s ‘a little here, a little there, precept upon precept, etc.’

John 8:23: “And He said to them, ‘You are from beneath; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. That is why I said to you that you shall die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I AM... [And He was telling them

straight out that He was God in the flesh.] ...you shall die in your sins.’ Then they said to Him, ‘Who are you?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘The One that I said to you from beginning. I have many things to say and to judge concerning you; but He Who sent Me is true. and what I have heard from Him, these things I speak in the world.’ *But* they did not know that He was speaking to them of the Father. Then Jesus said to them, ‘When you have lifted up the Son of man, then you yourselves shall know that I AM, and *that* I do nothing of Myself. But as the Father taught Me, these things I speak’” (vs 23-28).

Very interesting. When you put all the Scriptures together along with Isaiah 40, God the Father was teaching Jesus every morning from the time He was an infant. He didn’t go to school with the rest of Jews. The Father taught Him. “And He Who sent Me is with Me. The Father has not left Me alone because **I always do the things that please Him**” (v 29). Now let’s stop and ask a question. Since Jesus always does the things that please the Father, if you have the Spirit of God in you and you’re developing the mind of Christ, **can you please God?** *Of course!* Now isn’t that a wonderful thing to contemplate:

- that God delights in you,
- that God is pleased with you,
- that God loves you,
- that God wants you,
- that God has called you,

and you have this great relationship that you can have with God the Father and Jesus Christ. Tremendous thing! Now, with this, let’s use this as a basis for putting aside all the carnal, little things that get in the way of it. ***We can please God.*** Jesus always did and so can we.

Now let’s see what we need to do to please God. Let’s come to 1-Thessalonians 4:1—even Paul wrote of this: “Now then, as for the rest, brethren, we are beseeching and exhorting you in *the* Lord Jesus, even as you received from us how you are duty-bound to walk and to please God... [***Yes, we can please God.***] ...that you would abound *still* more. For you know what commandments we gave you through the Lord Jesus” (vs 1-2). So that’s how we can please God; if we do the things that Jesus told us to do, if we love God, if we keep His commandments, we can please God. And when we do, it’s a humbling experience. It’s not one of these things, ‘Oh, look what I did,’ and you put your thumbs in your suspender straps, or whatever.

Now let’s come to 1-John 3:1; here we are told directly that we can please God. We want to set the scene for what he tells us later. We won’t get into the other verses, we’ll go vs 1-3, and then we’ll jump ahead from there. Now here’s a tremendous

verse that we need to always keep in mind and live by. Let me just tell you this, if you ever get discouraged and down, which we do from time-to-time—don’t we? *Yes!* There may even come a point in your life, as I’m sure it already has, as it has with me, that you get so discouraged that you just walk out someplace and you say, ‘Oh, God, heal my soul.’ And God will do that. But the way that you keep your focus and you keep your understanding is never lose sight vs 1-3.

1-John 3:1: “Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, 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.” Now here’s the goal, here’s the focus. Let’s also keep this in mind from this point of view: we’re all getting older day-by-day—aren’t we? And there are brethren that are crossing the finish line, that is they pass away, they die, enter into their rest which is their place of safety. And when we get to the point as we are getting older, we get weaker, we have disabilities, we can’t remember like we really would like to, we can’t walk the way we would like to, we certainly can’t run, and yet:

- God is pleased with you.
- He’s not going to leave you.
- He’s not going to forsake you.

It does not matter what the problem or difficulty is you are going through, Christ is in you, the Father is in you, you are the children of God, and God loves you and you love Him and that can please God. So always keep that in mind.

“Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be... [we can think about this a little bit—can’t we.] ...but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be **like Him**.... [Isn’t that something? That, brethren, is the completed work of God: ***to be like Christ.***] ...because we shall see him exactly as He is. And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure” (vs 2-3). By loving and serving God.

Now come down to v 16: “By this *very act*... [that is of having the Spirit of God] ...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.... [Now here’s something that pleases God as well.] ...But whoever has this world’s goods, and sees his brother in need, and shuts up his feeling of compassion from him, how can the love of God be dwelling in him? My little children, we should not love in word, nor with *our* tongues, rather *we should love* in deed and in truth. And in this way... [now I want you to notice the self-verifying and affirming of the Word of God] ...And in this way we know... [Now when you study the

book of 1, 2, and 3-John, there are thirty-seven things you are to know. Here's one of them. "...we know that we are of the truth... [because:

- you prove all things;
- you believe the Word of God;
- you have the faith of Christ.]

...and shall assure our hearts before Him... [have confidence] ...that if our hearts condemn us... [because we fall short and have sins] ...God is greater than our hearts, and knows all things.... [So you don't have to go around with a guilty conscience. You don't have to go around with a frustration complex, as it were.] ...Beloved, if our hearts do not condemn us... [because of repentance and loving God] ...*then* we have confidence toward God.... [Now notice v 22; very key verse]: ...**And whatever we may ask we receive from Him because we keep His commandments and practice those things that are pleasing in His sight**" (vs 16-22). And those things that are pleasing in His sight are the fruits of the Holy Spirit: love and joy and peace and longsuffering, and gentleness and kindness, and goodness and self-control. Those are all good. That's all part of the love of God. That pleases God.

Now think about it for a minute. On the Sabbath day, the day in which God puts His presence, whether you're alone or whether with other brethren, if you are there in peace and harmony and God's Spirit; and you're wanting God's Word and Truth and you're studying it and you're understanding it, God's Spirit is there in the midst of you as well as within you because Jesus promised that it would be. So therefore, the Sabbath day, if we use it correctly and with the Spirit of God, it becomes the greatest day of the week. Now that's a marvelous thing. That's pleasing in God's sight.

Verse 23: "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.... [And how is that done?] ...And the one who keeps His commandments is dwelling in Him, and He in him; and by this we know that He is dwelling in us: by the Spirit He has given to us" (vs 23-24). Now that's really quite a wonderful and tremendous thing—isn't it?

Now let's look at some things that are pleasing to God for those who are teachers and ministers because there are things that we need to understand with that, as well. Let's come to the book of Galatians. What is one thing that kills a church? *Hierarchy*. Let's rename it: *politics*.

Now Paul was an anti-politician. And people start getting off the beam and going their own way when they start respecting people and pleasing people over the Word of God and over the way that

God says we are to do it. This is why it's very important that when anyone is teaching who is a minister, an elder or whatever, that you understand the greater responsibility and condemnation and judgment is upon us and what are we to do? ***Preach the Word***—the Word of God; the first responsibility. Then we are not to respect persons.

Let's see something here. Galatians 1:6: "I am astonished... [now we have seen this happen, too—haven't we? Were you not astonished when it happened?] ...I am astonished that you are so quickly being turned away from Him Who called you into *the* grace of Christ to a different gospel, Which *in reality* is not another *gospel*; but there are some who are troubling you and are desiring to pervert the Gospel of Christ.... [You think that's pleasing to God? *No, of course not.*] ...But if we, or even an angel from heaven should preach a gospel to you *that* is contrary to what we have preached, LET HIM BE ACCURSED! As we have said before, I also now say again. **If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to what you have received, LET HIM BE ACCURSED!** Now then, am I striving to please men or God?.... [This applies to everyone of us, but in particularly to those who are teaching.] ...Or am I motivated to please men? For if I am yet pleasing men, I would not be the servant of Christ" (vs 6-10). Very clear instructions as to what we are to do.

Now let's look at some other things that we are also to do. Romans 15. Let's see how our lives are to be. This is why Jesus said you're not to exalt yourself over the brethren, but you're to serve them, you're to love them, you're to teach them the Word of God. Because what you're dealing with, the effectiveness of the teaching and preaching of anyone who is a teacher, is based upon how much he really loves God and how he's serving God, and how he's serving the brethren the way that God wants him to do.

Romans 15:1: "Now you who *are* strong *in the faith* are obligated to support the ones who are weak, and **not to please ourselves**.... [very important] ...Accordingly, let each one of us please *his* neighbor for good, unto edification... [and here is the example, v 3] ...for even Christ did not please Himself; rather, as it is written, 'The reproaches of those who are reproaching You have fallen upon Me'.... [So put it all on Christ.] ...For all these things that were written before were written for our instruction, so that through patient endurance and encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope" (vs 1-4).

So the next two verses tell us what we are to be together. "Now may the God of patience and endurance and encouragement grant you to be **likeminded** toward one another according to Christ Jesus..."

- that comes from God’s Spirit
- that comes from God’s love
- that comes from the Word of God
- that comes from living and serving and helping each other

...so that with one accord and one mouth we may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ” (vs 5-6).

Now let’s go to 1-Thessalonians, the second chapter, and see again some instructions here. Then you can put in your notes there 1 & 2-Timothy, and the book of Titus. 1-Thessalonians 2:4: “But even as we were approved by God to be entrusted with the Gospel... [that says a lot—doesn’t it? That’s quite a statement. So as we find in 1-Tim., we are stewards; and a steward is one who uses his master’s goods and wealth to benefit the master. It belongs to him. What would happen if Congress did that? *What a different thing it would be*—right? What if the churches did that? What if every minister did that?] ...entrusted with the Gospel, we should speak in this manner as *those* who please not men, but God, Who proves our hearts. For neither at any time did we use flattering words *with* you, even as you know, nor a cover or covetousness—God is *our* witness. Nor were we seeking glory from men, neither from you nor from others, *though* as Christ’s apostles we had *the* power to be burdensome” (vs 4-6). And that was to collect tithes and offerings, but he didn’t do it because he wanted to set an example for them.

Now let’s come to the book of Ephesians, chapter four. Let’s see the whole goal and purpose of how we can please God and the aim and the goal of it. Now you’ve probably heard some of these Scriptures applied many times in the past, but we won’t apply it that way; because remember the Apostle Paul said he thought that God set the apostles as last, as the off scouring and the laughing stock of the world. So don’t anyone volunteer to be an apostle. Look out, you may find yourself in trouble.

Ephesians 4:11: “And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets... [now these are not to prophesy the future, necessarily, that’s possible; but more importantly a telling forth of the Word of God, rather than a foretelling of events.] ...and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers... [here’s the goal] ...for the perfecting of the saints, for *the* work of *the* ministry, for *the* edifying of the body of Christ” (vs 11-12). That is ***the up-building!*** So when any have problems and troubles, help them with it; don’t condemn them! Help them!

I remember we had a man who was just terribly obnoxious; I mean it was almost an insult to be around him every time he came around. Now it’s hard to have someone like that within a group, but

with patience and with forbearance, and getting to know him and understanding what his problems really were, and through prayer and through direct participation in helping him to overcome those problems, he is completely a changed person. You could take the other approach and say, ‘Boy, you know that guy over there? Want to tell you, stay away from him. He’s really kind of a ... I don’t want to say it, but you know...’ I think even one person one day was so disgusted, called him a jerk. Now that same person says, ‘You know, he’s really kind of nice now.’ So that’s how we are to treat each other with the problems and difficulties. Did God call all of us with all of our problems and difficulties? *Yes*, indeed! Did He reject us? *No!* Did He condemn us? *Enough so we could repent*—correct? *Yes!* Because He wants us to overcome and the best way to overcome is that you have encouragement of God’s Word and that you give hope to them and that you help them understand and realize why God has called them and where they are going and what they are doing. This is what God wants.

Let’s continue you on here: “...edifying of the body of Christ; **until we all come into the 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**” (vs 12-13). Now that’s a lofty goal, isn’t it? But that’s why we’re here and that’s what God wants us to do. Will that be pleasing to God? Can we all then please God? *Yes, indeed!*

Think about it with us all here today. With God’s Spirit do we all have a mind of wanting to please God and do what is right? *Yes!* That’s what God wants us to have all the time. That’s the whole purpose. And here’s another thing that is important; and understand this: God is not going to get us in the Kingdom of God by beating us into it. ***He wants us to be inspired into it,*** and to be inspired with the Holy Spirit to do it ***God’s way,*** which

- uplifts
- up-builds
- overcomes

That’s what God wants and I think I am correct in saying that’s how we all feel right now—isn’t it? *Yes, indeed!*

And that’s why when we get together on the Sabbath like this, and we ask God’s presence to be here, *He is here.* And if we are teaching the Word of God and loving God and loving each other, God is pleased; God is delighted. And then He gives us all of His Spirit and encouragement even more. That when we leave, we can go home and say, ‘God ***really*** inspired us today!’ Not because of who we are, but because of Who and what God the Father

and Jesus Christ are and what They want to do for us. Now that's something!

“...**unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ**... [an eternal goal, a lifelong pursuit] ...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 of the systematizing of the error.... [that's why doctrine is important] ...but holding the truth in love, may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even Christ*” (vs 13-15).

Now let's think about this and see what Christ is doing for the body; because Christ is working with His people wherever they are. “From Whom all the body, fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies... [and if you have any aching joints you know every joint is necessary—right? *Yes, all of us are necessary!* God has called all of us to this task.] ...according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part... [because the work of God is not a church, it's not an organization, it is what God is doing in every one that He has called.] ...is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love” (v 16).

Brethren, if we do that, ***you can please God***; I can please God, every single one of us. And that will encourage you, lift your heart and mind and spirit, and lift the burdens and cares that pull you down.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 8: 14-15
- 2) Ephesians 1:1-3
- 3) Revelation 21:22
- 4) Revelation 22:4
- 5) Revelation 7: 2-5, 9, 14
- 6) Micah 6: 6-8
- 7) Isaiah 66:1-4
- 8) Proverbs 16: 1-7
- 9) Proverbs 15:8-9
- 10) Proverbs 11: 20
- 11) Proverbs 12:20
- 12) Hebrews 11: 1-7
- 13) John 8: 23-29
- 14) 1 Thessalonians 4: 1-2
- 15) 1 John 3: 1-3, 16-24
- 16) Galatians 1: 6-10
- 17) Romans 15: 1-6
- 18) 1 Thessalonians 2: 4-6
- 19) Ephesians 4: 11-16

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Acts 21
- John 4

- Exodus
- Luke
- Zechariah 12
- Psalms 8
- John 14:6
- Mark 11
- Galatians 2
- Isaiah 40
- 1 & 2 Timothy
- Titus

Also referenced:

Sermon Series: *Paul's Inspirational Epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians*

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