

## Washing of the Water by the Word V

Fred R. Coulter—May 14, 2011

Greetings, everyone! Welcome to Sabbath services. We had a very interesting discussion before Sabbath services about the problem of trying to solve spiritual problems by political means. They will never work, because they all have to have either their own version of God or leave out God all together. So it can never solve the problem.

If they could solve the problems, then there would be no need for Christ. And if they could solve the problems, then they could perfect themselves without God. So, none of those things are true and none of them can work out. And even if we see and know and understand some of the problems, again, there has to be repentance. If there's no repentance, then they're not going to change. It isn't going to happen. So we need to keep that in mind.

So there are a lot of things going on and all you have to do is read Deut. 28 and Lev. 26. Everyone wants the blessings while they live in their sins and no one wants the curses while they reject God. That is the conundrum of human nature. It is irrational to begin with.

Let's talk about today, in this age, we need to realize this: we have more things that we need to overcome. We have far more influences in our lives than at any time in history. Once we understand that and then we use the armor of God and we use the principles of God, then we can overcome them. There are so many entrances into our mind and so many things that we have in our mind that have to be erased. We're to learn the lesson, but we don't have to relive the spiritual and emotional trauma concerning it. That's the important thing.

Let's do an overview so we see exactly what we're dealing with in the washing of the water by the Word. That's another way of saying: How does Christ convert us? *By the washing of the water by the Word* and it is a spiritual operation.

What we're going to do is we're going to survey Eph. 1-3. Then we're going to go through chapter 4 and then we will come to chapter 5 and we will end up where it is the *washing by the water by the Word* and that is the **action of conversion** by Christ.

Ephesians 5:25 and let's read that verse so we can realize that's where we are going. "...Christ also loved the Church, and gave Himself for it." It is His job to make us Holy. It is His job, through the power of the Holy Spirit, to perfect us. We have our responses and we have our responsibilities and we have what we need to do because conversion is a

joint project. We have to be involved and there are things that we need to do.

Verse 26: "So that He might sanctify *it*... [To make it Holy. What is the true Holiness that is going to make it really Holy? *Obviously, the resurrection!* That is the goal. That is the end of it—right?] ...having cleansed *it*... [So it's a process. Cleansing where? *In the mind, in the spirit!*] ...with the washing of water... [He's the *fountain of living water*. The Holy Spirit is a type of water.] ...by *the Word*" (v 26).

You can say the Word then becomes the *cleaning agent* within the water, which is the Spirit. This leads us to the ultimate conclusion in our physical lives. What's the highest attainment of spiritual growth we can reach? '*Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.*' *The mind of Christ!* That is accomplished in Col. 1:27 with Christ in us, *the hope of glory*.

God is doing a tremendous and mysterious thing on earth that the rest of the world doesn't know. It can't comprehend it and it cannot see it. It can see our behavior, but it cannot see what God is doing. Have you ever wondered where it says there in Matt. 13 that the Kingdom of God is likened unto leaven? We just finished the Days of Unleavened Bread which tells us during the Days of Unleavened Bread leaven is sin. How can the Kingdom of God be likened to leaven? There's a good action to leaven, which this is portraying. That is the *unseen action* of the Holy Spirit within us.

Just like you put leaven into dough and the bread rises, but you don't see the leavening, you see the effects of what the leaven has done. So she put into three measures of flour leavening until the whole thing was leavened. We'll talk about that as we lead up to Pentecost. So we're going to come from Eph. 1 now, let's go there, and then we will end up again at Eph. 5:25. because everything leading up to that verse pertains to the washing of the water by the Word.

Let's look at some interesting things right here in Ephesians 1:1: "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by *the* will of God, to the saints who are in Ephesus and to *the* faithful in Christ Jesus.... [Meaning that this letter was circulated to all the churches possible.] ...Grace and peace *be* to you from God our Father and *the* Lord Jesus Christ" (vs 1-2). Always remember, because there is an argument, and we're going to tackle part of that argument, about the trinity. But if you read the

introductions of every one of Paul’s epistles, he distinctly leaves out the Holy Spirit in the category of God, which, *if* the Holy Spirit were God, he would have to put it in the introduction. The Holy Spirit of God is the power of God, not a third person in a trinity and the trinity comes from pagan philosophy, anyway. Paul took care of that when he spoke on Mars Hill with the philosophers.

Then it talks about the blessings that come from Christ:

- “...He has personally chosen us...” (v 4)
- “...predestined us for sonship...” (v 5)
- and that “...we have redemption through His blood...” (v 7)’
- “Having made known to us the mystery of His own will...” (v 9)
- “...*the Divine* plan [of God] for the fulfilling of *the times*...” (v 10)

Verse 13: “In Whom you also trusted after hearing the Word of the Truth, the Gospel of your salvation; in Whom also, after believing, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise... [this shows an action of the Holy Spirit of sealing us]...which is *the* earnest of our inheritance until *the* redemption of the purchased possession, to *the* praise of His glory” (vs 13-14).

Then he gives a tremendous prayer here on how he wants us to understand the will of God. Ephesians, chapter two, is very important because we have to remember where we came from and who was working in our lives before we were called—*Satan the devil*.

Ephesians 2:1: “Now, you were dead in trespasses and sins... [Without the Spirit of God, we are as good as dead. That hasn’t happened, but also living in our trespasses and sins was a result of what?] ...in which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience; Among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the world*” (vs 1-3).

Everyone is influenced by Satan the devil, who is the god of this world, through the means that he has put in the world, if not directly by him and his demons. And they control the governments, the education, the religions, and the banking systems of this world. That’s why Christ has to return to bring the Kingdom of God and take it away from them.

You can argue all day long about political things, about monetary things, but until you get rid

of the inspiration and the power of Satan the devil, yes, and the worship of Satan the devil by the elite of the world—which you cannot do, that’s a job only Christ can do. Someone asked, ‘What would it take?’ Well, I’ll tell you what it would take.

1. You’ve got to be able to bind Satan. *Can’t do that!*
2. If you did #1, then you would have to identify all of the super-elite that were in direct contact and worship of Satan the devil to carry out their plans in their governments and the coming world government.

You would have to, as you look at the whole earth, you would have to have so many Seal teams of experts to isolate them and to kill them regardless of the time zone on earth all at once. And no man can do that. So, even though you go vote and vote for lower taxes—I vote for lower taxes—political means will never get rid of Satan the devil, because he is the one who has setup the politics. We need to realize that it’s by repentance.

We also need to realize v 9: “Not of our works...” Though we have works. In other words, we come to the same mind and attitude of Jesus Christ when He said, ‘I of Myself can do nothing.’ And you stop and think about whatever you do in your life. God has given you the ability to do it. All of that physical comes from God as well. But people in the world don’t realize it. Everything we do comes from God.

Does He not give us breath when we’re born? And we keep breathing until when? *Our last breath!* This past week we had a very nice funeral for Evelyn Gardner who died the week before. There was a dispute about her birth certificate, so she was either 97 or 98. God says that He’s given to man three-score and ten and if by strength four-score. Well, she went eighteen years beyond that. But nevertheless she had breath from the time she was born until she gave her last breath and God puts that in every one of us. So we need to give God all the credit.

Essentially, regardless of what you are doing, there is nothing in this world, whether you know it or not, that you can do without God having made it possible. Spiritually, since we were dead in sins and trespasses and we are physical and are going to die, the only way we’re going to have eternal life is through Christ and that is not of our works, though we have works that we need to do. But we’re going to see those are works that come from God that He demands of us and not what we do.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...” (v 10). I want to emphasize *the created*, because we’re being created in our minds and spirit and the finished product will come at the resurrection. That’s what the *washing of the Word* is all about

- to keep us in contact with God, with His Spirit,
- to keep us yielded to God so Christ can work in us
- to where we can change and grow and overcome spiritually.

“For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto *the* good works that God ordained beforehand in order that we might walk in them” (v 10). That tells us where we’re going. This tells us what we ought to do. And the good works are found where? *In the Word of God!* Let’s stop and think of the major sin of mankind. What is the major sin of mankind? If he understands anything about God, he wants to improve God, beginning with Cain. And that he thinks he’s so smart that he’s going to figure out a way that he can make God’s way better, when he cannot make God’s way better.

The truth is, only God can make you better if you yield to Him. Now just put in your notes there, Jer. 18, where he talks about the potter and the clay. And God is working us just like the potter and the clay.

Then he comes down here talking about being built up, Gentiles and Jews together, v 20: “You are being built up... [This creation is a process of being built up—ongoing, present-tense passive.] ...on the foundation of the apostles and prophets... [That is through their writings and word.] ...Jesus Christ Himself being *the* chief Cornerstone In Whom all the building, being conjointly fitted together... [That’s what God is doing. That’s going to be something at the resurrection when we will see the completed work of Christ. Think of all the work that He’s doing, spiritually.] ...is increasing into a Holy temple in *the* Lord; In Whom you also are being built together for a habitation of God in *the* Spirit” (vs 20-22). There again we see the Spirit is not God.

Then we have Eph. 3. There is an additional revelation given to the apostles and prophets about the plan of God that we are going to enter into the Family of God. It gives more understanding of the mystery or the secret plan of God. He is going to do everything that He is going to do. Like someone was saying the other day, ‘If you get the principles, if you get the foundation of it all, everything else can be put into place.’ So this is what Paul is talking about here. We’ll get this into the record to see what

God is doing. This will help us understand Eph. 4 & 5 and how that fits in to the *washing of the water by the Word*.

Ephesians 3:14 “For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man.... [The action, the ‘dunamis,’ the power, the inner man. That’s where it’s all going on.] ...That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith” (vs 14-17). Having the mind of Christ, having the Word of God in us. And, of course, we have that today more than every before—right? *Yes, we do!*

Verse 18: “*And* that being rooted and grounded in love... [And that is the basic principle of all and that is the greatest part of the washing of the water by the Word is the love of God. We’ll see that by time we finish this series.] ...you may be fully able to comprehend... [God wants us to know! God wants us to think! Think properly, put things together rightly. ‘Rightly divide the Word of God,’ etc.] ...comprehend with all the saints...”

And we have it today, brethren. What Satan likes to do is come along and dumb-down. That’s been his primary tool of interference within the Churches of God—to dumb everybody down, to restrict it by a hierarchy, that no one can go above the 18 points of an exalted idol of a man called *an apostle*. Some people don’t like it when I mention it that way. But I don’t think that he would even want, if he were alive today, to have people use that as the sum total of the Gospel. But men for power have done it.

We need to know, v 18: “...what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height” of the plan of God. Today we have the Word of God. That’s important. So we need to take the Word of God, multiply it in our lives, multiply it in preaching the Gospel and in teaching all the brethren. The goal, as we’ll see later, is *perfection!*

“And to know the love of Christ...” (v 19). This comes how? *Prayer! Meditation!* Try this one time: If you’re on a long trip, turn off the radio, turn off the CD, if you have kids in the back of the car—you know today they keep them all entertained with videos and their parents don’t know it, Satan is right there putting it in their minds, putting it in their minds, putting it in their minds. Everybody exalts Walt Disney, but he’s one of the tools of Satan to introduce kids into occultism. If you don’t believe that, watch every movie. Watch everything that he does. To exalt women over men is his goal. So this

sets the society for what? *An upside-down society, Satanic-occult society!* We're to come out of that.

Verse 19: "And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses *human* knowledge; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God." That's at the resurrection.

Verses 20 and 21 are important, because that's the lead-in to Eph. 4. So we can understand how the Holy Spirit is working and how we need to work with the Holy Spirit and how we need to have our minds cleansed, because as never before, with everything out there, there are things that can lodge in our minds just BAM! in a flash of a second. We have that on television. We have it on billboards, we have it in magazines. Everyone is attacked by all the pornography at the checkout stand at the grocery store—right?

Who are the magazines aiming at? *Women*. I think time I found one magazine for men, all women. Of course, Oprah is the big star, but she is a New Age believer. And New Age religion comes from whom? *Not God!* 'The prince of the power of the air.' Oh yes, you can be positive. Oh, yes you can be happy. Oh, yes, you can do all of these things. But always remember—you can come from prosperity to poverty in a split second. That's why we're not to get our minds on physical things or physical emotions and things like that.

God wants us to be filled with all the fullness of God, which will happen at the resurrection, v 20: "Now to Him Who is able... [That means has the power.] ...to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us... [the Holy Spirit, the power] ...to Him *be* glory in the Church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity. Amen." (vs 20-21). So what we're doing is for eternity. Isn't that something?

Let's come to Ephesians 4 and see how all of this fits together, and then how that ties into chapter five and *the washing of the water by the Word*. He was in prison (v 1), and he appeals to them:

Ephesians 4:2: "With all humility and meekness, with long-suffering, forbearing one another in love; being diligent to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (vs 2-3). Now mark that for Eph. 5:25, *washing of the water by the Word*, which is the Word of God, Christ, and the Spirit.

Verse 4: "*There is* one body and one Spirit, even as you were also called in one hope of your calling; One Lord, one faith, one baptism; One God and Father of all, Who *is* over all, and through all, and in you all. But grace was given to each one of us

according to the measure of the gift of Christ" (vs 4-7). This means that we stand in or under the grace of God, from which comes all of the spiritual blessings from God.

Come to Romans 5, because we need to understand about the grace of God even more than we have. That's why we did the series *God's Grace and Commandment-Keeping*. God has called us, not to just keep the commandments, God has called us to be like Him. God has called us to keep all the commandments as motivated and led by the Spirit of God. What God wants is the total conversion of our minds. That's the key.

Romans 5:1: "Therefore, having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." Instead of being at enmity against God, hostile to God, we have peace.

- God the Father loves us
- God the Father has called us
- Christ loves us
- God the Father has forgiven us through the sacrifice of Christ

—and so forth. And then that means we're justified. All of that we have to believe on faith.

Verse 2: "Through Whom [Christ] ...we also have access by faith into this grace in which we stand... [Grace is the state of relationship that we have with God and we are standing in that. We're going to see that sin, constant sin, puts us at the edge of that grace or out of that grace, if we go too far.] ...into this grace in which we stand, and we ourselves boast in *the* hope of the glory of God." Always keeping our mind on

- the Kingdom of God
- the hope of God
- the resurrection
- the return of Christ

—all of that together.

Verse 3: "And not only *this*, but we also boast in tribulations, realizing that tribulation brings forth endurance." What did Jesus say? He didn't say once saved, always saved. He said '*The one who endures to the end, that one shall be saved.*' Now that's the end when Christ returns or the end of our lives when we give up our last breath.

"And endurance *brings forth* character... [And the way you understand character is once you have gone through the trial, once you have endured the trial and you see the hand of God in that trial and what He's been doing, then you can look back and you can see—'yes, that's what God wanted done in my life.' Then you are motivated by that to change—correct? *Yes!*] ...and character *brings forth*

hope. And the hope of God never makes us ashamed because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit... [Again, the power of God.] ...which has been given to us” (vs 4-5). This is what we’re talking about back here in:

Ephesians 4:7: “But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ.... [comes freely] ...For this *very* reason, He says *that* after ascending on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men. Now, He Who ascended, what is it but that He also descended first into the lower parts of the earth? He Who descended is the same one Who also ascended above all the heavens so that He might fulfill all things” (vs 7-10).

This is another way of stating the whole goal and purpose of Christ in our lives. Now then, we come to another important section here. God has chosen men to convey the Truth of God through preaching. God does the working in the minds of people so that they can come to understand God. And then before them is set the choices whether they will begin to obey God, love God, answer the call—all of those things are there.

Verse 11: “And He gave some as apostles, and some prophets, and some evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers.” Now that’s the order in which they came within the Church. This does not imply a hierarchy, but these are functions of those who are elders.

Here’s the purpose, and this is the greatest sin within the Churches of God—the hierarchy, that those ministers think that they have been exalted above the brethren to rule over them with force and cruelty, to extract money from them. God does expect tithing and offering, but God gives it to us to choose to do so in our obedience to Him.

Here is the purpose of it, v 12: “For the perfecting of the saints... [Now that’s a joint project with those who are teaching God’s Word, God’s Spirit as motivated and inspired by Christ Who is the Head of the Church. And that’s how it needs to be.] ...for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” That is the building up and we build on that foundation and that foundation is Christ (1-Cor. 3. We all have our responsibility in that—don’t we? What are we to do? *Let’s see we are to work:*

- work as led by the Holy Spirit of God
- work with the Spirit of God
- work with the Word of God

To what? *To let Christ in us build the character that He wants!*

1-Corinthians 3:11: “For no one is able to lay any other foundation... [That takes away all other

religions—correct? *Absolutely!* All other gods, all other saviors, all other ideas and philosophies—period! They are all swept away as worthless, carnal activities by men who think they’re better than God.] ...no one is able to lay any other foundation besides that which has been laid, which is Jesus Christ. Now, if anyone builds on this foundation... [We have to build, we have to be growing in grace and knowledge. It’s expressed in another way.] ...gold, silver, precious stones... [Now we’re seeing in the economic world the value of gold, silver and precious stones—correct? Those have substance. Those have inherent wealth.] (But) ...wood hay or stubble” (vs 11-12).

What do they make paper out of for their paper money? *Wood, hay and stubble!* Those only have an emotional and psychological value. It can be stated by the government that it’s worth so much. If everybody accepts it, then that’s a psychological value. If you’re smart and you have enough of it, you will take that fiat money and you will buy some gold and silver and have some real wealth.

This pictures varying degrees of character. Notice what it says here v 13: “The work of each one shall be manifested... [Because we’re going to be tried. Like everything else, you test it, you try it, you examine it, and if it’s lacking you improve it—correct? If it needs something else, then you add to it—correct? That’s all part of building on the foundation of Christ.] ...for the day of trial will declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall prove what kind of work each one’s is.”

Everyone has this in their lives individually after they’ve been baptized. This comes, part of life, part of Christian character, part of the works that we have been given to do. Verse 14: “If the work that anyone has built endures, he shall receive a reward.” So there are great rewards to receive.

The Bible doesn’t give us a lot about what those rewards will be, but you know, since this is the work of God in each one of us—and that’s the work of God. Everything the ministry does is the work of the ministry. That’s not the work of God. The work of God is what God is doing in each one of us.

Verse 15: “If the work of anyone is burned up, he shall suffer loss; but *he* himself shall be saved, yet as through fire.” That’s provided one other caveat—*isn’t it?* And what is that other caveat? *That he has not committed the unpardonable sin—correct? Yes!*

Let’s understand the relationship that God has with us today. This is so important in our realizing how we fit in Eph. 4 & 5 together and come to *the washing of the water by the Word.*

Verse 16: “Don’t you understand that you are God’s temple... [With the Spirit of God, He’s dwelling in you.] ...and *that* the Spirit of God is dwelling in you? If anyone defiles the temple of God...” (vs 16-17). That’s why—now mark this carefully and understand it. Once we’re converted and have the Spirit of God within us, the Spirit of God working within us *will expose the sin within*, will make you aware of sinful temptations, so that you can repent.

People without the Spirit of God that doesn’t happen to. If you want to see the utter epitome of the opposite of what we’re talking about here, watch any of the harden-criminal documentaries; watch CNBC where they have this fellow that goes out and they entrap men who are out trying to get young women and young boys. And every one of them knows it’s wrong, but they cannot stop.

Compare that to what would happen in our minds. ‘Oh, God says, we’re not even to look upon a woman to lust after her’—right? What do we do then? *We ask God to cleanse our mind!* Not like these idiots. They walk in and the fellow says, ‘Well, here I am. We’re CNBC and I have a transcript of your texting this girl or this boy. Why did you come here?’ *‘Just to hang out, just to talk.’* Lie! Lie! Lie! ‘Well, I’ve got the transcript here and you said this and this and this.’ *‘Oh, I know it’s wrong. I’ve never done this before.’* And some of them have been caught two or three times.

Just to show you that without the Spirit of God *none* of the changing and growing and overcoming will happen. So he says, v 17: “If anyone defiles the temple of God, God shall destroy him because the temple of God is Holy, which temple you are” (v 17). Which he’s saying, if you go as far as to commit the unpardonable sin, you’re going to burn up in the Lake of Fire.

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Now, let’s continue on right here in Ephesians 4:12: “...for *the* edifying of the body of Christ.” That’s all the brethren, every elder, every apostle, every prophet, evangelist, and I think the best thing we need to do today is not exalt ourselves with titles, because every man who breaks off and starts a new Church of God, he’s some kind of apostle for something. Why doesn’t he just study the Word of God and just be teacher? *Teach the brethren!* That’s what Jesus said He was: a Teacher—right?

Verse 12: “For the perfecting of the saints... [Unless the teachers are growing and overcoming as Paul said to the Jews there in Rom. 2, ‘You who teach others, don’t you teach yourself?'] ...for *the* work of *the* ministry, for *the* edifying of the body of

Christ... [the up-building] ...until we all... [we’re all included in this process—all brethren, all elders] ...come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man...” (vs 12-13).

I’m going to give a sermon on *perfection*. That’s the goal! Not who’s in charge, not how much control someone has, not ruling over the brethren, because then you’re abusing the flock. We, through the Spirit of God and the Word of God, are to help all of us together come to God on our knees, in our lives, in repentance and service and yielding to God to grow in grace and knowledge. The goal is great. The rewards are fantastic, but we have to do it God’s way.

Verse 13: “...unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ.” How much does that take? That means that all of those who are teaching to bring this about, how can you bring it about unless you

- grow in grace and knowledge
- study the Word of God
- apply it to yourself
- explain it to others

“So that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men in *cunning* craftiness...” (v 14). That’s political aspects within the Church of God. What did Paul say later to the Church of Ephesus there, Acts 20? He said feed the flock whom Christ, the Holy Spirit has purchased through Christ. And he told them, ‘I know that grievous wolves are going to come in and even among you will arise those who will leave God.’

That’s why if there is a sin, you must have a spiritual solution. There may be some physical things you need to do as well, but you have to have the mental and the spiritual inner repentance and resolve and ability with the Word of God, with the Holy Spirit of God then, to let *the washing of the water by the Word*—Christ in you—to clean you up inside.

But notice this, v 15: “But holding the truth in love... [Not our own ideas, not our own ways, the Truth, the Word of God is true. The commandments are true, God is true.] ...may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ.” There’s a lifetime of growth. There’s a lifetime of overcoming. And this is what we’re to continue to do. Remember what Paul wrote to the Hebrews. ‘In the time that you ought to be teachers, you have need of milk again.’

Notice what God wants. Here is the whole working of it, v 16: “From Whom all the body, fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every

joint supplies... [we all have something to supply] ...according to *its* inner working..." That is of the Holy Spirit within us.

- This is how there is change.
- This is how there is growth.
- This is how we overcome.

...*its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love" (v 16). Use that as a measure of your life. Use that as a measure of growing and overcoming. This is how it's to be done. Now we get into the things we should not do, because those interfere with *the washing of the water by the Word*.

Verse 17: "So then, I declare and testify this in *the* Lord that you are no longer to walk even as the rest of *the* Gentiles are walking, in *the* vanity of their minds... [Don't be like the world. Don't be like the religions of the world.] ...Having *their* understanding darkened..." (vs 17-18).

Now let me explain something that's very interesting. Come to the Gospel of John, chapter three. I want to explain something to you which will help you understand why people cannot see themselves walking into apostasy, but they are.

After He says that God so loved the world, gave His only begotten son, etc. John 3:18. "The one who believes in Him is not judged... [Because you have repented. You cannot believe in Christ without repenting. It's that simple.] ...but the one who does not believe has already been judged because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." That belief must continue to go on. You must have faith, hope and love—where? *To the end!*

"And this is the judgment: that the Light has come into the world... [Who is Christ] ...but men loved darkness rather than the Light because their works were evil" (v 19). That's why they hate God. They want to continue in their sins. If they can't reform God to their ways, they'll go on their ways and continue in their sins. Whereas Paul, back in Eph. 4 said you're not to do that. .

"For everyone who practices evil hates the light, and does not come to the light, so that his works may not be exposed; but the one who practices the Truth comes to the Light..." (vs 20-21). It means exactly what it says. If you're living by the Truth and practicing the Truth:

- you're coming to Christ everyday
- you're coming to the Father everyday
- you're growing everyday
- you're changing everyday

"...so that his works may be manifested, that they have been accomplished by the *power of God*" (v 21)—or *in* God, or *through* God, and it's by His power.

What happens if you stop coming to the Light, if you stop coming to Christ, if you stop or you turn a little bit from the Light? Remember, half a degree over 12,000 miles is going to leave you many miles off course at the other end—correct? Here's a phenomena that happens when people leave the Truth. They still have enough Truth in them that they think they're still in the Light.

It's just like, we have lights here, if you turn your back to the light, you can see where the light is still ahead of you shining from back behind you. So you think you're in the light, but you're not. You're walking away from the light. What happens? *Sooner or later you walk away it gets dimmer and dimmer and dimmer*. POOF! Darkness! That's what happens to people.

They can turn around at some place on that journey away from the Light and come back through repentance, if they would. But this is how people are deceived when they first start leaving God. Then Satan comes along and he goes, 'Here's an idea.' 'Oh, *that's a good idea.*' BOOP! There's another idea. 'Oh, *look at that.*'

A lot of these Sunday-keepers are converted. How can they be when they're never in covenant with Christ? They may have some of the Bible. They may have some of the Truth, but if they are coming to the Light, which exposes Sunday, Christmas, Easter, and all of that, then they would repent—would they not? Since they don't, they have no light in them. That's what happens. This is what Paul is warning about and this is why we need to be aware of what it is with *the washing of the water by the Word*.

So here's what happens. Let's come back here to Ephesians 4:17; you see the progression. "...walking in *the* vanity of their minds." If something comes along, 'Oh, this is an idea,' compare it with the Word of God. You don't get lifted up in the vanity of your minds. How many times have we right here and also on my trips gone to 2-Chron. 32 about Hezekiah, because he got lifted up in heart, God left him. Vanity of your minds; that's what he got lifted up in.

What happens then? Verse 18: "Having *their* understanding darkened... [That's the next step. You see the progression.] ...being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardness of their hearts." So then your heart becomes hardened.

What's the next step? "They have cast off all feelings, *and* have given themselves up to licentiousness, to work every uncleanness with insatiable desire" (v 19). For those of you not in California, see if you can get some kind of documentary showing the abominations of Sunset Boulevard, Sunset and Vine, and Hollywood Boulevard on Friday night. You will see, yes, they have given themselves over to uncleanness with insatiable desire. That's the whole point of rock music and rap music, and pornography, and lying and cheating and stealing, and all of these things.

Paul says, v 20: "But you have not so learned Christ." Because what is the result of v 17-19, those three verses?

- a grace that is not from God
- a grace to commit sin
- a grace of license to do evil

'You have not so learned Christ.' Now let's see what we are to do and how this builds up toward Eph. 5:25.

Verse 21: "If indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, according to *the* Truth in Jesus: That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man... [That's all a part of what we learned during Unleavened Bread. So yes, we're to put out sin, but eating the unleavened bread means we put in righteousness, not just putting out sin. Because if you put out sin, then what you're doing, you're leaving a vacuum. *You have to put in righteousness!*] ...you put off the old man, which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts" (vs 21-22).

What is the great Achilles heel of human nature? *Self-deception*—right? 'There is a way that seems right to a man, but the ends thereof are the way of death'—right? Think about it. Every human being is destructive. They may not have killed, per se, but they've hated and murdered in their minds. Look at the world. Look at all the destruction. Look at everything that is going on. *Everything ends up in destruction and every man is a walking lie!* Every woman is a walking lie. Let me just a little side bar here for all women if you've been bitten with the bug of feminism.

Who was the Creator of mankind? Let's go back to Adam and Eve. We won't use 'mankind,' because that's how *NIV* does it today.

- Who is the Creator of Adam and Eve from whom all men and women have come? *Jesus Christ!*
- Who is the Savior of men and women? *Jesus Christ!*
- Does He know the minds of women as well as the minds of men? *Yes!*

- Are both carnal and sinful? *Yes!*

Look at the great fallen idol of the pious Osama bin Laden. Now they know he was addicted, not only to his four wives, but pornography. All human endeavor leads to destruction. If it doesn't lead to destruction, it leads to an end of life, because God put in us the law of death. So we need to understand that.

So here's what we are to do. "That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man... [How do you do that? *Through the washing of the water by the Word!*] ...which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind" (vs 22-23). That is the whole key. That is the whole reason for *the washing of the water by the Word* and this is the spiritual process of conversion within.

You cannot make people righteous by shouting at them that they're sinners. Everyone has to repent, him or herself—correct? *Yes!* That's why we have the Word of God today. We can study—can't we? *Yes!*

"And that you put on the new man, which according to God is created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth" (v 24).

- you put out the lies
- you put out the deception

***You put in the Truth!***

- you put out self,
- you put out the ideas of Satan,
- you put out the ideas of men

***You put in Christ and the Word of God through the washing of the water by the Word!***

Now notice v 25 down through v 30. These become important because this tells us the Achilles heels that we still have and that we still get involved with. Verse 25: "Therefore, let each one put away lies *and* speak the truth with his neighbor... [To the world, that would be a novel idea—right? *Yes!*] ...because we are members of one another." So quit deceiving yourself. It talks about deceitful lusts, up here. Quit kidding yourself. And that is the rationalization of inner thought to justify your own sinful behavior. Isn't that correct? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 26: "When you become angry, do not sin... [There's a righteous indignation. We'll look at some of the Proverbs a little later and see about anger. It says stay away from the furious man lest you become like him.] ...do not sin. Do not let the sun go down on your anger." It'll keep you awake all night. And there are certain things: anger, bitterness, hatred, and things, which we'll expound a



little bit more. are in the hidden recesses of the mind that you have to get out.

Last week I talked about getting out from underneath the real big ones, such as rape or incest, abuse, all of those things. Abuse by parents, abuse by siblings, abuse by employers, abuse by churches. Those things cause scars and hurts and you need to get those out as well, all of them.

Because here's why, v 27: "Neither give place to the devil." You've gotten rid of him through repentance and baptism, but do not open the door for him again. That's why chapter two says 'the prince of the power of the air.' Don't give him an entrance again.

Verse 28: "Let the one who stole, steal no more; rather, let him labor with his hands, working at what is good, so that he may impart *something* to the one who has need. Do not let any corrupt communication come out of your mouth..." (vs 28-29). That's a challenge—isn't it? Let me just tell you this. The more that you put away these things and the more that you're away from them, if you start channel-surfing and go through the channel-surfing, you're going to see that almost everything on television is based on some kind of sin and some kind of lie and some kind of Satanic deception. And that affects us.

"...but that which is good and needful for edification that it may give grace to those who hear.... [v 30 tells us something very important. I'm going to re-adjust the translation here for the next printing of the Bible and it will read]: ...Do not vex [grieve] the Holy Spirit..." (vs 29-30). Because 'grieve' has a connotation that this is a person, but it's the power of God.

"Do not vex [grieve] the Holy Spirit of God by which you have been sealed for *the* day of redemption" (v 30). What are we talking about by vexing, that is working at cross-purposes with the Holy Spirit in us? What is working at cross-purposes of the Holy Spirit? *The very things we just read!* Lying, anger, giving place to the devil, stealing, corrupt communication, those are working at cross-purposes of the Holy Spirit, because the Holy Spirit is what?

- the Spirit of Truth
- the Spirit of love
- the Spirit of change
- the power of God

—to convert you.

So I'm going to put a little footnote in there to explain it that you're working at cross-purposes. You *vex* the Holy Spirit of God within you or *frustrate* it, because the Holy Spirit comes from God

and the Holy Spirit within you communicates to God. You've got the spots of these sins *vexing* the Holy Spirit of God. Because this is what you have been sealed for the day of redemption. That ties right back here to Eph. 1:13-14, sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.

Here are other things which we will get into details concerning, which is this, because this also vexes the Holy Spirit. This also puts things in your minds where you are not going to be forgiving. And forgiving people their sins—not holding grudges; not being jealous; not being envious—all of those things work against the working of the Holy Spirit in your mind.

"Let all bitterness, and indignation, and wrath, and clamor, and evil speaking be removed from you, together with all malice" (v 31).

Let's come back here to Matthew 18. Let's see what Christ says needs to happen. You know it's the parable of the man who had ten thousand talents and God forgave him. What did he do? *He went out and found one man who owed him a hundred silver coins and couldn't pay it!*

- after he had compassion
- after he received forgiveness
- after he received mercy
- after he had all of that debt forgiven

Matthew 18:28: "Then that servant went out *and* found one of his fellow servants, who owed him a hundred silver coins; and after seizing him, he choked *him*, saying, 'Pay me what you owe.' As a result, his fellow servant fell down at his feet and pleaded with him... [almost the same words] ...saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' But he would not *listen*... [not forgiving] ...instead, he went and cast him into prison, until he should pay the amount that he owed. Now, when his fellow servants saw the things that had taken place, they were greatly distressed; and they went to their lord and related all that had taken place" (vs 28-31).

Judgment day is going to come. This is telling us there's a time that God is going to call us into judgment concerning our carnal attitudes and ways. *We must forgive!* I've seen even documentaries where the command to forgive was used to help heal the wounds of the survivors who had a family member murdered and the murderer. Have you ever seen any of those? Where they go in and over a period of meetings the one who perpetrated the crime repents and the ones who were victimized by it *forgive*. And it lifts a great burden from the mind. When you don't forgive, it's like plunging your brain into the ocean with a huge iron anvil. That's also called *depression*.

A lot of depression is brought about, some can be physical, some can be nutritional, but most of its caused by wrong thinking, lack of forgiveness, hatred, bitterness.

Here he wouldn't listen, so now the day of judgment comes, v 32: "Then his lord called him *and* said to him, 'You wicked servant, I forgave you all that debt, because you implored me.... ['You were on your knees crying right in front of me. Saying, 'Oh, I don't have anything to pay, how can I pay it?'] ...Were you not also obligated to have compassion on your fellow servant, even as I had compassion on you?'" (vs 32-33).

Everyone wants his or her sins forgiven, but are you willing to forgive the other person? Sometimes those who have perpetrated things against you that you still have in the back of your mind have died. So you have to forgive them before God and that will help relieve your mind from that burden. You cannot have your mind converted when you leave a section of your mind for bitterness and hatred and envy and jealousy and greed, and all of this sort of this, because it *vexes* or *works against* or cross-purposes with the Holy Spirit.

Sooner or later it's going to catch up with you. Verse 34: "And in anger, his lord delivered him up to the tormentors, until he should pay all that he owed to him. Likewise shall My heavenly Father also do to you, if each *of* you does not forgive his brother's offenses from the heart" (vs 34-35).

It's not like this, 'Will you forgive me?' 'Yeah, I'll forgive you.'<sup>(grumbling and grudgingly)</sup>. Is that the kind of forgiveness you want from God? *Sooner or later!* Let's see what we are to do instead of that. Here's how we change that behavior. This has to come from God. This has to come from His Spirit, because God's Spirit is to work within us and we are to use God's Spirit.

Ephesians 4:32: "And be kind *and* tenderhearted toward one another, forgiving one another, even as God has also in Christ forgiven you." That's why we need to remember, 'Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy.'

You will find this: when you do forgive and you do it from the heart and you really mean it—it may be something stuck in your craw, so-to-speak, for so long that it's going to take some time to really attain the forgiveness that you need. But keep at it. It will come. You can't say, 'Oh, God, forgive him. I forgive him, amen.' No, you have to ask God please cleanse my mind. Please cleanse that out of my mind.

Just like if there is a sin—like on a stuck record—repeating itself in your mind. It keeps

coming back on you. Then you really pray and ask God to cleanse your mind and get it out of your mind. Study the Word of God and put God's Word in there to have that replace what your mind has malfunctioned on. Because when we change our thinking, and with God's Spirit we change physically, our brains so we don't think in the same way. That's what conversion is all about.

Now notice how we accomplish this, Ephesians 5:1: "**Therefore, be imitators of God...**" Think of that! That's our standard! So how is God?

- God is merciful
- God is kind
- His mercy endures forever

Right? Go back and study 2-Chronicles 33 and the companion chapter there in 2-Kings 24 about Manasseh. Look at everything that that man did and it gradually got worse over the period of his 55-year reign.

I cannot conceive of having Obama reign for 55 years over us, but I would have to say that that's probably very akin to what happened to the children of Israel. And what happened? *They all got swept up in it themselves, too!* If he came to you and asked for forgiveness, would you forgive him? He dealt with demons, put his children through the fire to Moloch, built idols in the temple, all the host of heaven. Set up booths for homosexuals, right on the temple ground. Shed a lot of innocent blood in Jerusalem. Well, God finally sent him off into captivity to Assyria. That's when the Assyrians were controlling Babylon.

Guess what he did in prison? *He repented!* God forgave him and God restored him to the throne as a vassal king. Because he probably made the promises, 'Oh, God, if You'll forgive me, if You'll ever let me go back to Jerusalem, I know that's probably impossible, but if You ever will, I promise You that when I get back there I'll destroy every idol. I'll take down everything that I ever put up. I will renounce the putting of children through the fire to Moloch.' So, that's what he did. He went back and did that.

Stop and think! Who is it that you haven't forgiven? Who is still in the back of your mind that occupies a place in your mind that you have no forgiveness? You have to answer that question. You have to examine that before God yourself so you can see what you need to do.

Verse 1: "Therefore, be imitators of God, as beloved children; and walk in love, even as Christ also loved us, and gave Himself for us *as* an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savor" (vs 1-2). Oh, we want to go to God and say, 'Oh,

God, apply the shed blood of Jesus Christ to my sins,' and then get up off our knees and still hate someone. Get up off our knees and still have bitterness in our mind, envy in our minds, jealousy in our minds. You can't be double minded. We'll talk about that a little bit later here in the next one.

Verse 3: "But fornication and all uncleanness or covetousness, do not permit it even to be named among, as is fitting for saints... [Isn't that the problem that people find in most churches? *They're all hypocrites and doing these things—right? Yes!* And even in the Church of God—right? *Yes!*] ...nor filthiness, nor foolish talking or jesting, which are not becoming; but instead, thanksgiving" (vs 3-4).

That's how we are to have our behavior changed. ***This is what the washing of the water by the Word is going to do. It's going to clean you!*** Having cleansed it, that is the Church, and He does it each part by each part, each person ***by the washing of the water by the Word!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Ephesians 5:25-26
- 2) Ephesians 1:1-5, 7, 9-10, 13-14
- 3) Ephesians 2:1-3, 9-10, 20-22
- 4) Ephesians 3:14-21
- 5) Ephesians 4:2-7
- 6) Romans 5:1-5
- 7) Ephesians 4:7-12
- 8) 1-Corinthians 3:11-17
- 9) Ephesians 4:12-18
- 10) John 3:18-21
- 11) Ephesians 4:17-31
- 12) Matthew 18:28-35
- 13) Ephesians 4:32
- 14) Ephesians 5:1-4

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Deuteronomy 28
- Leviticus 26
- *Colossians 1:27*
- Matthew 13
- Jeremiah 18
- Ephesians 4:1; 5:25
- Romans 2
- Acts 20
- 2-Chronicles 32, 33
- 2-Kings 24

Also referenced: Sermon Series: *God's Grace and Commandment-Keeping*