

## Passover Preparation IV

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This is *Passover Preparation #4* and we finished last time through John 14. We're going through John 14, 15, 16 and 17. In chapters 14 and 15 we'll go in much more detail than we will the others and in particularly John 17, because John 17 is Christ's prayer and there's not too much in the way of comment that you want to add to that, after all that is *His* prayer.

So, let's begin in John 15 and what we need to understand is this: ***that God wants us to have a direct living relationship with Him through the power of the Spirit.*** That's what God wants:

- based upon faith
- based upon hope
- based upon love

That's what God desires. He doesn't want 'religion' because 'religion' puts you into a corporate relationship with a church entity and puts you into a laity ecclesiastical hierarchical relationship with the church leaders. *God doesn't want that!* He wants a direct, living relationship with Him by the power of the Holy Spirit through the Word of God, through prayer, through study, through how you live, how you think, how you conduct your life in all of that. We are going to see as the Days of Unleavened Bread teach us that it is all a part of *being perfected*, and that's the important thing we need to understand.

John 15 1: "I am the true vine, and My Father is the husbandman.... [It is a collective work that they do together, as we showed last time, through the power of the Holy Spirit.] ...He takes away every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit..." (vs 1-2). With a living dynamic direct relationship with God the Father and Jesus Christ you are going to be continually growing, continually overcoming. He does not want you to stagnate.

- God is the One Who handles all of these things and these problems.
- God is the One Who makes the decision, ultimately.

That's why that if someone is excommunicated out of a synagogue or out of a church that doesn't mean they're cut off from God. In some cases it may mean the opposite. God is the One Who does the final work. No man is going to do this work of God because Christ is the vine, the Father is the husbandman.

"...every branch in Me *that* does not bear fruit... [He takes away.] ...but He cleanses each one

that bears fruit, in order that it may bear **more** fruit" (v 2). You might put there that is ***the whole purpose and object of trials.***

Around here, living in wine country, you're very familiar with the vines. Every year they trim back the vines. You can tell how old the vineyard is by the size of the trunk of the grape plant. The bigger the trunk the older the vineyard, and probably the greater the quality of the grapes, and hence the quality of the wine. If you take a grapevine, of which we have one that we have for kind of an arbor over a little garden area that we have in our backyard. We just let it grow so we have shade and it covers so we have these 20-foot long vine branches going out. Well, every year *bingo*, here come all these new green grapes. But they never produce anything because the vine has not been pruned.

So, the pruning that God does is to get rid of human nature so that you can produce more spiritual fruit. It's so simple that He puts it in the terms of the vineyard. Now let's look at *our part* on cleansing. We have our part. He stirs us up with the Holy Spirit. He takes away our sins when we repent. And here's how we are cleansed. The cleansing is not a haphazard thing. It is not a partial thing. If your attitude is right and you're wholehearted toward God and you love God, it's going to be a complete work.

As we all need to realize we're all a work in progress. Every year, just like the husbandman goes out to the vineyard and he trims off all the old dead branches so that it can have new branches in the spring and hence new fruit, so likewise, every year we go through the same process with the Passover so that we renew the covenant and we have that standing before God. This becomes a very important thing in relationship to whether you have a personal one-to-one direct, living relationship with God, or whether you play church, or attend church, or have 'religion,' or whatever it may be.

1-John 1:6 "If we proclaim that we have fellowship with Him, but we are walking in the darkness, we are lying to ourselves, and we are not practicing the Truth." Why? *Because if you walk in the light you're going to be doing something very profound!* There is something that you will always be doing regardless of your sin, regardless of your fault, regardless of your trial and difficulty that you are going through. Here is what you are always going to be doing: *you're not going to be walking in darkness.*

John 3:17<sub>[transcriber's correction]</sub>: "For God sent not

His Son into the world that He might judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.” That’s the whole goal of what God wants. Ultimately the unrepentant sinners will have condemned themselves.

Verse 18: “The one who believes in Him is not judged, 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. And this is the judgment: that the light has come into the world, but men loved darkness rather than the light because their works were evil” (vs 18-19).

You can’t be walking in darkness and saying that you have fellowship with God. You cannot be a Buddhist and have fellowship with God; you cannot be a Moslem and have fellowship with God; you cannot be a Catholic and have fellowship with God; and the Protestants probably have a half-hearted beginning fellowship with God, etc.—because Christ is *the Way, the Truth, and the Life* and there is no other way. He also says, ‘*I am the Light of the world.*’

Verse 20: “For everyone who practices evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light so that his works may not be exposed.” He doesn’t want to change, or he does not want to discover that his human nature is inherently evil and poisonous by nature and that it needs to be changed.

Verse 21: “But the **one who practices the Truth comes to the Light...**” This shows it’s a continuous ongoing thing that you do. You are doing the Truth, you are practicing the Truth, you are coming to the Light, and Christ is the Light. You are continually coming to Him, and this is what it’s all about; this is what the New Covenant is all about, and this is what our relationship with God is all about.

“...so that his works may be manifested, that they have been accomplished by *the power of God*” (v 21). In other words, the fruits of the Spirit of God (Gal. 5:22): love, hope, joy, peace, longsuffering, temperance, goodness, meekness, ‘against such there is no law.’

Let’s come back to 1-John 1 and finish this section here concerning cleansing and so forth and how God does this. It’s really a wonderful and marvelous thing. This is all a part of our relationship and standing with God.

1-John 1:7: “However, if we walk in the light, as He is in the light... [John 3, because we are coming to the Light] ...*then* we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ, His own Son, cleanses us from all sin.” That’s the whole purpose of the Passover, that’s the whole purpose of the words that Jesus is talking about—to cleanse

you—but more important to keep you in a covenant relationship with God so that you have opportunity to have your sins continually cleansed through Christ Who is our propitiation. That is the act of grace under which we live.

Verse 8: “If we say that we do not have sin... [a sinful nature] ...we are deceiving ourselves, and the Truth is not in us.” Isn’t it interesting that those people who believe that men are inherently good rather than inherently evil, they have no room for the Truth of God? These are living things. The Word of God is living; it applies everywhere, at all times, in all circumstances.

Verse 9: “If we confess our own sins... [and this does not mean to the priest, but to God] ...He is faithful and righteous, to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” That’s how the relationship with God works. That’s why Jesus said, ‘Now you are clean through the words which I have spoken.’

- you believe them
- you act upon them
- you live with them
- it’s part of your being

That puts us in the standing with God that there is no condemnation of the fact that we have human nature. That’s the *individual work*.

There’s the also the *collective work*. Jesus said, ‘Go into all the world and make disciples of all nations, teaching them whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you till the end of the age.’ It’s still being done through the Word of God. If we are preaching what God has spoken, then we are giving you what God would give you if He were to talk in your ear, and likewise with the words of Christ and the writings of the apostles, because He said, ‘You would be witnesses for Me to the ends of the earth.’

That could only be accomplished through having the New Testament written, because they didn’t get to the ends of the earth. They covered a gigantic area, but even they didn’t know until a few years before they died, with the exception of the Apostle John, that time was going to go on way beyond their lifetimes. They didn’t know that until the last few years.

This is why God does it. When you have a trial or you are overcoming human nature and you have this spiritual battle within, know that God is doing this to cleanse you. That’s why there is repentance, that’s why there is prayer, that’s why we ask everyday, ‘Forgive us our sins and our debts.’

John 15:3: “You are already clean through the word that I have spoken to you.” How does that

work? How do the words cleanse you? *It's accomplished through the power of the Holy Spirit!*

The Holy Spirit is likened unto water, John 7:37: "Now, in the last day, the great *day* of the Feast, Jesus stood and called out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. The one who believes in Me, as the scripture has said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, which those who believed in Him would soon receive; for *the* Holy Spirit was not yet *given* because Jesus was not yet glorified" (vs 37-39).

Now let's come to Ephesians 5 and see what the Holy Spirit and the words do together and how it's phrased here—very interesting expression. And he's talking concerning Christ and the Church.

Ephesians 5:25: "Husbands, love your own wives, in the same way that Christ also loved the church, and gave Himself for it; so that He might sanctify it... [Here's what Christ is doing to the Church: sanctifying her, or that is making it Holy] ...having cleansed *it*... [He said, 'Now you're clean through the words which I have spoken'] ...with the washing of water by *the* Word" (vs 25-26).

Very interesting process that takes place— isn't it. Why? *When you confess your sins and repent to God, you study the Word of God, you feel relieved!* Have you ever felt greatly relieved when you really know that you have repented? What is that relief? *That is a cleansing!* That's what that is. When Jesus said, 'You are clean through the words which I have spoken to you'; because of that then here is a direct, living relationship. All of this is building to what we find in John 17.

John 15:4. "Dwell in Me..." It's a living and dwelling relationship. It's direct because He is the vine and we are the branches and we are dwelling in Him. I mean, you can't get any more direct than that, can you? *No!*

"...and I in you.... [that's by the power of the Holy Spirit] ...As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself... [means the impossibility of having the power to produce any spiritual fruit on your own; it can't do it of itself] ...but **only if it remains in the vine**... [Christ is the vine] ...neither *can* you bear fruit unless you are **dwelling** in Me" (v 4). The words: *dwell, remain, dwelling*, because all of those are reflective of the same Greek verbs.

Verse 5: "I am the vine, *and you are* the branches..." Many people never understand that and come up and proclaim that they are God. You know like Yahweh ben Yahweh, remember that down in Florida some 15 years ago? It ended up that he really thought he was God, and he authorized other people to kill people that he didn't like. *No!*

Verse 5: "I am the vine, *and you are* the branches..." The pope ought to learn that. He's not in place of Christ. As a matter of fact he's another plant. You might say the wild vine, not connected to Christ at all.

"...The one who is **dwelling** in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit... [all the fruits of the Spirit, all the things we need to do] ...because apart [severed] from Me you can do nothing" (v 5). That's why no one can do the work of God without Christ in him. Many have tried to do the work of God. Let God do the work in you, and then let Him do His work through you if that's what God wants.

Now let's look again at this situation concerning *dwelling in Christ*. Sometimes dwelling in Christ we find ourselves in a nonproductive way—don't we? That also fits into the parable of the ten virgins, they all slumbered and slept. This shows that there is sometimes need for a revival.

Luke 13:6: "And He spoke this parable: 'A certain *man* had planted a fig tree in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit on it, but he did not find *any*. Then he said to the vinedresser, "Look *here!* For three years I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree and have not found *any*. Cut it down. Why should it *continue* to waste *space* in the ground?"' But he answered *and* said to him, "Sir, let it alone this year also, until I dig about it and put *in* manure"" (vs 6-8).

Sometimes we need some digging and dunging. God will inspire us to do that if we go astray from God for an extended period of time. It's three years he's been coming. But the digging and dunging also shows the mercy of God, that He doesn't want to give up on us.

You might say that the man who owned the fig tree in the vineyard was God the Father, and the man who was tending the garden was Christ. So, Christ says: 'No, don't cut this one off yet, don't dig it up yet. Let's dig and dung.' If you need a little 'd-n-d' in your life, dig out the sin and dung in the Word of God for a spiritual fertilizer to get you to produce some good things.

Verse 9: "And *see* if in fact it will bear fruit; but if not, after that you shall cut it down." This ties right in with the parable concerning God the Father, because when we started out here it says, 'Every branch in Me that does not bear fruit He takes away.' This is of God the Father.

John 15:6: "**If** anyone does not  **dwell** in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up..." We've seen this operation take place within the Church of God—haven't we? *Yes, indeed!* The scattering can be likened unto the hoeing and dunging. How are the

fruits going to be produced then? What is going to happen if you are not in Christ?

Verse 6: “If anyone does not **dw**ell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up...” We’ve seen that happen to people, too—haven’t we? In the history of the Church that I read in a book by Gipp. He is a staunch Baptist that believes that there is absolutely nothing wrong whatsoever with the translation of the *King James Version*.

He has a good insight into churches, which is this: Churches start out evangelical, that is, like going and preaching the Gospel to the world and so forth. Then they grow and they reach a certain stage of growth. Then they begin developing into institutions. That is, they begin building buildings and schools, and people are attracted to these things because it’s an institution.

Well, that happened to us, for those of you who were in Worldwide Church of God—correct? *Yes!* It became an institution and people were attracted to the institution rather than being called of God. You had a lot of branches hanging in there that weren’t rooted in Christ, but they were rooted in the institution and in the corporation. They were not only members but also ministers, because the ministry became a job *rather than a service* to the people. It was for the value of a living and paycheck rather than for the value of teaching people the way of God.

So, there has to be these prunings and trimmings. There has to be these hoeings and dungings because that’s the way we are going to be tested and tried and proved, or disproved. Sometimes when you meet people who have been cast off as a branch that has withered up, and you meet them and talk to them (maybe you meet them in the mall, you’re shopping, or in the grocery store) and it is just like talking to a dead branch—isn’t it? Sometimes even the comment has been made, by some who have known severe cases of this that, you look into their eyes and their eyes are virtually dead. These are living things that we are going through.

Verse 6: “**I**f anyone does not **dw**ell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up; and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are burned. **I**f you **dw**ell in Me... [the branch and the vine] ...and My words **dw**ell in you...” (vs 6-7). That’s where it has to be because that’s the whole purpose of the covenant—isn’t it? Isn’t that the whole purpose as to why God has called us? That’s the reason we renew the covenant so that the words of Christ can dwell in us, because humanly speaking *without the Spirit of God there is no place in our minds for the Word of God*, because our carnal nature is made of such a way that unless we are converted there is no room for God.

“...My words dwell in you...” (v 7). There’s a way that they get there. I’ll tell you one thing, you never have the Word of God dwelling in you unless you study it—can you? How do you get what is in your mind unless you put it in there? I have not baptized anyone and attached a funnel hole so that after they are baptized we can stick a funnel there and just run it in. It doesn’t happen!

It’s a process! It is a perfecting! That’s why it is a living relationship. But here in Hebrews 10:16: “This *is* the covenant that I will establish with them after those days,’ says *the* Lord: ‘I will give My laws into their hearts, and I will inscribe them in their minds.’” You might put: if you desire them. God isn’t going to force it upon anyone. He’s given that choice to us. If we choose to do so He will write them in our hearts and our minds.

Verse 17: “‘And their sins and lawlessness I will not remember ever again.’ Now, where remission of these *is*, *it is* no longer *necessary to offer* [animal] sacrifices for sin.... [That’s the meaning of it because you have the sacrifice of Christ.] ...Therefore, brethren, having confidence to enter into the *true* holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which He consecrated for us through the veil (that is, His flesh)...” (vs 17-20).

This again shows a living relationship. And if the words of Christ are dwelling in us, or living in us, and they are written in our hearts and our minds by the washing of the water by the Word through the power of the Holy Spirit by prayer: by study, by faith, and by living God’s way/ *That’s the whole process of what you call conversion*.

That’s different than belonging to a church where you zoom in and in 45 minutes all is said and done and you are out the door and that’s it until next week. That is distinctly playing church. It’s not what you *do* when you come into the assembly of the building called a church, because *you, as part of the vine, are the Church*. It’s what you do constantly with your life everyday. This is *quite profound!*

John 15:7: “If you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire...” That has to be according to the will of God.

- You don’t ask God to sin for you, if I could put it that way.
- You don’t ask God to do something, that if you did, would be sin. Y
- You don’t say, ‘God, kill my enemy.’
- You say, ‘God, I commit to you the judgment of my enemy.’

It’s a different thing—isn’t it? God will take care of your enemies. I’ve had enemies come after me. God

has taken care of them *in His own way*. So, this ‘whatever you desire’ has to be according to God’s will. But the greatest desire that we need to have is to be in the Kingdom of God—right? *That’s the greatest desire above everything else!*

“...And it shall come to pass for you. In this... [or by this means] ...is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples” (vs 7-8). There’s the individual fruit of personal growth and overcoming. There’s the individual fruit of doing the work that God wants done by those who are teachers and leaders, and so forth.

Once the fruit has been produced let’s not make a mistake. Here’s the Laodicean mistake and it has disastrous results, Luke 12:15: “And He said to them, ‘Watch out, and keep yourselves from covetousness...’” That’s something we need to be aware of today more than anything else, because there are more things out there you desire that can be had that you can get. If you have them don’t set your heart on them. Be thankful, appreciate them, take care of them, thank God for them, but don’t set your heart on them because they’re all temporary.

“...for no one’s life is in the abundance of the things that he possesses.’... [Is that talking about our age or not? *Yes, it is!*] ...Then He spoke a parable to them, saying, ‘The ground of a certain rich man brought forth abundantly’” (vs 15-16).

When we have an increase in fruits or growth or whatever, let’s not do as the rich man did. Instead of giving credit to God and maybe perhaps giving it to those who had need, he became very selfish. It’s like the one man that I related to you that I was riding in his car, which was a Rolls Royce, the big expensive model, and he looked at me and said, ‘I don’t believe in tithing.’ I about fell on the floor. Very similar attitude here—isn’t it?

Verse 17: “And he was reasoning within himself...” He didn’t pray to God and ask for guidance—did he? We’ve all done it—haven’t we? We’ve all thought within ourselves and made our own decisions without praying about it and what happens? It doesn’t come out right—does it?

“...saying, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to lay up my fruit?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my granaries and build greater ones, and there will I lay up all my produce and my good things. Then I will say to my soul... [you’ve got it made, buddy] ...“Soul, you have many good things laid up for many years; take your rest, eat, drink, and be merry”’” (v 19).

We’ve seen that on the stock market recently—haven’t we? Everybody poured their money into all of these things and it was all a lie,

and all ballooned up, and many people said, ‘Hurray, I’ve got it made, I’m going to retire.’ And BAM! it’s gone. A very similar thing.

Verse 20: “But God said to him, ‘Fool, this night your soul shall be required of you; and to whom will you leave what you have prepared for yourself?’” Who are they going to go to? A rich man never wants to leave it, but he can never take it. And even the Pharaoh’s who figured: ‘Well, I’ll take it with me in my pyramid.’ The thief figured out how to get in and take it anyway. At the funeral of a rich man someone said, ‘Well how much did he leave?’ And someone looked at him and said, ‘All of it.’

So then, here’s the lesson, v 21: “So *shall it be to the one who lays up treasure for himself, and is not rich toward God.*” You have to be rich in faith. It doesn’t matter what your personal wealth is. Personal wealth is not going to get anybody into the Kingdom of God. *Spiritual riches* will!

If you bear much fruit, give God all the credit because you couldn’t do it without Him anyway. Besides, if we understand that we’re just sojourners here in the earth, and that is we just have custodianship over what has been given. In other words we’re just stewards. God owns it anyway. You can hold and possess gold and silver but God says, ‘All the gold and all the silver is Mine.’ You can own lands and properties and houses but God says, ‘The earth and the fullness thereof is Mine.’ If we produce fruit spiritually then that is a great and marvelous thing and so shall you be the disciples of Christ.

Notice how He gives us hope through His love, John 15 9: “As the Father has loved Me... [you can’t have any greater love than that] ...I also have loved you; live in My love.” That has the same meaning as ‘dwells.’ We have *dwelling, dwelling, dwell*, now we have *live*: “...live in My love.” That’s the ultimate of what we are to do. That’s what the perfection of things that we go through are to do.

When you go through sorrow and difficulty and problems and traumas and desperations, that is all to teach you the value of the love of God, because then you realize that the love of God is the only great and remaining and lasting thing that there is— isn’t that true? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 10: “**If** you keep My commandments... [that goes right back to John 14:13, ‘If you love Me, keep My commandments’] ...you shall live in My love...” It’s an ongoing thing. 1-John 5 says, ‘Herein is the love of God, that we love the children of God and keep His commandments, and His commandments are not

grievous. This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments.'

"...**live** in My love..." (v 10). That's the hardest thing because we as human beings have a nature that is bent on carnality and hatred and sin, and so this is a complete opposite thing that God is expecting us to do, which He knows that we can't do without His Spirit, and that we can't accomplish without living within Him and always remaining in the vine.

"...just as I have kept My Father's commandments and live in His love.... [That's the relationship.] ...These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you... [We're going to be dwelling in Him, His Spirit in us, His words in us, and now His joy in us.] ...and *that* your joy may be full. This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you" (vs 10-12). He said that back in John 13:34. The commandments fall in this order:

- love God with all your heart, mind, soul and being
- love the brethren as Christ has loved them
- love your neighbor as yourself
- love your enemy

There are the four descending orders of love from God. **All of those require keeping the commandments of God.** That's to bring us the joy, that's to bring us the love. Here then becomes the epitome and the ultimate of it:

Verse 13: "**No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends.**". He's talking about Himself and what He is going to do. How He is going to do it. Proverbs says 'a friend loves at all times.' Proverbs also says 'the wounds of a friend are to be desired rather than the kiss of the enemy' because it's to help you

Verse 14: "...You are My friends, **if** you do whatever I command you." I mean, this is a great and tremendous thing. We are the *friend* of Jesus Christ. Abraham was called the 'friend of God.' **We are the friends of God!** Why should you ever be discouraged and down to the point that you are ready to throw in the towel and give up when you realize that Christ is your friend. **No! Never!** And that's all a part of the New Covenant and the relationship that we have with God.

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What is so important is this, brethren: When we look at what Christ is teaching us here, if you as a branch remain in the vine, guess what? **No man can take you away!** The only one that takes away is the Father. And that's important. This also shows us something very profound, too. There is such a thing as a falling away or a drying up, and there is such a

thing as a lake of fire because the branches are burned—correct? *Yes, indeed!* All of these are very profound and important in connection with our relationship with God, and in connection with how we respond to God and live in Christ and dwell in His words, and His words in us, His Spirit in us, and all of this together.

Verse 15: "No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father." That is obviously all the things necessary for salvation.

Verse 16 is the key: "You yourselves did not choose Me, but **I have personally chosen you...**" This helps to end the argument about someone appointing himself to do the work of God. You don't choose God to do a work for Him. You don't choose God so that He must save you. God chooses you.

"...and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you" (v 16). Here's the fourth promise of answered prayer right within the chapters that we have. This becomes an essential and profound part of what we are doing in our relationship with God.

Now then, does this mean that no one can seek God? *No, it doesn't mean that at all!* Let's see some other things here that Christ has taught that we find here. Yes, we can seek God, and yes, He will hear us and answer us, and yes, if we repent and yield to God, He will choose us. We can't demand of God, we can't force upon God, we can't command of God, *but we can seek God.* We seek God on *His* terms, not on *our* terms. A lot of people like to seek God on *their* terms. 'God, if You'll do this for me, I'll repent.' That's backwards! Repent and then let God decide what He's going to do.

Here's the invitation, Isaiah 55:1: "Ho, everyone who thirsts, come to the waters... [Christ is the living waters—isn't He? *Yes, He is!*] ...and he who *has* no money, come, buy and eat..." It costs nothing to do the things spiritually. The Holy Spirit of God is a gift. After all, the whole purpose and the whole meaning as we know of concerning the Passover is eating and drinking Christ—isn't it? *Yes, it is!* He said: 'I am the true bread, which came down from heaven. And any man that believes on Me shall never hunger and shall never thirst.' This is what it's talking about here. This is a prophecy of the Gospel.

"...Yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price" (v 1). This is all spiritual. You have the strong meat and the strong drink—

don't you? You also have the milk, the milk of the Word for babes.

Verse 2: "Why do you spend money for *what is* not bread?... [That's for people chasing off on religions that have nothing to do with God.] ...And your labor for *what* never satisfies?..."

How many have seen on some of these documentaries showing the Tibetan religion? There is a certain pilgrimage that different of the men do which is this: they put on certain garments and they have certain things to cover their hands and their knees, and they walk so many steps while they are praying. This prayer is just kind of a chant, you know, *mla-mla-mla-mla-mla*, and then they prostrate themselves on the ground and say another prayer. Then they get up and they take a few more steps, and they do this for mile after mile, which is labor. Wouldn't you say that is labor? Labor for something that profits not, and you finally end up at this big Tibetan temple.

Or, you can say the same thing even in churches that call themselves Christian. How many have been so busy with activities; and part of the psychology of keeping people locked into a status of playing church, or living church, or being part of a church is to give them work to do. Keep them busy, have this activity going, put so-and-so in charge of it, and do this and do that and do the other, and get them so busy that they forget about God even in a church that professes God.

That's why there is a great movement even among Protestant churches to stay at home. You can go on-line for Church at Home {churchathome.org} We're not going to be like the others. We're not going to talk about things that human beings relate to in griping and complaining about the church that they just left because they're almost as dead at home as they were when they were in this church that they are complaining about. We're going to tell them that at home what you need to do is right here: **seek God!** We'll show them what the Word of God is. We have to start out with the milk, but we're going to bring them up to speed as quickly as we can. We'll go from milk into chopped liver and then into steak, if I can put it that way.

Now notice, here is what you do to solve the problem of "...And your labor for *what* never satisfies? Hearken diligently to Me... [**Listen to God!** That's the whole thing through the whole Bible—'*If you will hear My voice.*'] ...and eat *what is* good, and let your soul delight itself in fatness... [the richness of the Word of God] ...Bow down your ear... [don't be hard-headed and unwilling and stubborn] ...and come to Me... [you have to come to God] ...hear, and your soul shall live; and I will

make an everlasting covenant with you, even the sure mercies of David" (vs 2-3).

That's really a bargain—isn't it? God is saying, 'I'm going to give you eternal life and it's not going to cost you a cent. It's going to cost you yourself.' That's what it's talking about.

Verse 4: "Behold, I have given Him *for* a witness to the people a Prince and Commander of people... [who was also a type of Christ] ...Behold, you shall call a nation that you do not know; a nation *that* did not know you shall run to you because of the LORD your God, and for the Holy One of Israel; for He has glorified you" (vs 4-5).

This goes into the glorification of Christ, preaching the Gospel and all of those things going out to the Gentiles who then become grafted in, etc., etc. All of those things are there in this verse.

Verse 6: "Seek the LORD while He may be found; call upon Him while He is near.... [We can seek God. God is near. He's not way off.] (and here's how you do it): ...Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts... [showing repentance and conversion; change of mind and heart; that's what it's all about] ...and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon" (vs 6-7). That's a great and fantastic promise—isn't it? This is not the way that people normally think. So that's why He says:

Verse 8: "'For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,' says the LORD." It's kind of foolish if we think we are going to do something for God *our* way—right? I mean, when you really get in and go through the Bible and understand it, it makes everything clear—doesn't it? *Yes, indeed!*

Verse 9: "'For *as* the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.'" That's why the Word of God is **spiritually** understood. That's what's important.

There is no way, which they have tried to do in the *Contemporary Bible*, remember I brought that to you and read a little bit out of that. That contemporary message is absolutely blasphemous. But what they try and do in the translations is this: instead of faithfully translating the Word of God so that it conveys what God wants, what they do, they say, 'We have all of these unbelievers out here that don't know the Word of God, so how can we convey it to them in a contemporary language that they will receive it?'

Well, what is happening when they do that then is that they are taking away the spiritual power

and punch and meaning from the Word of God to try and make it comprehensible to someone who is antagonistic against the Word of God. The carnal mind is not subject to the Law of God, neither indeed can be. That's why in translating, it needs to be that the words are faithfully translated because the words that were originally given were given in such a way that it universally applies to all people at all times in all circumstances in any part of the history of the scope of man. Then let God do His work with His Spirit of calling people.

God is not going to be left out of the equation at all because He says v 10: "For as the rain comes down, and the snow from the heavens, and does not return there, but waters the earth, and makes it bring forth and bud, and gives seed to the sower and bread to the eater, so shall My Word be which goes out of My mouth..." (vs 10-11). That's the whole point of anything concerning the Word of God. These are the Words of God that came out of His mouth that He inspired to be written, therefore, they should be translated in such a way that it still projects the Word of God.

"...it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall certainly do what I sent it to do." (v 11). God is going to make it happen.

Let's talk about seeking God. Psalms 63 is how we are to seek God. This is the attitude—when we come to this understanding, which is very important and profound that we need to come to—which is this: *everyday is a new day*. Everything we did yesterday has already been spent and exhausted and there's nothing more we can do. What we do today will affect what we do tomorrow, but you can't wait until tomorrow to do everything. So, in relationship to God here's the best way to do it: take each day as a new day, and each day, if possible, as if you're waking up in the middle of a desert.

Psalm 63:1: "O God, You are my God, earnestly I will seek You!..." This needs to be the attitude. There is no person on earth who attempts to seek God in this manner that will not find Him. I don't care where he is, what nationality he is, what the circumstances are in his life, if he truly does this, God will answer; because God *is* God. Remember how we showed how that the seven Spirits of God are going through the earth seeking those who are seeking Him? *Yes!*

"...My soul thirsts for You. My flesh longs for You, as in a dry and thirsty land where no water is." You can tie that in with what we read there.

Let's come to John 6 because here's the answer of that. Christ is the answer. Billy Graham has said. 'Christ is the answer.' Then he tells you

that the church of your choice you attend is the answer. Christ *is* the answer, but here is how this is fulfilled. John 6:35—you come to Christ: "Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life; the one who comes to Me shall never hunger; and the one who believes in Me shall never thirst at any time.'"

So, if you are coming after God, as it says here in Psalm 63, as in a dry and thirsty land, you are going to be filled. Your thirst is going to be quenched. The satisfaction of God's Spirit is going to fill you.

Psalm 63:1: "...where no water is." That's just the way this world is. It doesn't have any of God's Spirit. It's out there just like a dry vast desert. But he wanted the eternal life. That was his driving force. And that's what we need to have concerning the New Testament and renewal of the New Covenant when we take the Passover. The driving force behind it is eternal life. That comes through Christ. And that must always be in front of us, just like it is here.

Verse 2: "To see Your power and Your glory... [Rev. 22 says we're going to see Him face-to-face] ...—as I have seen You in the sanctuary. Because Your loving kindness is better than life..." (vs 2-3). It is better to know God, better to have the love of God, and to have the loving kindness of God than to live in the world. Or as it says there in the Proverbs concerning a poor man that has his bread, righteousness.

Verse 4: "Thus I will bless You as long as I live; I will lift up my hands in Your name. My soul shall be satisfied as with marrow and fatness... [just talking about the depths of the understanding of the Word of God] ...and my mouth shall praise You with joyful lips when I remember You upon my bed and meditate on You in the night watches" (vs 4-6). Many times you will have tremendous spiritual experiences at night. That will happen.

Verse 7: "Because You have been my help, therefore in the shadow of Your wings I will rejoice. My soul follows hard after You..." That's how we need to follow God. Not in a lazy haphazard way. 'If I pray, that's ok. If I don't pray, that's ok. If I study, that's ok. If I don't study, that's ok.' **NO!**

Verse 8: "My soul follows hard after You; Your right hand upholds me." That's the attitude that we need to have.

See what this leads to, Psalm 62:5: "My soul, wait in silence for God alone... [Notice the single-mindedness. Notice the attitude toward God.] ...for from Him comes my hope. He only is my Rock and my salvation; He is my strong tower; **I shall not be moved**.... [That's something! Do you



have your mind set that way, that you will not be moved? That's what we need to have.] ...In God is my salvation and my glory, the Rock of my strength; my refuge is in God" (vs 5-7).

Here's where we need to come in our lives and our hearts and our minds toward God, Psalm 57:7: "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed..." You *believe God to the very depths of the marrow of your bones*. "My heart is fixed..."

When your heart is fixed then you have faith, and faith from God, you will do this, Psalm 62:8: "Trust in Him at all times... [that means *regardless of whatever the circumstances may be*] ...you people; pour out your heart before Him... [always go to prayer to God] ...God is a refuge for us. Selah." When you do that then you will come to a situation that is most profound. You will understand the world. You will realize that the spiritual things of God are forever, and everything else doesn't count.

Verse 9: "Surely men of low degree are vanity, and men of high degree are a lie... [We've seen that—haven't we? *Yes!*] ...when weighed in the balance, they are altogether lighter than vanity... [You'll understand that's the way the world is.] ...Trust not in oppression, and do not take pride in stolen goods; if riches increase, do not set your heart upon them. God has spoken once; twice I have heard this: that power belongs to God. Also to You, O LORD, belongs mercy; for You give to every man according to his work" (vs 9-12).

All of those things have to do with seeking God, and those are the ones that God is going to choose. Because as Christ told them, **'I have chosen you, you have not chosen Me.'** This is how you seek God, and how God makes His choice. He does it because of this attitude and this seeking of God.

John 15:16: "You yourselves did not choose Me, but I have personally chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain... [This is meaning 'unto eternal life' because if it doesn't result in eternal life then it's at the end whenever we pass on.] ...so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you. These things I command you, that you **love one another**" (vs 16-17).

He said that because it's not an easy thing to do with those that He calls. Why? *Because we're all called from different backgrounds, different walks of life, different everything!* I hate to use the word 'diverse' because that is a politically acceptable word in the world today, but when you get a composite of many different people from many different backgrounds, with many different

personalities, many different ages, experiences, types of work, it is difficult to love one another.

It's easy to love your own flesh because they're part of you. It's difficult to love someone else that is not loveable. Many of us are not loveable. God called us because we are weak. That's why we need to work on loving one another constantly. Love doesn't come naturally, but God has put us in a situation where that, according to the circumstances of the world and our natural inclinations, we're going to be *in a very unnatural situation*—aren't we?

It's the Holy Spirit of God that gives us the love of God and also gives us the love of each other. What we need to do is constantly ask God to help us love Him and love each other. Part of that includes what is called the word 'forbearance.' Forbearance is putting up with the idiosyncrasies of someone else that you don't particularly care for those idiosyncrasies because they don't hit you just right. You know what I mean?

How do we handle it? *We have forbearance! We have understanding!* If we love each other maybe some of those things will change—won't they? It's like anything else, if you know you're loved, your behavior is different— isn't it? If you know you're not loved, your behavior is also different— isn't it? That's why He told us to 'Love one another. This I command you: love one another. Love one another as I have loved you.' The reason He said it over and over again is because it's a difficult proposition for the people of God to really do. We need to really take that to heart and really have the forbearance, and have the love, and have the understanding, and accept each other for what we are and let God do the changing for the things that need to be changed. God can do that.

Verse 18: "**If** the world hates you... [which it will] ...you know that it hated Me before *it hated* you. If you were of the world, the world would love its own..." (vs 18-19). That is what is so blasphemous and damnable about the *Contemporary Message*, the new Bible just put out. They want to get it to a world where then the world will love what that says because it's not really the Word of God.

"...the world will love it's own..." (v 19) You need to understand this: *don't go out of your way to offend people, but just realize that sooner or later differences and problems are going to come.* Like the first thing when people find out that you keep the Sabbath and Holy Days, what's the first thing they ask you? If they find out about the Sabbath first they say, 'Are you Seventh-Day Adventist?' Then they find out about the Passover and the Holy Days and they say, 'Are you a Jew?' Then you tell them you're not and they're

completely frustrated. They don't know what to do because the world is used to hearing what it has been told. And you may lose some friendships over it, because the world will love it's own.

"...However, because you are not of the world, but I have personally chosen you out of the world, the world hates you for this" (v 19). As long as they perceive us as nice and good and kind and that sort of thing, that's fine. But when you go out and start preaching the Truth of God there's going to be some hatred come along—is there not? *Yes, indeed!* When you stand for the Truth the world's going to hate you.

Isn't it something if the world hates us and we don't love each other, we're really in trouble—aren't we? Think about that! That's why He said to 'love one another.' And then He said, 'The world's going to hate you'; the world's not going to love you. So, the message is, is that if you don't love God and love each other, how much love is in your life? *None!* We've experienced trying to play church without love—haven't we? We've experienced trying to play church by law rather than grace—haven't we? It's manifest in *the letter of the Law kills, but the Spirit gives life*. That's what we're talking about in all of this here. This is so important.

Now let's see about the world loving it's own. If you want a message that is accepted by the world you've got to preach the way the world preaches. That's why when they heard Christ preach they were astounded because He spoke with authority, not as the scribes. Wherever the apostles went to preach the Word of God, what was it said of Paul? *'Here come these men that turn the world upside down.'* Yes, the world likes to hear what it wants to hear. But when someone comes along and says, 'God says, and this is what God means, and this is what you are commanded to do,' then the world hates you.

Now notice what the world likes, and it comes from false spirits, 1-John 4:1: "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are from God... [because Satan appears as an angel of light and all that sort of thing] ...because many false prophets have gone out into the world.... [Which says *false spirits come with false prophets*. That's why they have a spiritual impact.] ...By this *test* you *can* know the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ has come in *the flesh* is from God. And every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not from God. And this is the *spirit* of antichrist..." (vs 1-3)—which then is the spirit of the world. The spirit of the world is the spirit of antichrist.

"...which you heard *was* to come, and even now it is already in the world. You are of God, little

children, and have overcome them... [So if you have come out of the world, you've overcome them, don't go back.] ...because greater is He Who *is* in you... [that is Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit] ...than the one [Satan the devil] who *is* in the world. They are of the world; because of this, they speak of the world, and the world listens to them.... [We're not of the world. That's why we're hated of the world.] ...We are of God; the one who knows God listens to us; the one who is not of God does not listen to us. By this *means* we know... [perceive and understand] ...the Spirit of the Truth and the spirit of the deception" (vs 1-6). That's how we understand.

All Scriptures from *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order, A Faithful Version* by Fred R. Coulter

#### Scripture References:

- 1) John 15:1-2
- 2) 1 John 1:6
- 3) John 3:17-21
- 4) 1 John 1:7-9
- 5) John 15:3
- 6) John 7:37-39
- 7) Ephesians 5:25-26
- 8) John 15:4-5
- 9) Luke 13:6-9
- 10) John 15:6-7
- 11) Hebrews 10:16-20
- 12) John 15:7-8
- 13) Luke 12:15-21
- 14) John 15:9-16
- 15) Isaiah 55:1-11
- 16) Psalm 63:1
- 17) John 6:35
- 18) Psalm 63:1-8
- 19) Psalm 62:5-7
- 20) Psalm 57:7
- 21) Psalm 62:8-12
- 22) John 15:62:16-19
- 23) 1 John 4:1-6

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- Galatians 5:22
- Ephesians 5:4-11
- 1 John 5
- John 13:34
- Revelation 22

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