

A Father's Love for His Children (Go To Meeting)

Albert Jones—December 2, 2023

I want to just sample a little bit of the, a few of the Scriptures that speak to God's:

- relationship with us
- His perspective of us
- how He feels about us

Not just the elect of God, but:

- all of His creation, mankind

We often see and talk about the other side of the Flood and all of those who died on that side of the Flood. Yes, Satan wreaked havoc over there. He came in and he destroyed relationships and opportunities for mankind on that side of the Flood, so much so that God said that 'it truly grieved Him that He had made man.'

Having seen the depth that we can fall off and the direction that we can go as human beings. But God, from the very beginning, had laid out a purpose and a plan for all of that as we know and as revealed by the Sabbath and Holy Days. We understand that God's Plan wasn't threatened then.

We understand that from the foundation of the world, Jesus Christ would come, a Savior would come and make a good way for us to overcome all of that.

Christ's blood and sacrifice, as we know and we've been learning, extends back and it covers those sins on the other side of the Flood. So, in the second resurrection, they will come up and have an opportunity to have a relationship with God.

But, brethren, *we have our chance right now*, our opportunity is here today, and we have been encouraged by God to recognize this very valuable relationship.

*We are called **the children** of the Father; **we are the children of the Father**.* He selected us. He called us by name and brought us into His circle. I like the way the Scripture puts it, 'unto His bosom' and He wrapped His arms around us.

Rom. 8 is a favorite chapter of all of us! The calling was the beginning and having accepted it and recognized the change in our personal lives:

- we embraced the calling
- we accepted the calling
- we admitted that we needed God

His Spirit was working with us!

We went on to recognize a need that in that relationship, being physical, we needed something

extra in our life. We repented and changed, that was the first step. Faith in Jesus Christ and His blood.

Yes, we do believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that He is our Savior, but we needed an extra ingredient. Understanding this Truth and comprehending this Truth is made possible by God's Spirit present in us.

So recognizing at the time it was with us, but recognizing that we need God Spirit within us, we came to understand from the Scriptures that after baptism we needed to have prayer given and the asking of God to grant us His presence within our very being so that our minds would be changed.

That their orientation would be changed, and our hearts would be yielded toward God and not hostile against Him anymore. That we wouldn't be a stubborn people, that we wouldn't be a difficult people, but we would recognize that our loving Father is extending to us something very special.

Through the indwelling of God's Spirit, that's what we have. Here's the reality of our relationship with God and the game changer, as I like to refer to it, the indwelling of God's Spirit,

Romans 8:14: "**For as many as are led by the Spirit of God...**"

That's the way God drew us to Him. By working with us with the Spirit, we began to see, we began to recognize and have a yearning for God through His Spirit, "...led by *the Spirit of God...*" Then we received it within us and now we are truly led by it.

Verse 14: "For as many as are led by *the Spirit of God*, **these are the sons of God.**"

Verse 15 *further expands upon this Truth:* "**Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear...**"—*the game changer!* Before

- we were alienated from God
- we were hostile against God
- we were far off

but the Father has now begotten us! God has united with us through the Spirit, indwelling with us, united with the human spirit within us.

- we are God's Temple
- we are God's House
- we are God's children

He says that 'no more unto bondage with the fear that our sins are going to result in our death, **but now we have hope in His Son.**'

"...but **you have received the Spirit of sonship**" (v 15).

So, the relationship is not just one of salvation. Yes, Christ made salvation possible for us, and not just us, but all of mankind. But now that we have God's Spirit within us, we belong to Him. We are His sons and His daughters. That's a different relationship than we had before.

We can see who we are in our lineages and in our families. We might even come from kings. But truly, *we are made in the image of God to be born into His Family!*

The most incredible blessing that we can have as God's people is to be called a son or daughter of God, to have the potential and the hope in front of us that we have, ***which is to be born a spirit being in God's Kingdom as His begotten son or daughter!*** Let's focus on that!

Verse 15: "Now, you have not received a spirit of bondage again unto fear, but you have received *the Spirit of sonship*, whereby we call out..."

We cry out to God; we petition His Throne in this manner: 'Father.' That's what we cry out, 'Our Father' "...Abba, Father" (v 15). *That is significant and a very, very privileged thing to be able to do!*

Verse 16: "The Spirit itself... [the very indwelling of God's Spirit] ...bears witness conjointly with our own spirit, *testifying* that we are *the children of God*. Now, **if we are children...**" (vs 16-17).

We are completely and wholly incorporated into the Family. We have an inheritance with the Son Jesus Christ.

Verse 17: "Now, if *we are children*, **we are also heirs—truly, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ...**"

What does that say? We're not adopted into the Family; we're not some illegitimate child, some far distant forgotten stepson or something.

We have been incorporated into the very Family of God that when we say, 'Abba, Father,' it applies to us. We walk in that faith and in that hope. We journey in this life, struggling against the flesh and against this world and all the things that may come against us with that knowledge and with that Truth. It talks about this relationship with Christ:

"...if indeed we suffer together with Him..." (v 17)—*that's true!*

In this physical life we're going to have trials, testing, chastisement, difficulty, those things are a part of existing in the flesh. But God tells us to hang on, to be strong, to endure, to work with one another, to help each other as brothers and sisters in Christ. So:

"...if indeed we suffer together with Him, so that we may also be glorified together with Him... [Paul recognizing the comparison says] ...For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time *are* not worthy *to be compared* with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (vs 17-18).

Verse 19: "For the earnest expectation of the creation itself... [all that God has made, the universe, the galaxies, itself] ...it is awaiting the manifestation of the sons of God; because the creation was subjected to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of Him who subjected *it* in hope, in order that the creation itself might be delivered from the bondage of corruption... [which Satan has brought upon this entire world] ...into the freedom..." (vs 19-21).

We are free today because God has made us free. We have been called, we are under this covenantal relationship with God, that promise and that grace is applied to us. We stand in grace, justified before God because of what God has done in our lives as His very own begotten sons and daughters.

Verse 21: "In order that the creation itself might be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that all the creation is groaning together and travailing together until now. And not only *that...*" (vs 21-23).

Yes, we ourselves, even we ourselves, who have the firstfruits, the firstfruits of the spirit. That's right, we're the first, but not the last. We're the first as a privilege, as a blessing.

It is not because we carry so much greater credential than anybody else in the world indeed, we are the weak. God is calling to Himself the weak, the humble, those who recognize their need for God.

Verse 23: "Not only *that*, but even we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, also groan within ourselves, awaiting the sonship—the redemption of our bodies. For by hope we were saved; but hope that is seen is not hope; for why would anyone still be hoping for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we ourselves wait for it with patience" (vs 23-25).

Let's continue to walk in patience, trusting God and not wavering for a moment in terms of doubt, in terms of what God is doing in our life! We are the sons and daughters of the living God.

Let's read something here in 2-Cor. 6 that Paul speaks of in terms of the work that he and the other apostles were doing.

2-Corinthians 6:1: "We then, working together *with Him...*" ***That is Christ!***

As Christ is doing this work on behalf of the Father, perfecting us, bringing us to an understanding, bringing us and developing within us a knowledge of God's Word is true so that God's Spirit can do that perfecting within us.

2-Corinthians 6:1: "We then, working together *with Him*, are also exhorting you not to receive the grace of God in vain."

- Don't take it for granted.
- Do not take this calling for granted.

Verse 2: "(For He says, 'In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in a day of salvation I have helped you.' Behold, now *is* an acceptable time. Behold, now *is* a day of salvation.)"—*for us, brethren!*

- this is our time
- this is our day

We're walking in this time and in this day with God the Father and Jesus Christ actively working in our life.

Verse 3: "We do not give offense to anyone in anything, so that the ministry may not be blamed; but in everything we are confirming ourselves as servants of God, in much endurance, in tribulation, in necessities, in distresses, in stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings" (vs 3-5).

Yes, those of us in the ministry. We are blessed to be in a day when we're not pressed upon hard, at least in America and most of the nations, we're not pressed upon every day to be able to do this job. It is a commitment and it is a work and it requires a commitment and effort on the part of those who are doing it.

We see the prayer request list. What you don't see in the background is that opportunity to encourage each other during the Sabbath services or to be at the other end of the phone call when a brother called that needs some counsel or just to be encouraging one another when there is despair.

Satan has come against God's people in so many unique ways. He throws rocks at us, yes, but

he's also stealthy. He goes behind and attacks our children. He goes behind and attacks our families.

In trying to bring us down, he tries to bring us to a point of feeling despair and losing hope. ***God is telling us to hang on, watch, continue to trust in Him!*** Paul is making this point here.

Verse 6: "In pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in *the* Holy Spirit, in love unfeigned."

There's got to be just unending amounts of love poured out from God to us and from us back to God and from us to one another. Pray for that, brethren.

Verse 7: "In *the Word of Truth...*"—*yes, studying God's Word!* We're trying to bring not only more resources through the various mechanisms that we have with the Christian Biblical Church of God, but we are bringing additional study opportunities through Bible study, through Sabbath services and opportunities to do that.

In this past week, as an example, this is one of those full weeks for ministering to God's people in that there were two Bible studies this week on Tuesday and one on Thursday and we come to Go To Meeting last night and we have a sermon this morning.

We'll have a sermon today as a part of our regular Sabbath service and then we'll have the live stream. What an incredible treasure trove of resources available to us as God's Family. God has made all of this possible for us. ***This is a gift from Him!***

Verse 7: "In *the* Word of Truth, in *the* power of God; through the armor of righteousness on the right hand and *on the left*."

That's because we're not turning to the left nor to the right, ***but we're straight on with Christ, our Lord and Savior in our view, and we're walking toward Him!***

We're not going over into the world. There's nothing over there. There's nothing on the left side. All is ahead of us for Christ is extending His hand and:

- He is our light
- He is our guide
- He is our strength
- He is our way

all of those things that Bible talks about!

You can see the vision. You can visually see what I'm describing here is a walk with God.

Verse 8: "Through glory and dishonor, through evil report and good report, as deceivers and true, as unknown and well known; as dying, but behold, we are alive; as chastened, but not put to death; as sorrowful, but always rejoicing; as poor, but enriching many; **as having nothing, yet, possessing all things**" (vs 8-10).

Who can compare to that? Yes, in the midst of trial and difficulty, *we have God!* In the midst of all things, *we have God!* I think Fred has expressed it in a message entitled, ***Remember, When All Else Fails, Remember That God Loves You*** [transcriber's correction] That is what we are hanging on to is that relationship that we have with Him.

Verse 11 [transcriber's correction]: "O you Corinthians!...."

Let me just say, 'O, you members of God's Church everywhere.' As Paul says here

"...Our mouths have been opened to you, and our hearts have been enlarged *toward you*" (v 11).

We want you to be in God's Kingdom; we want all of you to come into God's presence. Brethren, my wife and I had a conversation recently: We are the next generation. We used to be the little ones in the Church back there, that is, those in my age group now!

We used to be the little ones back there in the Church, young ones coming up and being instructed by the elders in the Church. But we are the next generation and behind us. This is what I like to think on: God is still calling, God is still bringing new babes in Christ into His fellowship. God's Church is growing. God's Family is expanding.

Nothing will prevail against God's Church, not even death and the grave!

We have a relationship with God Who is eternal. We have put to rest many of God's faithful servants, but they have had an impact in our life and we are having an impact in that next generation, as well.

So look around you, brethren, at the babies in our Family. Look around you and see the brethren and let us encourage them. Let us be that light and example to them, as well.

Verse 12: "You are not suppressed by us, but you are restricted in your own hearts; now in return *for our ministry to you* (I am speaking to you as to children), you should also enlarge *your hearts toward us*. Do not be unequally yoked with unbelievers.." (vs 12-14). *This is where it matters! Family matters!*

- love the family
- love the children
- love the brethren
- love the mothers and fathers

We should give honor to one another, encourage one another, lift each other up.

We are a special treasure to God. Don't be unequally yoked with unbelievers.

"...For what do righteousness and lawlessness *have* in common? And what fellowship *does* light *have* with darkness? And what union *does* Christ *have* with Belial? Or what part *does* a believer *have* with an unbeliever?" (vs 14-15).

This is again just a difference. Darkness, light, that's just the Truth. They don't get along. A non-believer and a believer, you're talking about 'casting your pearls before swine.'

No, it isn't that they're filthy, ***but sin is***, and they are not called of God at this point and there is no understanding in them. There is no knowledge of God in them. But over here is the Family of God:

- Truth is there
- Light is there
- Spirit is there

Brothers and sisters who are together in this fight; we're together in God's Family!

Our focus in Ephesus is on God's people. We pray for stability in the world, we pray for leaders. We want peace so that we can do God's will and do God's work.

We don't hang out and embrace the ways of Satan. We are separate from that over here where God's Family is.

Verse 16: "And what agreement *is there between* a Temple of God and idols? For you are a Temple of *the* living God, exactly as God said: 'I will dwell in them and walk in *them*; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.'"

That is not just a quote, brother, that is a Truth. We are the people of God.

Verse 17: "Therefore, come out from the midst of them..."—*those in the world who are blinded and deceived by Satan the devil*, so that you don't get caught up in that mess in that filth which Satan has spawned in the world!

God wants you to have a life of peace, joy, and all the things that come from his spirit.

"...and be separate,' says *the* Lord, 'and touch not *the* unclean, and I will receive you..." (v 17). *Justification before the Father, through Christ,*

Christ died so that we could have that access.

Verse 18: “**I shall be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughters,**’ says *the Lord Almighty.*”

This relationship, God has laid it out for us very clearly in just a couple of verses there.

God tells us how he sees us. He’s not saying these things for us *to become* these things. This is what He sees.

Matthew 5:1: “But seeing the multitudes, He went up into the mountain; and when He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth *and* taught them, saying, ‘Blessed *are* the poor in spirit, for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven. Blessed *are* those who mourn, for they shall be comforted. Blessed *are* the meek, for they shall inherit the earth’” (vs 1-5).

If you wanted the list of things that God is promising to give you and an understanding of your standing before Him as He sees you:

- you are the poor
- you are those who mourn after Him
- you are the meek

There is no haughtiness or lifting up of self!

Verse 6: “Blessed *are* those who hunger and thirst after righteousness... [Are we hungry and thirsting after righteousness?] ...for they shall be filled.” *God says that if you want righteousness in your life, ‘I’m ready to give it to you!’*

Verse 7: “Blessed *are* the merciful, for they shall find mercy. Blessed *are* the pure in heart, for they shall see God.... [He’s talking about the elect of God] ...Blessed *are* the peacemakers... [that’s what we should be doing, making peace every day] ...for they shall be called *the sons of God*” (vs 7-9).

Verse 10: “Blessed *are* those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness... [you’ve seen it in the past, yes, it’s coming again] ... for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.... [hang on, endure] ...Blessed are you when they shall reproach you, and shall persecute you, and shall falsely say every wicked thing against you, for My sake” (vs 10-11).

We know that in the book of Revelation it speaks of those who are martyred in the faith, and who endure, who don’t take the mark of the beast, neither in their hand or in their forehead.

Verse 13: “You are the salt of the earth... [you, brethren] ...but if the salt has become tasteless, with what shall it be salted? For it no longer has any

strength, but *is* to be thrown out and to be trampled upon by men.”

- salt with seasoning has a purpose
- salt without seasoning has no use

God called you to be the salt of the world, *to be that light!* So, let’s put it to use!

Verse 14: “You are the light of the world. A city that is set on a mountain cannot be hid.”

God doesn’t want us to hide our light. He wants our life to be seen. If you’re hiding in a cave, you gotta come out, *and let your light be seen in the way you walk and the way you live!*

Again, we’re not standing on soap boxes around the city. We’re not going somewhere, lifting up a personal campaign. God has called us and He does everything according to an orderly way:

- through His Church
- through His ministry
- through His people

We all understand our roles there; so in the same way:

Verse 16: “In the same way also, you are to let your light shine before men, so that they may see your good works, and may glorify your Father Who *is* in heaven.”

We have that as an encouraging word from God. Christ gives us this Truth as His brethren and the elect of God. We are able to receive this Truth because of the indwelling of God’s Spirit within us.

John:16—this is where Christ is talking to His disciples, that He would give them the means by which they can do great works. Even the ability to get great things done does not originate within the individual, *it comes from God!*

All the great works that have happened in God’s Church over the millennia are a result of work that God has done and the people’s willingness to yield to Him.

John 16:12: “I have yet many things to tell you, but you are not able to bear them now. However, when that one has come, *even* the Spirit of the Truth, it will lead you into all Truth, because it shall not speak from itself...” (vs 12-13).

Again, this power emanates from the Father and Jesus Christ to us! So, here’s how you are able to comprehend and understand Truth.

“...but whatever it shall hear... [given power to express to you] ...**it shall speak. And it shall disclose to you the things to come**” (v 13).

The Spirit is not a personage! We understand the power of the Spirit probably better today because of cell phones and internet and computer systems. God is sending a message to you through the Spirit, and that message enables you to comprehend something from the other end. **God extends power to you to understand spiritual things! God extends power to you to understand His will!**

“...it shall speak. And it shall disclose to you the things to come. That one... [the Spirit] ...shall glorify Me [Christ] because it shall disclose to you *the things that* it receives from Me. Everything that the Father has is Mine; for this reason, I said that it shall receive from Me and shall disclose *these things* to you. A little *while*... [from God's perspective it is a little while] ...and you shall not see Me; and again a little *while*, and you shall see Me, because I am going to the Father” (vs 14-16).

Christ is with the Father, and He's sending back to us the power to do what God wants us to do. We want to continue to be tuned in and connected to that power.

Verse 23: “And in that day you shall ask Me nothing. Truly, truly I tell you, whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He will give you. Until this day, you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you shall receive, that your joy may be full” (vs 23-24).

This is a simple verse. Ask God what you need to live and walk this way. Ask and He's going to give it to you. Jesus Christ died and went through what He did to make that possible. It's one of the benefits of His death in the flesh; for the joy that lay ahead He endured at the cross! Christ wanted to make this possible for us **so He did what He did so that we could access it!**

Remember how precise He was, you remember how dedicated He was

- in His prayer
- in His actions
- in His love for the brethren

He knew what He was doing; His mission was fulfilled! He is alive and He is at the right hand of the Father now doing these things. **Ask in His name**, He says, **and you shall receive that so that your joy may be full!**

Verse 25: “These things I have spoken to you in allegories; but the time is coming when I will no longer speak to you in allegories, but I will plainly disclose to you *the things* of the Father.”

I am doing that today; this is from the Father. These Truths are from Him.

The Father sees us as His little children! That's how He views us because He has begotten us. Now He wants to nurture and bring us to full birth on that day when Christ comes back.

1 John 3:1: “Behold! What *glorious* love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God! For this very reason...”—*because we are the children of God, begotten of God, different from the world!*

- we don't line up with it
- we don't mix well with it
- it's like oil and water, light and darkness

The world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested... [when we see Christ as He is] ...**we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is.** And **everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, even as He is pure**” (vs 1-3). *We are:*

- *walking* in that hope
- *living* in that hope
- *striving* in that hope
- *worshiping* in that hope

Christ's desire for us, is to stay on the path of righteousness and to avoid sin, all sin!

Verse 4: “Everyone who practices sin is also practicing lawlessness, for sin is lawlessness.... [the author of that is Satan the devil] ...And you know that He appeared... [Christ came into the world] ...in order that He might take away our sins; and in Him is no sin”(vs 4-5).

Here we are in this relationship with God and are justified standing before God. Our walk is with purpose. Obedience is with purpose, through love, not fear. Our relationship with God is on a different plane, one of a son and a daughter, not of a stranger, not of one who is cut off and far over there and don't know God.

We walk in this relationship with our Father, crying out every day in prayer, ‘Abba, Father,’ as the Scripture says in Romans.

Verse 6: “Everyone who dwells in Him does not *practice* sin; anyone who *practices* sin has not seen Him, nor has known Him. Little children, do not allow anyone to deceive you; **the one who practices righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous**” (vs 6-7).

The one who practices sin ***is not of God!*** Practicing sin means that that individual is given

over to the other way. That individual has given themselves over to darkness and allowed it to rule their life and to pull them back into bondage.

Verse 8: “***The one who practices sin is of the devil***, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. For this purpose the Son of God appeared that He might destroy the works of the devil.”

No more bondage, brethren, no more bondage! Yes, the prisoners have been made free, and Satan does not have control over us. We belong to the Father and we were made free by our elder Brother, His Son, whom the Father has sent to come and save us and rescue us from this present evil world and all that Satan has. ***So, He desires for us to stay on this path of righteousness and to avoid sin!***

Prov. 4—I want to get this Scripture in here, this section. It really defines how God has given us instruction in this section of the Bible. This section that is called *The Book of Wisdom*, from my perspective, the wise sayings! Let’s just read one of those things that kind of speak to this discussion that we’re having.

Proverbs 4:1: “O children, hear the instruction of a father, and be attentive in order to know understanding, for I give you good doctrine; do not forsake my law, for I was my father’s son, tender and the only *beloved* in the sight of my mother. He also taught me, and said to me, ‘Let your heart hold fast my words; keep my commandments and live. Get wisdom; get understanding; forget it not, nor turn away from the words of my mouth. Do not forsake her, **and she shall keep you**...[Wisdom referred to in the *feminine gender*] ...love her, and she shall preserve you. Wisdom *is* the principal thing; **get wisdom; and with all your getting get understanding**” (vs 1-7).

Not just read the Word, but understand the Word. Not just read the precept, ***but comprehend*** the precept, the law, the statute, or the judgment of God.

Verse 8: “Exalt her, and she shall promote you; she shall bring you honor when you embrace her. She shall place upon your head a garland of grace; she shall bestow upon you a crown of glory” (vs 8-9)

This is what wisdom is sent to do, fueled by the Spirit of God so that you have that honor, that grace, that glory, and not be pulled down by Satan the devil into the pits of despair, misery, drama, and distress in life. God wants us to stay on that path that I mentioned earlier.

Verse 10: “Hear, O my son, and receive my sayings; and the years of your life *shall be* many. I

have taught you in the way of wisdom; I have led you in the right paths. When you go, your steps shall not be hampered, and when you run, you shall not stumble” (vs 10-12).

Remember what I said a moment ago, *we are that next generation*. These things have been instructed in God’s Family from the very beginning, from God’s Church from the very beginning.

I look back at my 40 years or so in association with God’s Church, and I see God’s teachings, instructions, examples and all of those things given to me by other family members now are really making sense to me when they didn’t then. Yes, ‘too soon old and not wise,’ right? That may not be the exact expression of that proverb, but we recognize that in our old age. If we only had that understanding in our youth, but that time has passed, and God is still in our life. ***Let’s continue to look to Him to help us and guide us in that way of Truth!***

Verse 13: Keep hold of instruction; do not let go; keep her, for she *is* your life. Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not into the way of *evil men*” (vs 13-14).

Yes, God’s way is Truth. What God says is, ‘If you are approached by sin and evil, He says to do this:

Verse 15: “**Avoid it**... [sidestep it, get away from it] ...do not go in it; turn from it, and pass on!”

This is what God instructs us in. Read the rest of Prov. 4. God has called us to a way of righteousness, and He wants us to live that way in which He instructed us to do.

Brethren, the work of God is to save His children from death. He tells us not to be in bondage to sin anymore.

James speaks to this principle; James 1:16: “Do not deceive yourselves, my beloved brethren. Every good act of giving and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with Whom there is no variation, nor shadow of turning” (vs 16-17).

He is precise, consistent, ‘the same today, yesterday, today, and forever.’ *No variation, no turning!*

Verse 18: “According to His own will, He begat us by *the Word of Truth*, **that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all His created beings**. For this reason...” (vs 18-19).

His created beings, all of mankind, God’s Plan covers His creation, those who are made in His image especially. So:

“...that we might be a kind of firstfruits of

His created beings. For this reason, my beloved brethren, let every man be quick to hear, slow to speak, slow to anger, because man's wrath... [any indignation worked up in you, for what you see around you] ...does not work out God's righteousness" (vs 18-20). **God works out His righteousness:**

- in His time
- in His way
- in His purpose

You see the evil around you, God has got that taken care of!

You can't change the heart of man as an individual, but God is working in you so that your heart can change, so that in that day that you are born into His Family, you will have some capability to then influence mankind.

But today, you are being worked with. Judgment is upon you and me and God's Family.

Verse 22: "Then be doers of *the* Word, and not only hearers, deceiving your own selves, because if anyone is a hearer of *the* Word and not a doer, this one is like a man considering his natural face in a mirror. Who, after looking at himself, went away and immediately forgot what he was like" (vs 22-24). *Now, we see ourselves and we understand:*

- who we are
- what we are
- that we are a product of God's calling and God's work. **Let Him have His perfect work in you!**

Verse 26: "If anyone among you considers himself to be religious, and does not control his tongue, but deceives his own heart, this one's religion is vain. Pure and undefiled religion before God and *the* Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their afflictions, *and* to keep oneself unspotted from the world" (vs 26-27).

Yes, the work for eternal life is between you, Jesus Christ and God the Father, and the work for eternal life is between every other person, Jesus Christ and God the Father! We have been called to be assistants to Christ in this manner.

- preach the Word
- preach the Gospel
- be lights in the world of the great things that God is doing in your life, and then they will see

So yes, God has called us to this Truth. He doesn't want us to be in bondage to sin anymore.

God has called us out of the way of the world. Christ paved the way for a new life in Him.

1-Peter 4:1: "Consequently, since Christ has suffered for us in *the* flesh..."

He's talking to Church members, but we know that God 'so loved the world that He sent His Son' into it to be the Savior for the world.

"...arm yourselves also with the same mind because the one who has suffered in *the* flesh has finished *living* in sin *to this end: that* he no longer live *his* remaining time in *the* flesh to *the* lusts of men, but to the will of God" (vs 1-2).

That lust of men is not out there. That lust of men is in the mind and heart. The law of sin and death within mankind. It pulls. It wants to go over there where it's comfortable.

But the Spirit of God within you says, 'No!' The pings of conscience say, 'No, that's not the way.' It instructs us to get back in line, get back in the way of God. 'Don't do that,' it says, as we read in Prov. 4.

Verse 3: "For the past time of our lives..."

All that time leading up to my calling and my baptism and my commitment toward this way and receiving of God's Spirit, again, the past time of our lives:

"...is sufficient to have worked out the will of the Gentiles..." (v 3). *Those cutoff from God; those who do not know God or understand His purpose for them!*

"...when we ourselves walked in licentiousness *and* lusts, *and were* debauched with wine, carousing, drinking and wanton idolatries" (v 3)—*whatever form it might have come in!*

So, if you were the best of Catholics, you were the best of Protestantism, whatever it was underneath **was not sufficient to have a right standing with the Father for eternal life!**

Verse 4: "In *seeing* this *difference* in your *behavior*, they are astonished *that* you do not rush with *them* into the same overflowing debauchery, *and* they revile *you*. *But* they shall render an account to Him Who is ready to judge *the* living and *the* dead" (vs 4-5).

Their day of judgment will come, **your day is today!** For this purpose, as I said earlier, here's what we do:

Verse 6: "And for this purpose the Gospel was preached to those who have died so that, *although* in *the* flesh they may in fact have been judged according to men's *standards*, on the other

hand, they might live according to God's *will in the Spirit*. Now the end of all things has drawn near. Therefore, be serious-minded and be watchful in prayers; But above all, have fervent love among yourselves because love will cover a multitude of sins" (vs 6-8).

This is our relationship in God's Family as we walk in His Truth, doing His will. He tells us to be hospitable to one another without complaining:

Verse 9: "*Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Let each one, according as he has received a gift from God, be using it to serve the others as good stewards of the grace of God, which manifests itself in various ways* (vs 9-10)

Yes, within the Family of God! Each gift edifies the members.

Verse 11: "If anyone speaks, *let it be* as the words of God; if anyone serves, *let it be* as from the strength which God supplies; so that in everything, God may be glorified through Jesus Christ to Whom is the glory and the power into the ages of eternity. Amen."

As I said, everything that is good within God's family, everything that is good within God's work is from God.

- He is the author of it!
- He is executing it!

We are instruments in this overall work God is doing, privileged, very honored, desiring to be an effective instrument in His hand. ***But we of ourselves have no power!*** It is from God. The glory is to Him.

2-Corinthians 5:17: "Therefore, if anyone *be* in Christ, *he is* a new creation; the old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new. And all things *are* from God, Who has reconciled us to Himself through Jesus Christ, and has given to us the ministry of reconciliation" (vs 17-18)—*that we preach!*

We preach it as a part of a Gospel and all the materials and the websites and the various programs that are out there that are ministering to the people preach repentance and reconciliation as a few of the things that are preached.

Verse 19: "Which *is*, that God was in Christ... [the Savior of the world] ...reconciling the world to Himself, not imputing their trespasses to them; and He has entrusted to us *this* message of reconciliation. Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ; *and* God, as it were, is exhorting *you* through us. We beseech *you* on behalf of Christ, 'Be reconciled to God.' For He made Him Who knew no sin *to be* sin for us... [this is a great investment, the

great gift] ...so that we might become *the* righteousness of God in Him" (vs 19-21).

- there's the power
- there is the Plan of God

He has given to us that way and that way is in His Son, our Lord:

- Who is our Light
- He is the Truth.
- He is the Way
- He is the Life

His way is the straight way as proclaimed by John the Baptist!

John 14:1: "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many dwelling places; if it were otherwise, I would have told you. I am going to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; so that where I am, you may be also" (vs 1-3). How do we get there?

John 1:23: *John the Baptist proclaiming Christ:* "He said, 'I *am* a voice crying in the wilderness...'"

In this world, in this darkness, to those who are lost in this desolate land.

John the Baptist says, as God has instructed him: "...Make straight the way of the Lord," **as Isaiah the prophet said**" (v 23). *Jesus Christ is that Way!*

1-John 1:1—*here we have it described for us again:* "That which was from the beginning, that which we have heard, that which we have seen with our own eyes..."

This is John giving a first hand account. We believe the Gospel as preached here by John, preserved for our instruction in the Word of God. Our own eyes saw, touched, heard, experienced Christ, as he says:

"...that which we observed for ourselves and our own hands handled, concerning the Word of Life; (and the life was manifested, and we have seen, and are bearing witness, and are reporting to you the eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested to us" (vs 1-2).

Given to us as a gift, as sent from the Father to us for the purpose of saving us!

Verse 3: "That which we have seen and have heard we are reporting to you in order that you also may have fellowship with us; for the fellowship—indeed, our fellowship—is with the Father and with His own Son Jesus Christ. These things we are also

writing to you, so that your joy may be completely full" (vs 3-4).

- Are you rejoicing in this Truth?
- Are you celebrating the life that God has made possible for you?

Brethren, this is the Father's and the Son's gift of love to us, His children:

- freedom
- forgiveness
- reconciliation
- peace
- faith
- hope
- love

Let's remember the greatest of all of this is God's love!

I'll just close with the expression that I embrace so well within my life. That is when all things fail, when everything around you may crumble and seem to have hit a wall, **remember, do not forget that God loves you!**

Scriptural References:

- 1) Romans 8:14-25
- 2) 2 Corinthians 6:1-18
- 3) Matthew 5:1-11, 13-16
- 4) John 16:12-16, 23-25
- 5) 1 John 3:1-8
- 6) Proverbs 4:1-15
- 7) James 1:16-24, 26-27
- 8) 1 Peter 4:1-11
- 9) 2 Corinthians 5:17-21
- 10) John 14:1-3
- 11) John 1: 23
- 12) 1 John 1:1-4

Also referenced: Message:

Remember, When All Else Fails, Remember That God Loves You by Fred R. Coulter

AJ:bo
Transcribed: 12/17/23

Copyright 2023—All rights reserved. Except for brief excerpts for review purposes, no part of this publication may be reproduced or used in any form or by any means without the written permission of the copyright owner. This includes electronic and mechanical photocopying or recording, as well as the use of information storage and retrieval systems.