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We need to wait for His purpose. In Psa. the 50th chapter, verse 5 - *Gather my servants together unto me; those who have made a covenant with me by sacrifice.* God is speaking to those who are aligned with His purpose, not just to start but to finish. These are the people that have learned that the heart of God, His purpose, was only going to be fulfilled and realized by sacrifice. If we are in this for our own purpose, for our own gain, then we are never going to have His purpose fulfilled in us by His hand.

In that line of thought, I'd like to look over at Colossians 2. I think probably the clearest expression of the whole gospel is in the 28th verse of the 20th chapter of Acts. In it the apostle gives a significant warning for those who watch over the flock. He said that they were to be very careful how they dealt with the flock of God because it's His bride and He has purchased it with His own blood. This is not to establish some controversy: has it the blood of Jesus; was it the blood of God? It is obvious, without any controversy, that when Jesus died on the cross, his blood was shed. But it is also equally true that he said, *Of myself, I do nothing. I live by the Father and I only do the things I see Him do, and I only say the things I hear Him say.* It is equally obvious that because of the love of God, He sent His son as a testimony to His purpose in the earth and what Jesus did was funded by the power of God. It says that *he through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to God.*

In Colossians the second chapter, the 13th verse, it says, "*And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, has He quickened together with him, having forgiven you all trespasses, blotting out the handwriting of ordinances that was against us, which were contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing them to his cross; and having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a show of them openly, triumphing over them in it.*" This is almost like an excerpt, and what it is detailing to us is what God did for us in Jesus. Paul, in another place says, "*There is no other foundation that can be laid than that which is laid, [and it was laid by God], and the foundation is Jesus Christ.*" He goes on and he also says in another place that the church is founded on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus Christ being the chief cornerstone.

So we all stand here with some sense of anticipation, and it's based on the reality of a sacrifice that was made on our behalf by someone else. There is no possibility that we would be here with any hope or any sense of purpose if we had not had a substitutionary sacrifice offered for us. He was the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Under the law if you sinned, you could offer a sacrifice for your sin – if it wasn't a sin unto death. You could return to your tent forgiven, restored to the fellowship of the community and in good standing because you had substituted another life, and by the shedding of that blood your sins were forgiven. We can't do that now with a lamb, or a turtledove, or a ram, or a bullock, but it did work then because God was in it. It doesn't work now because God's not in it. We have all had a substitutionary sacrifice, and it had (it says in Hebrews) a greater consequence on our behalf than the blood of bulls and goats had for the Jews.

However, not only are our sins forgiven but it also says blotting out – that the handwriting offenses (ie, the handwriting that was against us) was taken away. That didn't happen with the blood of bulls and goats. That same standard governed their life from that point forward.

I thought a lot of times about my history, since really coming to a recognition of not only the saving grace, but also the responsibility of finding the Lord in this man, Jesus. And how many times I've erred, and how many times I've had to confess and ask for forgiveness and have confidence that God was forgiving me because of Somebody else making the sacrifice. It's really a great contract. Amazing! But I thought about, what if I had been a Jew and had a sense of conscience about me, how many lambs that would have cost me...you know, in the last 40 years...yeah. Wherever my tent would have been, they would have said, "You know, if you could shape up a little bit, we could get grass to grow between your tent and this Temple..." You know, it's so amazing what God has done for us, so that my sins are forgiven and He bore testimony to that fact. It just isn't something that I believe because of Sunday School and Bible school, whatever.... "Jesus Loves me this I know, for the Bible tells me so..." There was a witness in my heart, there was a release of the responsibility and the guilt that came to me because the Holy Spirit was showing me my condition. In that acceptance of Him as my Savior, that burden was lifted. You know....it is impossible that I could testify that it wasn't real. There was nothing that anyone could do to argue me out of that as just being an emotional experience or some other worldly occurrence because there was a

testimony in my heart that was like a stake driven down , or an altar that was made that is there forever.

I've thought sometimes since, in getting lifted up and recognizing after a season, that I've gotten away from that responsibility, that if all He had ever done for me was forgave my sins, could I ever be unthankful, ungrateful, should I ever be not humbled before the magnificence of that act and my benefit as a result to that act? And not only did He forgive my sins, but He took away the Law! This gets better! Why was it important that the Law was taken away? Because the strength of sin is the Law! The Law is the strength of sin. But the Law is now taken away. Now just think of the first commandment, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, with all thy mind, with all thy soul and have no other gods before Me. And they wanted to hear number two or three or four? If the Law hadn't been taken away, we'd still stand guilty! So He forgave my sins and took the Law away, which was contrary to me and I was contrary to it, so it was kind of a hopeless stand-off. Who's going to blink first, kind of thing. But He removed it.

So Paul says in two different places, *All things are lawful to me*. Do you ever wonder what that meant? Paul, what were you seeing? What were you looking at? What were you describing in the Spirit that caused you to say and then write, *All things are lawful to me*. If the law was gone, what would be unlawful? Right? Nothing! That's what He is talking about. It is the same author that wrote Colossians who said that the law has been removed. That isn't the standard any longer for me to be measured by. In a sense, that is the effect of it, right? We are not being measured by the law. This is really good news!

But it goes on and there was a third thing that was accomplished by that substitutionary sacrifice that was offered, and that is that it says that *he made an open show of principalities and powers*. I wonder what that refers to? What was his open show over principalities and powers? There was a man from the region of Gadarene who just had so many "friends," and they were with him all the time, and he said, "What are you doing here? It's not time." The demon spoke right through the man... that was kind of an open show. It was a testimony, but it wasn't the big one. It was just one of the little side notes. The big one was that in spite of taking upon himself every sin – the forgiveness of sin is only possible if it is atoned for in some way – right? It couldn't just be ignored, but it had to be dealt with. So he took upon him the sins of the world – past, present and future. I'm saying future

because he was crucified, died, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven 1949 years before I was even born. If he only died for sins past, everybody in here would be in trouble. Sin has been removed and the law has been removed so that sin no longer has a definition based on behavior. The open show that he made was the last testimony of that substitutionary sacrifice as he rose from the dead. It sealed the deal. That's the further witness.

Do you know when I was released from the responsibility of my sins – sounds kind of slippery, doesn't it? – almost too good to believe. There was a further testimony than just the fact that the burden and accountability that I had made me feel defiled. I was clean, and there was a rejoicing, and there was a sense of liberty in the Spirit when my sins were forgiven, a testimony that was driven deep. But it was even more than that because there was a second witness to that, in the sense that there was a life birthed within me that was of the Spirit that had not been there before. It was evidence that my sins had been forgiven just as surely as his resurrection physically out of that grave on Easter morning. Paul made quite a big deal about that.

In the beginning of the 15th chapter of 1 Corinthians, he said that if Christ be not raised, then you are dead in your sins. He said that because if it was our sins that took him down, he couldn't have come up if the sins hadn't been removed, so the resurrection was proof of the atonement and the expunging and the removal of sins for the whole world. It isn't contrary to spiritual reality to say that the only people that will ever populate hell, will also be forgiven of their sins. They won't have benefited by it...but they're gone. So what should be the effect of my sins being forgiven? Expunged is actually a better word. They were so far taken away that they never even actually happened. So it isn't like there were sins listed and ok, "forget that one, and forget that one, forget that one, etc." But there is still a record of forgiven sins...it's like **THEY'RE NOT THERE!** What should never be my condition if I'm walking in faith? I should never be condemned. I should be convicted by the Holy Spirit; I may be led of that same Spirit to seek forgiveness if I offend you; I might even need to make restitution in some way. Not because I owe it as a result to sin, but I owe it out of being conformed to the One who gave Himself for me.

What about this Law-thing being removed? What would be the effect of that in our life? What should be the influence of a law being removed? It would be freedom to

walk in the Spirit, not without consequence. There's accountability in the Spirit. It's just not on the basis of right or wrong. It's based on Spirit or no Spirit. So our repentance isn't from "anger", our repentance is "I haven't been walking in the Spirit as I should be." Because if I only decide that anger is my problem – "I'm not going to do that again; I'm not going to....I'm not going to...." Has anybody been successful with that program? But it says, If we through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the flesh.... So that would be because the Spirit gives substance within us to another life. And if we walk in the Spirit, the life of Christ comes to the front and He will NOT sin. He's proven that. His life won't sin. It's impossible. So we can, and we well know, in this fellowship, that we can hold the truth in unrighteousness. But you can't hold Christ in unrighteousness. You don't necessarily lose the truth, but you lose Christ. So the restoration is not making right out of wrong, the restoration is restoring the joy of our salvation because the life of Christ is nourished.

What about this thing with death? If death was destroyed by resurrection, and was made an open show of by the resurrection from the dead, - our sins are forgiven, the Law is destroyed, and death is defeated. What should that produce in my life? How about removing the fear of death? Now that has some consolation to us. There are many testimonies to us of people on their death bed and they approached it with fear and in almost their last moments before their death peace and joy came over them and they've said, "I see angels (Jesus,)" and He brought them through what could be a terrifying experience with a sense of peace and safety. But I don't think that that is the primary purpose. I don't think that that's really the fear of death that is being referred to, for it says that they were kept through the fear of death subject to bondage all their life. This is not just the end of their life. So if I am really moving by the Spirit, I am beginning to engage the things that are of God, the fear of death is gone, and I am going to begin to offer a sacrifice on a daily basis. Paul said, "Brethren, by the mercies of God, I beg you, to offer your bodies a living sacrifice to God on a daily basis."

Now just keeping it real for a minute, that is something we haven't really learned to do yet. The major reason for it is FEAR. We know better than we are doing. We actually have borne witness in our spirit a better way to approach God than what we use. Milton Vereide used to say, you know, we go to a convention and there'd be a great anointing, mighty praises, good word, then it seems that after the convention we needed a flesh break. Did you ever hear him say that? There's

something about spirit, and I think it's in Galatians the 5th chapter it says that the flesh lusts against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. We've got that, right? These are contrary natures. This is a collision; these are irreconcilable things, so if we hold on to our life here, there is no way we can gain our life here. You can't have both. Jesus said it, either you will lose your life and find it or on holding on to your life, you'll lose it. He isn't talking about behavior. He was talking from a place where sins are forgiven, the Law's removed, the accountability to God is not based on what's right or wrong. It's just not! We spend more time over issues of what's "right or wrong". We get offended over issues of whether it's "right or wrong." We worry about issues of what's "fair," the things that don't really have pertinence to going on to maturity, the things that Paul said of "letting go in order that I may lay hold; forgetting those things that are past. Peter said, "...the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, reveling, banquetings, and abominable idolatries." He's not talking about just (sexual lusts...we've got kids...soooo) You know what I'm saying? That isn't the only aspect. How about the desire to live MY life good.

Now there are little petty-ante demons running around. They are third rate. They don't have any status. They are the ones that get kicked in hell. They're the Rodney Dangerfields of hell. They are the ones like murder and adultery, fornication and pedophilia. We consider these the worst, the ugliest, the most despicable, but it says that Satan himself is an angel of light; he is religious in nature and he hangs out with God and angels. He was there. "Where've you been?" I guess God missed him because He asked him, "Where've you been? You're usually here. I haven't seen you. Welcome back. Give us a travel log. This spirit that is our enemy is a good looking spirit. He did not come to Eve in the garden and say, "You know, did God tell you that you couldn't go surfing today?" Did he say that you couldn't build a house of bricks or He didn't talk to her about stuff that God hadn't said; he talked to her about stuff that God HAD said. All he wanted to do was not so much to twist the truth but to get her out of a proper relationship with God. Now remember that although the accounting was that she was a separate physical body from Adam, the truth of the matter is she was just the side of Adam that needed to be under a covering. And Adam joined her, so he came out from under his covering.

Let's go back to Genesis 1 for a second. Above and beyond all things, and we heard it in two of the first three songs that we sang tonight, that God wants our relationship to be based on TRUST. Abraham had his son after 25 years and some years later, God said, I want you to take your son and I want you to offer him on a mountain in the land of Moriah that I'll show you of. And it says...Early the next morning....can you imagine. I mean, forget what it was....but that I would respond to God early the next morning! And then on top of that, pile on what it was that He said to do! ...Early the next morning.... Abraham lived by trust, another word for faith, right? Abraham believed God and his faith counted to put him in a proper standing with God, but his behavior, to a large degree, was actually ignored. And the reason is because his trust was in the God of the promise, not the fulfilment of that promise by that God. And so it says that in a figure, he received him back from the dead. Fear was addressed as a result of an open show being made over principalities and powers, who through the fear of death seek to keep the children of God in bondage. Why? Because you can't offer a sacrifice in fear! This is going to cost us something! Gather together my people unto me who have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice.

You know, I don't know everybody's history in here, but I know that most of you have been around for decades. I know that most of you have "hit the wall" more than once. And the reason you are here is because God has been faithful to restore and to heal. Have you ever had personal encounter in the reality of the verse that says, "Hope deferred makes the heart sick?" Have you ever done something and been part of something and you go, "This isn't just wrong, this is horrible! What in the world, this can't be God!" And God's been faithful to come in behind that and say, I'm not concerned with what it looks like, I'm concerned with you heart. I want you to be established from the inside out. What did you say, Tim? The road isn't always going to be smooth; the sun isn't always going to be out. What's it look like when the "sun's out," by the way?

In Genesis the first chapter – nope, second chapter, *Thus the heavens and earth were finished and all the host of them (seen and unseen); and on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made, and he rested on the seventh day from all of his work which he had made.* Does that tell us what God did on the seventh day? No, it tells us what he didn't do. He rested from what he had been doing. It doesn't say what he did do. He stopped doing that. He was creating for six days and he quit creating, but it wasn't a hammock in Cancun. It goes on...*And God blessed the*

seventh day and sanctified it. Jesus referencing the seventh day asked the scribes and Pharisees, “Let’s see; was man created for the Sabbath or the Sabbath created for man? Here’s the key to that answer. God stopped creating but on the seventh day He blessed by SANCTIFYING what He created. And we come through the scriptures to Hebrews and it says, Therefore it remaineth for the people of God to enter into REST. Why – we need to be sanctified. We’ve been created; we need to be blessed by sanctification. And this is what God wants us to do, but if we can’t offer a sacrifice because we are bound up by fear, there’s not going to be a covenant established.

From the beginning of time, coming out of the garden and having children, and God somehow got across to those kids that he wanted a sacrifice. There’s no telling of that story – I mean there’s a telling of the account, but it doesn’t say, “And God spoke to them and said, ‘Bring me a sacrifice.’” But somehow they knew to bring a sacrifice and they offered what they had, and the one brought things that were concerning the law, based on right or wrong, things that he could control and he could do – the works of his hands, and God said, “Ehhhh...NO. I’ll give you another shot and we’ll talk later.” I like this one – he offered a substitutionary sacrifice – without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. This was established somewhere – I don’t know – it was before the Law.

Then He went to Cain and said, “Why are you upset? Your countenance has fallen, you are not looking at me anymore, you’re angry and sin lies at the door, and its desire is to eat you for lunch. What are you going to do?” He gave him every opportunity...but he wouldn’t. And it turns out that his fear had ruled his life. He said, Hey, if you’re going to turn me loose, people are going to seek my life, they are going to seek me for prey; they’re going to hunt me down. So He said, OK, anybody that touches you, I will be their enemy. So He gave him protection. But FEAR was the dominating thing. What wouldn’t Cain offer? He wouldn’t offer himself on the basis of a substitutionary sacrifice. He offered himself on the basis of what he could DO – the Law. What is the weakness of the Law as a standard? It leaves it up to us to do it. The Law is weak through the flesh, right? So our efforts are set aside and our covenant is established through TRUST.

What’s the last enemy? Death. What’s the link to death? FEAR! For the fear of death they are subject to bondage their whole life. It dominated things and it left them trying to get this thing done by their own hands, and God’s saying, What I

want to do is “bless you by sanctifying you, so that you can bring an appropriate sacrifice to Me.”

Let's think about Daniel. He had a vision. He didn't understand it. And when the angel got there he said, Let me tell you about this vision. Part of the explanation was that from the day – from the very second actually – that the daily sacrifice was removed from the holy place, what was set up in its place? The Abomination that makes desolate. You know that wasn't ugly? It looked good! It really kind of almost looked more suitable than the daily sacrifice. The problem was the consequence of it overtime, produced an undesirable result. (You say) What's Daniel and some dream got to do with me? Well, the holy place is here (in me), and if I am offering myself to God on a daily basis in trust, anticipating that He is going to do by His Spirit in me what I cannot do for myself, there is a sense of righteousness that exceeds my performance. But from the moment that I stopped on a daily basis offering myself to God, - it isn't that something else takes its place, it's that that's not there to protect me from my own inclinations. And so progressively, not recognizing it, all of a sudden something finally jumps up. Now if I'm sensitive enough to the Spirit, the Spirit comes in and says, “Hey, come on, get back on track,” and you repent from not offering the daily sacrifice. But if you can't be sensitive to that it will finally work out to some obvious sin, and it's the GRACE OF GOD that that happens. I didn't miss God by sinning, I missed God by not offering the proper sacrifice. The sin is a testimony of where it has taken me. It's a wake-up call.

I know some Christians and they are dear saints, and they are extremely gifted. I know this one guy who can turn on a prophetic direction like a light switch. He's phenomenally gifted and he's spends most of his life trying to find out what God is trying to do in his life so that he can focus with God on his problems. I say to him, “_____, just offer a daily sacrifice. You're not going to get on top of your problems by solving your problems. You're going to get on top of your problems by sowing yourself to the Spirit.” It's through the Spirit that you are going to mortify the deeds of the flesh. The flesh isn't going to destroy the flesh. No man has yet hated his own body. God's not looking for us to kill ourselves; He's looking for us to offer ourselves and to trust in the work of the Spirit so that Christ comes to fullness in us – growing up into Him into all things, Who is the Head – even Christ. ...till we all come to the measure of the stature of the FULLNESS...Oh, so there's a fullness. Would it be a stretch to say that there is a measure that is not quite full

yet? It doesn't mean that we are not on the path. It doesn't mean that we haven't begun. It doesn't mean that we are not in the process.

So if I want to be measured by the standard of the Law, I'm looking to be justified by my performance. Now let's say (it's a stretch for me, but some of you might qualify) – let's say that we are actually good for a month.= (I don't even know what I'm talking about, so....) and we were looking at the standard of the Law as being justifying, what would that produce in me? Pride, self-righteousness, arrogance – a haven for religious spirits. Yeah, but I might not see that, right? It might be supported by other spirits so that I don't see that because deception is part of that, too. But if I'll make a daily sacrifice, what begins to be impressionable, what I begin to be sensitive to is the presence or the absence of not living my life. Do you know that there is a verse in the Bible that says, "So Christ pleased not Himself." It didn't mean that he was walking around unhappy. It means that His will wasn't what dominated His life. He allowed His life to be dominated by subjecting Himself to another Spirit and another will, and He found the joy of THY salvation, not the joy of MY salvation –unsustainable and doesn't work very long.

So what God was doing on the seventh day – and we know that that is talking about Christ, right? We understand that the established rest IS Christ. But the way to enter in – it says that if we will cease from our own works, as He did from His.... You know, - how do I cease from my own works? I make a little list of the things I'm not going to do, but then I'm doing the list, right? There's only one way – it's to offer myself in trust to God. Well, tell me, give me a list for that! No, no..... It's Christ! It's a disposition, it's an inclination of the heart. If He isn't seeking me, if He hasn't called me, my response doesn't mean anything. But if He is seeking me, my response means everything. Haven't we not proven that? Have you not been forgiven your sins? Did you get forgiveness because you played some fantastic game of "Monopoly" and "got out of jail," passed Free? NO! It was the ministration of the Spirit. He both convicted you of sin and presented you with a solution to the problem. He brought us to an understanding; He brought us to an awareness of what we are and what we aren't. He sought me out. That is what made my response valid. There was something waiting on me when I responded – the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. Prior to getting the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, everybody said, "There's got to be something more!" Are you a genius? Do you know the hidden things of the Spirit and the unseen things of God? My experience was, I was sitting down with some saints and one of them turned to me and said, "I

think you're ready." I said, "I think I am too; for what?" And he said, "Well, for the Baptism of the Holy Spirit." I said, "What's that?" Genius!?!.... But I responded through the drawing of the Spirit and that gave it substance – in ME! This is the whole way that we have learned Him to this point; should we not walk then according to that government, instead of, as Paul wrote to the Galatians – *What are you doing? Are you crazy? You started in response to the Spirit and now you think you're going to take the football over the goal and score a touchdown on your own? Do you not know that we are in an environment where we are so over-mastered and out of our league to be successful on our own?*

In Proverbs or Ecclesiastes it says, *The way of a man is not in him, and the way that IS in him leads to ----* not a good thing. We can't do this out of ourselves. We have to come to an acknowledgement of that. And how many times does God have to humiliate me before I take a memo, and I say, Before humiliation comes, it might be a good thing to humble myself, so he doesn't have to! His humiliation (of me) is not a response from my heart. His humiliation is an offense to my life. The response from my heart is when I humble myself. Samson spent his whole life learning this lesson. He was born with the Spirit and a covenant and an anointing from his mother's womb. And it wasn't until the last day of his life that he realized that that anointing wasn't there to deliver him. That anointing was there to humble himself before God. So when he faced the gates of the city and they locked him in, they thought they had captured him, he went early in the morning. It says he that he lowered himself and lifted the gates of the city, he walked UP a hill, and he set them down in the dirt and he laughed at them. So that was his idea of what the anointing was for, right? But the last day of his life, the account was that there was a small child (you could probably preach on that for a while, too, but that's not the point), and he asked the child to put his hands upon the pillars, and it said that "Samson bowed himself with all of his strength." Whew! He finally got the point! Anointing is not here to make us great. Anointing is not here to help us demonstrate the gifts of the Spirit. Anointing is here for the same reason that Jesus was anointed – for His burial.

So Paul said, *This one thing I do...because I want to know Him and the power of His life, I'm willing by any means to be conformed to His death.* He wasn't talking about dying on a tree. He was talking about dying daily, because the fear of dying daily had been removed. Why? Through the witness of the Spirit that followed it that if you died daily, will you die tomorrow if you're not raised daily? Ever

thought about that? The resurrection is not a future event; the resurrection is not a past event. During Paul's time, he said, it was written, that there were those going about saying that the resurrection was already past and they overthrow the faith of many. They were limiting the resurrection to a man Jesus. Why would resurrection past overthrow somebody's faith unless they weren't anticipating being raised today? Although the resurrection is anchored in the testimony of Jesus' resurrection from the grave and making an open show over the principalities and powers, it was made there not just to release us from our sins, but it was a testimony that if we would be willing by the Spirit to offer ourselves to God, He will lift us up to something greater than what we offered.

So he said, I don't care what it takes. And it's going to take something, but we don't know what it is. And if you think about what it might be, all that can cause if fear – JUST DO IT! Just offer yourself in faith and trust to God. Has He not proven Himself that what He has done when you responded to the moving of His Spirit was good – forgiveness of sins (wow!), baptism of the Holy Spirit (cool!)...and all that was based on a response...a sowing to His Spirit. His Spirit was wooing and I responded. And that is what God is looking for.

Go back to Colossians 2...in the twentieth verse, and it's a very definite pattern, ...it's almost if we had an English major here, it's almost like there's a resonating – you know light and sound come in waves – it's like the wave dips again from the 13th verse - *And you being dead in your sins and trespasses* – then in the 20th verse it says, *Wherefore if you be dead with Christ (this is a better perspective) from the rudiments of the world, why as living in the world are you subject to ordinances – touch not, taste not, handle not, which are all to perish with the using after the commandments and decrees of men, which in deed have a show of wisdom in will worship and humility and neglecting of the body, but not in any honor to the satisfying of the flesh.* You know Paul came under a very significant assault, not only from the Jews. People said, You're preaching such a GRACE and such a MERCY and so little accountability to the Law that people are just going to hear this and they are going to go “nuts!” They're going to say, Well, if grace is the antidote to sin, then let grace flourish and we're going to go for sin with both hands on purpose. Should we then sin that grace might abound? Paul said, God forbid! If that's what we are in it for, if that's what we are looking, for then we are not feeling the wooing of the Holy Spirit. And maybe being free from a bunch of religiosity and going and trying it for a while might bring you back with a repentant heart. Might

not be the bad thing to do. But if we are hearing the Spirit, we are not making lists, we are offering ourselves by the Spirit to God, and it's a response. He is MOVED by these responses and He will answer those responses. We heard tonight in prophecy, just because you don't get your burger with no mustard on it in ten seconds doesn't mean God isn't going to answer. But does that mean I can touch and taste? Uuh, no, actually it doesn't. When Jesus came, He said the Law said you shouldn't kill, and I'm not still in favor of killing, but what I'm going to tell you is you shouldn't hate. Then the Apostle John came along and he swept up behind the parade and said that if you don't LOVE... What do we want for a standard? If the Law is going to be removed, what is our standard? Paul said, Look, when you come together, come together for the edification of one another. When you're off site, speak in tongues for your edifying, but when you come together, speak in a known tongue and it will edify and strengthen one another.

Somebody was fussing at me one too many times about the fact that the services in that location were no good, so I said, "Bring something. You don't like the service? Bring something." There's no restraint, do it! Don't like it? Do it! In spite of the fact that we have an accountability to one another, and this is a key point I think, for us going forward, if we are considering maturing, if we are considering finishing and not just satisfied with having started, we have a significant accountability to one another, but it is not the Source. It says that every High Priest that is ordained of God is ordained for men in things pertaining to God. If we don't develop a relationship with God, we have nothing for one another. And if the obstacles in our past, present, and I hope there's no obstacles in the past that are a problem, if there are, there shouldn't be... I guess let's just spend a moment there – in 1 John 1 it says, *If we confess our sin, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sin, and, AND, AND... to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.* It's almost an accepted basis of our culture that God forgives sin. It's not a tough one to latch on to. There's a tougher response to the Spirit the first time you prophesy in a service than there is to the forgiveness of sins. I know people still that have the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and haven't spoken in tongues. They say, Well, we don't need that. Well, you just proved you did! They say, Why would you say that? Well, it's obviously bothering you because you are defending yourself. God must be in there somewhere. What are you making an excuse for? You know, it's kind of like being an atheist. You can't even define what you can't believe in, yet you talk about God. If you say you don't need tongues, it's proof that you do. They say, What's the big

deal about tongues? Well, it's usually one of the first manifestations of the Holy Spirit in the life of a believer. Not the first evidence, not the first revelation, but one of the first manifestations. If we are called to be the manifestation of the sons of God, it ought to start somewhere in being that! And isn't it kind of interesting that God starts with the first manifestation, one of the first manifestations and evidences of the Holy Spirit in manifested form with the most unruly part of your body, and He can get it from an act of your will and a step of faith to speak mysteries of the Kingdom of God. Whew!!! This is really a cool God, you know? He is so desirous, and if we just respond, He will flood in behind and make things begin to happen to bring testimony to His intent and encourage us.

I don't do a lot of Greek, but I did look up the word "baptism." I found it like a third level root, I don't even know how I got there, but it means "*whelmed*"...whelmed. It's not a common word, but to be overwhelmed ...right? So if you think about baptism, even water baptism, what you are doing is you are putting your trust in the person who is lowering you beneath the water, not complete trust, but some trust, that they are going to take you down and bring you up. And one of the important reasons to trust that person is because you, the natural man, being under water is an adversarial situation. If you don't get up above the water at some point, you're going to die. And then follow behind that is the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and we already said that it was recorded in Galatians that the Spirit is against the flesh. The Baptism of the Spirit is a contrary environment to the natural man. There's going to come some panic! Just like if - somebody didn't go, In the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit....buried with Him in baptism, raised with Him into the newness of life....How's that ham sandwich comin'? I'm kind of hungry!5, 6, 7... I think he's still holding his breath, what do you think? Well, I don't know, let a little panic set in...good testimony. I'm not saying we should do that, but I am saying that that's the testimony, right? We've been lowered into an adversarial condition and we are raised up by trusting the person that put us down. That principle carries over to the Baptism of the Holy Spirit and the panic that we get sometimes when we are not willing to wait, we're not willing to be at rest, we're not willing to have confidence to stay uninvolved in our own salvation...the evidence of an adversarial circumstance. But you know what? Unless I stay there willingly, it doesn't have its proper effect. And I'm beginning to suspect that this sacrifice that was made on my behalf was supposed to be a testimony that would give me evidence of what the Holy Spirit wants to do with

me...make ME a sacrifice. By the MERCIES of God, present yourselves.... My first encounter with mercy was I didn't get what I deserved. But that isn't the real purpose of mercy. The real purpose of mercy is so that I can be involved in that which I don't have the right to be involved in.

Ephesians 1 - *That in the dispensation of the fullness of time, He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and in earth, even in Him, in whom also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestinated according to the purpose of Him who worketh all things after the counsel of His own will, that we should be to the **praise of His glory who first trusted in Christ.** In whom ye also trusted after ye heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of his glory.* This is where we are – *the redemption of the purchased possession* – we've been bought. It was a substitutionary sacrifice that paid for our emancipation, but's He's looking for us to join Him, not just one Son coming to glory through tribulation, but others to be added.

Have you ever thought about what the legal status of this whole thing is? God's going to judge the world. There's a white throne coming and everybody's going to be judged at the white throne, and the accounting is going to be, "Did you finish?" not "Did you start?" But I think, unless, this thing that we are talking about takes place, that I've got an "out" because there has only been one testimony on this planet of a glorified body for 40 days, and that was Someone who was born of a virgin, without sin...Big deal! How does that hold me accountable? I was not born of a virgin; I was born in sin and shapen in iniquity, so what does that mean to me? But if there's just some who were born in sin and shapen in iniquity and they take the full benefit of God's salvation so that without coming to death and coming back from the other side, because there are those who are waiting, there's someone who then proves that every man COULD have entered in...NOW all are held guilty and without excuse. You know what? That's the only thing left undone. Everything else has already been done. You tell me one thing that has not been accomplished except someone born in sin, shapen in iniquity, receiving a glorified body, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, without going through death, ...I want to hear it.

Do you think maybe the Spirit of God is wooing us? Do you think that if maybe we will just make an offering to Him on a daily basis that we'll establish a covenant? And if we could just get past the fear **to trust** and make that sacrifice on a daily basis, it would accumulate to the fulfillment of His purposes. That's all that's left.

The desire of God's heart has been focused on the beginning of time on **THIS DAY**. It's not that He wasn't invested in anything else, it doesn't mean that He is not birthing babies, that He's not baptizing people in the Spirit or that He's not moving in the gifts of the Spirit – It doesn't mean that He's not doing all that, but His desire has been from the beginning to bring forth a testimony so that His government is set up in the earth **in an apparent way** so that the kingdoms of this world become the kingdoms of our Lord and of His Christ.

There are some that feel like if we could just get back to the republic of the forefathers who wrote the constitution and the bill of rights and on that basis we would be better off. It didn't work! It didn't work! Turn on your TV! Oh, yeah, right...you don't have TVs. Buy a TV and turn it on! It didn't work; getting back to it isn't going to work again. There's only one thing lacking and there's only one way to get there. I have to humble myself before God and offer myself to the Spirit on a daily basis. And that my repentance be, that when I realize that I haven't been – by whatever means that awareness comes to me – I get back quick. When you come to realize that this is impossible by any other means, when the burden you carry – 'cause, do you not know – I'm not telling you anything that you don't know, right? – We all know that this is what our call is. I've seen some where the burden got so great that they've lost hope and left. And that certainly is going to be an obstacle we are all going to have to face and either succumb to or overcome. Nobody's going around it. It will stare you right in your eyes – somebody's going to blink...us or it.

But there's such a grace, there's such a desire that's coming from the throne of God to draw a people and to be to a people and make up what they recognize they can't do to fulfill this. You know, the risk is that we will look at how long it's been. I would say that I was genuinely born again when I was nineteen years old. I'm sixty six. In those short 47 years - and you think, of myself I don't really feel that I've gotten anywhere. Well, you say, How many 47-year increments do I have left to "make it?"

But even a man, born of a virgin, without sin, it took the Spirit of God three years to put him in the grave. It isn't a function of time, but it does take time. It did take an anointing on Samson's life – 40 years? – 35 years? I don't know how old he was – to recognize that the anointing wasn't there for his glorification, it was there so that he could humble himself before the throne of God. And the accounting of that ONE event in his life included him in Hebrews 11. Wow! And actually, the recording of that one event was so that more was accomplished in his death than in his life. Does that sound familiar at all? Sounds a lot like CHRIST.

What if – what IF the 47 years are to convince me to offer the right sacrifice.... How long did it take for God to get Him out of the grave? Thirty three years for God to get him in the grave – out of the grave in an instant, in a blink of an eye. The three days was a testimony to his death. It wasn't restraining God. God didn't start in three days, "Ooo, this is hard work! Three days – come on; somebody help Me get it done." Three days of death was a testimony to His death; it wasn't that God was straining to get Him out of the grave.

We've looked at this as something that we are accomplishing. It's not. God is trying to bring us into an agreement with Him and when He does.....THIS THING WRAPS QUICK! He said He was going to cut the work short in righteousness if we'll get right. It doesn't have to take long. I actually looked at that in the Greek and it really does mean that, too. You know the fact that most of you here, if we took the time to get your testimonies – "how'd you get here?" "How many times did you 'hit the wall?' How many times did you say, 'I'm done?'" You're being kept by the power of God. Now if we will engage with Him in purpose and in concert and with a proper response to Him, this thing could wrap up pretty quick. We don't need the date. We just need a day – and it's TODAY.