

From God's Calling to Eternal Life

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Let's see about our calling. Part of the difficulty that I found in reading the book *Quitting Church* was that there were two categories of people:

- the church-ed
- the un-church-ed

I didn't hear anything about the converted and unconverted, because one of the goals of Protestantism is to get people in church; but the problem is, as many as come in the front door, more go out the backdoor. They've been having problems with the ministers, problems with people, disillusionment. If you think your church experience was difficult, some of them have had the same thing and even worse.

Here is something that we know that the Bible tells us because now is not the time of salvation for everybody in the world. If it were the time of salvation for everybody in the world, then God would have a system to do that. Now is the time for God to call the firstfruits. Now is the time for warnings at the end. And by the way, there are a lot of people out there doing an awful lot of warning concerning an awful lot of things in addition to warnings that come from the Bible. My wife Dolores says, 'There are a lot of watchmen out there. There are different levels of them.'

What do I mean by that? Not everyone's going to listen to someone whom they consider 'religious' or that is following the Bible. But they will listen to someone like Rush Limbaugh, Glenn Beck, Michael Savage, or whomever. All of them, in their own way and their own level of doing things, are sounding an alarm for the people. The different ones who are doing the warnings are warning about economics, immigration, moral problems, political problems, and so forth. All of those tie back into the Bible when we understand them. In a sense, we can take advantage of that because more people are aware of more things at that level, but they need to understand that all of this eventually comes down to God.

Out of that there will be some people who are called. Matthew 22:14: "For many are called, but few *are* chosen." What does that mean? It means exactly what it says.

We'll see an explanation of this, because if God were trying to save the whole world today, He would set His hand to save it. He's got a plan to save it. He has a means of doing so and that will be when Jesus returns.

Stop and think about all the problems that we have—not only in America, but in the whole world—and name one man that you know of in the human race who could solve those problems. Or let's put it another way: Given all the problems and the magnitude of the problems that we have today, is there any human being that has the knowledge or understanding to correct it? The answer is *no*, only God.

That's why 'many are called, but few are chosen.' When the calling goes out, that is also a warning message. Isn't it interesting that we have many, many different avenues of getting the Word out today? There are many people within the Churches of God, some not in the Churches of God, who are warning against the moral decadence that they see all around. This helps people become more interested in the things that they need to know from the Bible. When they hear the Word, here's what happens.

Jesus gave the *parable of the sower*, and He gives the explanation of it, Matthew 13:18. "Therefore, hear the parable of the sower: When anyone hears the Word of the kingdom and does not understand *it*, the wicked one comes and snatches away that which was sown in his heart. This is the one who was sown by the way" (vs 18-19). It made an impression, but it didn't last. They have heard a calling, but they haven't responded to be chosen. This is something that we understand, but that the world doesn't understand.

Then He goes along and He explains again why, v 21: "But *because* he has no root in himself, *he* does not endure; for when tribulation or persecution arises because of the Word, he is quickly offended. And the one who was sown among the thorns is the one who hears the Word, but the cares of this life and the deceitfulness of riches choke the Word, and it becomes unfruitful" (vs 21-22).

What happens when people get in trouble? As I've said before, **God never wastes a good crises!** As a matter of fact, **He causes them!** So, Raum Emanuel is stealing from God, because politically he says, 'Never waste a good crises.' What does God do when there are crises? People want to know:

- What's happening?
- Why are things going the way they are?
- How come things are difficult?

All those who have had money are saying, 'Whoa, I've got to start again.' So, God takes it away.

Verse 23: "But the one who was sown on good ground, this is the one who hears the Word and understands, who indeed brings forth fruit and produces—one a hundredfold, another sixtyfold and another thirtyfold." The ones who produce and come into the good ground are those who are chosen because they repent. There is a process that God uses to begin to work with people. It's quite a process when we understand it.

Here's a principle: When there're troubles and difficulties that come along and people are trying to find and understand it, many people turn to God. Sometimes they don't know where to go. Sometimes they end up saying, 'God, where are You?' I don't know if that happened in your life when you first began, but here's a principle in how God begins to deal with people. This is important for us to understand because God has not forgotten the rest of the world. He'll take care of those later, as we know through the Holy Days.

This is going to be important for us to realize also, because there will be new people coming along. The inquiries that we're getting from ChurchatHome.org and CBCG.org, and we are getting more requests for baptism; also, with the Bible, there are many second generation children who have forsaken the way who are coming back and who are finding their way—so all of this all fits together. We are going to experience here, I think in the next year or two, given the circumstances that we have, we're going to find that there are going to more people who want to find out about God. There will be more who will follow through and search out to seek God, which is the thing that they have to do. Where is God?

There are plenty of Bibles around. And nearly all the Bibles that are there will give the basic information to help people begin to answer the call. With *The Holy Bible in Its Original Order*, we have all of the errors of Protestantism corrected out of the *King James Version*. I'm going to work up a special study on that, because in going through and developing *How to Understand Paul's Difficult Scriptures Concerning the Law and Commandments of God*, it's evident that every incorrect translation of the *King James Version* of the Bible is the basis for every single one of their wrong doctrines and misinterpretations, almost every single one.

They'll have to come to the point that they really want to know and understand the Truth and this is where the things that we are doing through ChurchatHome.org and CBCG.org, which combined now we are well over 50,000 distinct visitors every month. So, we're beginning to reach out to more

people. We hope that that will expand even more. But here's the basic thing.

2-Chronicles 15:1: "And the Spirit of God came upon Azariah [a prophet] the son of Oded. And he went out to meet Asa... [king of Judah] ...and said to him, 'Hear me, Asa, and all Judah and Benjamin. The LORD *is* with you **while you are with Him**...." (vs 1-2). Here's a great principle to understand: ***two cannot walk together unless they agree!*** With God, we must agree with Him. Too many people want God to agree with them. Then that turns everything upside down.

"...And **if you seek Him**... [When you start seeking God something happens, as we will see right here, and we'll explain that this is New Testament doctrine as well.] ...He will be found by you. But if you forsake Him, He will forsake you" (v 2).

Unfortunately, after God blessed Asa for seeking Him, he forsook Him, and everything went to 'H in a HB.' You know what that is. The first 'H' you understand, the 'HB' is a *hand-basket*. We'll see some parallels that we have here in what's happening in America and different nations around the world.

Verse 3: "And for a long time Israel *had been* without the true God..." Israel and Judah have always had a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. As we have seen, the three major counterfeits of worldly Christianity are:

- Sunday
- Lord's Supper, Eucharist, Communion
- Holidays

God has three major things that He also uses, which are the real thing and the three that worldly Christianity has are the counterfeit. God has:

- The Sabbath—because the Sabbath is a special day in which God puts His presence for those who are seeking Him
- The Christian Passover
- The Holy Days

Sunday is the wrong day and takes away from God and you can be very well intended and have good intentions, but remember, good intentions pave the way to hell. Even every sin, except the most malicious, starts out with a good intention. So, intentions may or may not count, depending on how people pursue and seek God.

"...without the true God, and without a teaching priest, and without law" (v 3). Today we're living in a lawless society. View what's going on in Washington, D.C.—Washington, D.L.C., the District of Liars and Corruption—it's on full display.

Verse 4: "And when they turned in their trouble to the LORD God of Israel, and sought Him, He was found by them." That's the key. What we need to do with Church at Home is take advantage of the troubles and difficulties that are happening and appeal to people.

- Why are they happening?
- Why is your life the way that it is?
- Why is the church that you've been going to falling apart?
- Why do the ministers have sex problems and drinking problems and disillusionment problems and why are they leaving after five years tenure on the average?
- Why do these big mega-churches become so carnal? They start out as a good thing and they're no more than a big shopping center and all the little churches are falling apart and coming to nothing.
- What is happening?
- What is the message of God to every one of you?

We can explain it, because this is the same situation.

Verse 5: "And in those times *there was* no peace to him who went out, nor to him who came in, but great tumult *was* upon all the inhabitants of the lands." What do we have today? *Unemployment, crime, sickness, disease, war, corruption, all of those*; all the result of it!

Verse 6: "And nation was destroyed by nation, and city by city, for God troubled them with every adversity." That's exactly what's happening today. We have dedicated adversaries against us, because we've left God.

Verse 7: "But you be strong and do not let your hands be weak, for your work shall be rewarded.'... [what did they do?]: ...And when Asa heard these words, and the prophecy of Oded the prophet, he took courage and put away the abominable idols out of all the land of Judah and Benjamin, and out of the cities which he had taken from mount Ephraim. And he renewed the altar of the LORD before the porch of the LORD. And *he* gathered all Judah and Benjamin, and the strangers with them out of Ephraim and Manasseh, and out of Simeon; for they fell to him out of Israel in great numbers, when they saw that the LORD his God *was* with him" (vs 7-9). That's how God worked with Israel. Now today, He still works with Israel as a nation, but not in the spiritual sense that He did back here in this particular case.

Let's see how God deals with individuals. We will see the mechanism that God uses. This is why in every one of our lives you can look back and you can look and you can remember the time that

something happened, almost like a switch went on in your mind. I remember the first time that I started to seek God. I had a lot of problems in my life. I was going to San Mateo Junior College, later the College of San Mateo. I lived in Burlingame, which was right close there. I was a chef in a restaurant. I had quite a few problems and I was just out walking one night. I didn't know anything about God. I attended church once in a while growing up. At this time I must have been about 25-26, somewhere around there.

I was out walking at night and I looked up through the fog from the Bay Area there and saw some stars and I said, 'God, I remember that You said if you seek, you shall find. I'm in trouble and I need Your help.' It was a complicated thing to answer that prayer, because I worked Monday, Wednesday, and Friday from three in the afternoon till midnight, actually four to midnight. Went to school in the daytime. Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday I did all my homework. I had no television, no radio in my little apartment, but I did have a radio in my little Nash Rambler. I always had my radio tuned to the classical music station and never changed it. So, one night as I was driving, after I had been studying, turned the radio on in the car, and there was Bach, the worst Bach, the Brandenburg Concertos. Everyone of them sounded like the dirge. I said, 'Oh, I can't stand it.' So, I turned the dial and guess what I heard? The *World Tomorrow Program*. As soon as I heard it I said, 'That's it!' So, I wrote.

Here's how the process works spiritually. God has a special message for choosing. It's not everyone who wants to, or everyone who hears the Bible and they get excited about it for a little while, but for those who respond. This is what the Protestants don't understand. How many have heard Franklin Graham interviewed on television? The good Catholics on Fox News have him there to show his Christmas tinker toys for all the little kids overseas. Then they ask him about Christ and the return of Christ, and they say, 'When is Jesus going to return?' What is the first answer? 'He may come tonight.' Why do they answer that? *Because they don't know when the 'rapture' is going to come*, so He may come tonight. But that doesn't mean that He's coming to the earth. I think they're going to have a lot of surprises in store. It's not going to work quite that way.

God is selective because the warning goes out, the word goes out, and in America they have four Bibles average in every household. They can pick it up and read it if they want to.

But here's the key, John 6:44: "No one... [this is pretty exclusive] ...can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise

him up at the last day." How does God do that? *He says seek Him, but no one can come to Christ unless the Father first draw him!* How does that work?

Verse 45: "It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.'...."—which is an interesting statement. Everything you know from the Bible has come from God. When you read the Bible, and you believe it and you follow it, God is the One Who is teaching you. As you go along and you study the Bible, you have many of these times where 'ping' the light goes on and, 'Oh, I understand that.' That's God working with you. We'll see how He works with you here.

"...Therefore, everyone who has heard from the Father... [in this particular way God is working with them] ...and has learned, comes to Me" (v 45). That means comes to Him in repentance.

How does God do this? Just put in your margin there or in your notes: God does it by what is called the '*eyes of God.*' It says in 2-Chron. 16, 'the eyes of God go to and fro through the earth seeking those who are seeking Him.' That's how you make connection with God.

Let's see something about *the eyes of God* Let's see what Jesus says. Maybe you've read this Scripture, but maybe you've never followed through to really understand it. God has a mechanism that He uses all the time. This tells us something maybe you haven't understood in the past.

Revelation 1:4: "John to the seven churches that *are* in Asia: Grace and peace *be* to you from Him Who is, and Who was, and Who *is* to come; and from the seven spirits that are before His throne."

- What are those seven spirits?
- How do they work?

Verse 5: "And from Jesus Christ, the faithful Witness, the Firstborn from the dead, and the Ruler of the kings of the earth. To Him Who loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood."

- What are the seven spirits of God?
- What do they do?

Revelation 5:6 answers the question: "Then I saw, and behold, before the throne and the four living creatures, and before the elders, *was* standing a Lamb as having been slain, having seven horns and seven eyes..."

- What are the seven horns?
- What is a horn in the Bible? *A king or a leader!*
- Where are these seven horns? *In His head!*
- Who is the head of the Church? *Christ!*

- How many churches are in Rev. 2 and 3? *Seven!*
- Could it be that those seven horns represent the seven churches? *Very likely!*

"...and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God that are sent into all the earth" (v 6).

God knows what's going on, on the earth, at all times. If someone is seeking God, he or she can find Him if they seek Him with all the heart. If they're just in trouble, and they say, 'Oh, Jesus, save me,' and God intervenes to bring them out of their trouble and they say, 'Well, thank you, Lord,' and go on with their lives, they're not seeking God. They're just having remorse because of the problems that they are in. That happens to a lot of people.

What happens when a person really comes to a point in their lives, because of the circumstances that they are in, God uses that in combination with the seven spirits *to lead them to repentance.* That's how the Father draws them.

Now let's read another verse that we have read many, many times, but let's add that to this. We find that the process of calling for conversion and being chosen is actually a joint project. It says in John 6 that 'none can come to Christ unless the Father draw him.' We find what Jesus says here in:

John 14:6: "Jesus said to him... [After Thomas said, 'How can we know the way?'] ...'I am the Way..." The *only way* to God is through Jesus Christ. You have to be searching for the way out of your trouble, out of your mess, out of the spiritual things that you are going through, *through Christ!* *He is the way!* That applies to everything from that point forward in everything that we do.

"...and the Truth..." (v 6). This is what we need. When we're out there and don't know the Truth, when we're out there and have a lot of problems coming down upon us, we don't know where we're going, we don't know what is happening, we don't know how our lives are going to turn out. Maybe we've messed them all up and everything is in a mess and ruined. We'll see what has to happen in that.

- Do you want the Truth?

The real point of the beginning of *God choosing you*, or anyone that He chooses is:

- Do you really want the Truth?
- Do you love the Truth?
- Do you want to live by the Truth?

That can only come through Christ!

"...and the Life..." (v 6). People realize that this physical life, being a mess, there's got to be something better, not only physically, but also

spiritually. The only way to eternal life is through Christ.

Now notice the joint participation of Christ with the Father: "...no one comes to the Father except through Me." (v 6)

Let's go back and read John 6:44 again and put those together. "**No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him...**" So, you see it is a joint process. This is where the dividing line for all 'religions' takes place, because if you want to follow Christ as *the Way*, that means you want to walk in His footsteps. He is *the Truth* and you want the Truth. What is this going to do with every other religion in the world? You start proving.

- Do they have the Truth?
- What is the Truth?

Then another thing takes place: you want to know about the Truth. Remember when you first began to understand about the Truth? Today, we don't have to listen to a half-hour program and then write in for a booklet. We don't have to write in for a magazine; now we have it all online 24/7 around the world. I just hope and pray that every Church of God website will be out there actively working with people, calling people, drawing people, being used as a instrument in God's hands.

The way to reach people, and there are more people, is a whole lot faster and more in depth, and they can learn and they can find things. I had an e-mail from some people the other day and says, 'I've listened to you and studied you for two years on the Internet and I want to be baptized.' I get e-mails, 'I'm getting my life straightened out.' We do have a prison program, too. We send out the paperback edition of the Bible free. All they have to do is ask for it. We know there may not be many conversions with the inmates, but at least if it can help them pull away from criminal thinking and be productive in the society, we're happy to do that. So, that's our part for our community service.

Let's see how God uses circumstances. Let's combine this all together now. Circumstances, wanting to find out about God, the seven Spirits of God finding those who are trying to seek Him. You might liken those like satellites, or these drones. These spirits are not spirit beings, they are called *eyes*, because *they are a spirit apparatus that God has made for the very purpose of finding out what's going on on the earth*, where He does not have to come down here to find out.

Although God can know anybody's thoughts at any time if He wants to tune in to them. God is all-mighty, all-powerful, but this is how He does it. This becomes the mystery of the Kingdom of God.

How does God send a warning and a message out to so many people and 'many are called, but few are chosen,' how does He do it? *Through circumstances, through one of the seven spirits, and through conviction of sin!* We find that all wrapped up here in Luke 15 under the parable of the prodigal son.

Luke 15:11: "Then He said, 'A certain man had two sons; and the younger of them said to *his* father, 'Father, give me that portion of the property which falls to me.' And he divided to them *his* living. And not many days after, the younger son gathered everything together *and* departed into a distant country. And there he wasted *all* his substance, living *in* debauchery'" (vs 11-13).

Like so many people, they think, 'I'm grown up, I'm on my own. I'm out of here.' And lo and behold, they're confronted with adult challenges. Sounds like he went to San Francisco first, if he lived on the West Coast, but not quite, because they don't have swine farms in San Francisco.

Verse 14: "'But after he had spent everything..." People have to be brought low. People have to be humbled—mentally, spiritually, some cases physically. Those are the crises of life that God uses to deal individually with us. If we respond to God, then we will see something else happens, too, because of these circumstances.

"...there arose a severe famine throughout that country..." (v 14). Nothing worked out the way he thought. Today we can put this in terms of runaways, drugs, divorce, remarriage, employment problems, all of those things, personal sins, obsession with sex. One told Tiger Woods he ought get a Christian counselor and not a Buddhist counselor, because that would be more credible. There's a good example of someone who went to the bottom, but didn't respond to God. He's responding back to himself and what *he* wants to do. Maybe he will improve his behavior, have to wait and see, we don't know.

But nevertheless, so here are the circumstances. "...and he began to be in need. Then he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine" (vs 14-15). There's no more dirty, unclean job to a Jew than going out and working in a swine house. For all of those from Iowa it may smell like money back there, but it still stinks and it is dirty.

Verse 16: "And he was longing to fill his stomach with the husks that the swine were eating, but no one gave *anything* to him." Something began to happen and this is the point then, where God begins to choose someone, if they will further respond to Him.

Verse 17: "And **when he came to himself...**" Key thing!

- You've got to admit the truth
- You've got to admit your errors
- You have to confess your sins to God and let's see what God does at this point

Rom. 2—here's what God does. When God begins dealing with us and we begin responding back to God that way, and we've been thoroughly beaten up by circumstances, whether they're economic, emotional, religious, sexual, drugs, divorce, remarriage, whatever, and *we start coming to ourselves*. We start admitting when we come to ourselves that *we've sinned!* Then here's what God does. He's talking to the Jews who severely judge people for their lack of religiosity.

Romans 2:3: "Now, do you think yourself, O man, whoever is judging those who commit such things, and you are practicing them *yourself*, that you shall escape the judgment of God?" What happens when you first come to a conviction of sin? *You say, 'I've been wrong.'*

Verse 4: "Or do you despise the riches of His kindness and forbearance and longsuffering, not knowing that the graciousness of God leads you to repentance?"

So, *through the grace of God He starts leading you to repentance!* How many people have said, 'The first time I prayed and confessed my sins, it was'—and you do it to God, you don't go to a priest. You're never honest to a priest. I've never found a Catholic that told me they really told him everything. You confess them directly to God and Jesus Christ. What happens? *You probably cry a lot!* You probably confess how evil and miserable and wrong that you have been. After you're done, you feel like a great burden has been lifted. *It has, because God is with you to lead you to repentance!*

What is this repentance supposed to do? Some people can just get up and walk away and forget it. If that happens, then the Spirit of God, one of the seven spirits that may have been working with them, pulls back. The work of God the Father and one of the seven spirits is to find out what's going on and for the Father to begin drawing that individual. If they stop responding to God, then God will pull back from them.

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When God leads us to repentance, let's see what happens; let's see how this works. Repentance means **a change, a stopping, a turning around, and going God's way!** That's why it is *'the Way, the Truth and the Life.'* You put it all together. Here's what has to happen.

Luke 15:17: "And when he came to himself, he said..." Each one of us have to come to ourselves; have to admit, yes we're sinners; have to understand that we as human beings do not know *the Way*. We do not know the Truth. We cannot give ourselves life. We are weak, we are fallible, and only God can save us, and only God can change our circumstances, and only God can impart to us eternal life. We'll see what has to happen after you come to yourself.

I remember when I was driving on down to Pasadena to be baptized, at that time they had a lot of *World Tomorrow* radio programs. This was back in 1960. I was baptized October 19, 1960. I remember driving along and hearing a program on repentance and what Jesus went through. Just south of Bakersfield there's a spot on Hwy 99 where they've got about eight or ten miles of these real tall eucalyptus trees. I went through there several years ago and they're still there. It was about 9:30 at night and I was on my way to Pasadena and I was crying and repenting and thinking. What happens, you have flashbacks to all of your sins and crimes and stupidity. That's what it means *to come to yourself!*

Here's what this man did: "...he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have an abundance of bread, and I am dying of hunger? I will arise and go to my father, and I will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you'''" (vs 17-18)—admittance of sin, conviction of sin; conviction of sin that you want to turn and go the other way.

In this case, in the parable, the father is like God the Father. Here this young man went out and ruined his life, but there is salvation and redemption, because God made us so we could repent, and He would lead us to repentance and He made us so we can be redeemed. He made us so we can have our minds and our emotions repaired with the Spirit of God and get our lives straightened around, and then to live God's way.

So here's admittance of sin. "...I am no longer worthy to be called your son..." (v 19). You come to understand how worthless and wretched that human nature and human behavior is. A lot of people can do good things.

We're going to see the other son, who never went out and sinned, and when he did the foolish thing of comparing himself with his brother, he sinned; because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. No human being can stand before God, other than a sinner, and you need God's grace and mercy and forgiveness. God uses all of these circumstances. Just think of what Jesus said to the apostles back in John 4. He said, 'Don't say it's four

months to the harvest. Look up for the fields are white unto the harvest.'

With the circumstances we have in the world today, let's think that maybe God is going to do a whole lot more than we ever figured in His time and in His way, and maybe this is His time and what we need to do is our part in helping preach the Gospel, do the things for new people. We've had the blessing and privilege of being able to study and grow in grace and knowledge and understanding:

- to know the Bible forward and backward
- to be able to understand these things
- to memorize them, to understand them

We're going to have the opportunity to help others come to the same point.

Verse 20: "And he arose *and* went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion..." When the seven eyes of God are going to and fro in the world and He finds those who are seeking Him, and He begins to lead them, the process of repentance carries much further.

Let's add a little bit more in here from Isa. 55; it tells us some important things about seeking God, and it also tells us what we are to do. This is a spiritual operation that God has worked out with His Holy Spirit, with the seven spirits of God, with the angels of God, with the very fact that He created all human beings and gave every human being a *spirit of man* in him, and also put into human beings something He has not put into any other of His creation which is this: we have, what it says there in Ecc. 3, eternity in our heart. Meaning, every human being has a sense that there's more to life than this life, that there's something greater, that there's something beyond them. Now, the devil comes along and misleads a lot of people and pretends he's God, and so forth; but nevertheless, God has put that there.

Isaiah 55:6: "Seek the LORD while He may be found..." We know from prophecies that there's going to come a time when it's going to get so bad and be so much evil around that He's not going to be found by very many people.

"...call upon Him while He is near" (v 6). A lot of people think that God is way off in the universe someplace. Just because we can't see where the throne of God is, doesn't mean it's far away from the earth. After all, is it not the earth that's most important in His plan at the present time with human beings? *Yes, it is!* It's not on Jupiter or Saturn or Pluto, or on the moon that goes around Saturn called Titan. You listen to some of these programs,

'Oh, there may be life up in Titan.' But you know it's 490-degrees below zero. It's for the earth.

Here's the first step: If you're going to respond to God, *you have something to do*. You want God to help you, you want God to draw you, you want to be chosen by God:

Verse 7: "Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts... [It has to be a change of heart and mind and attitude.] ...and let him return to the LORD, and He will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for He will abundantly pardon." It's there; this is God's invitation

Then He tells you, 'I want you to understand something,' v 8: "'For My thoughts *are* not your thoughts, nor your ways My ways,' says the LORD." That's why Jesus said the first thing: '*I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life.*'

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." God has a great plan that He says, '***The eye has not seen, the ear has not heard the things that God has prepared for those that love Him.***' We can only contemplate by reading some of the things in the Scriptures, what is it going to be like to be a spirit being?

The one I want to try out first after born again, which is at the resurrection, I want to walk through a wall. I want to understand what that's going to be like. What is it going to be like to be an immortal spirit being and to be free of all the carnality and all the pulls of the flesh and to be totally rid of the *law of sin and death* that plagues us and pulls us down? That's going to be something! God shows that if we do, He'll answer.

Let's see how all of this applies right here in this parable. What does this tell us in the parable?

- God is waiting
- God is willing
- God is merciful
- God is kind
- He will forgive

And as He says there in Isa. 1, 'Though your sins be like scarlet, they'll be like wool.' We'll see that in operation right here:

Luke 15:20: "And he arose *and* went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion... [Didn't we just read that? 'He will abundantly pardon.' It's another expression for compassion.] ...and ran *and* embraced him, and ardently kissed him."

God loves the world. God loves all the human beings that He has created. Since He's not calling all of them now, then their time will have to

come later, because God wants as many as possible to be saved, but they have to come to Him. Since God is only calling a few, choosing a few of all of those that are called, that's why we find ourselves in small groups. God has called us so that when Christ returns we are going to bring to the world the Kingdom of God. We have the greatest calling that's possible, brethren. Let's keep that in mind when we see what's happening in the world, because what is happening in the world today is not very pleasant wherever you look.

Now notice, the son had this all memorized. He probably thought it over and over again as he was feeding the swine, and as he was walking through the muck and the mire and the stench. When you're around swine you have to be careful because if you do something the wrong way, they'll attack you and run you down and eat you up. So, he practiced this:

Verse 21: "And his son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'" When we come to ourselves and we see all of our sins and all the things that we have done, we say, 'God, do you still love me?' *Yes, God does!* Notice this is a type of what's going to happen to us when we're resurrected.

Verse 22: "But the father said to his servant, 'Bring out a robe, the best robe...'" This is a type of salvation here and resurrection. Are we going to have new garments? *Yes, spiritual garments!* Going to have a new name? *Yes!*

"...and clothe him, and give *him* a ring for his hand and sandals for *his* feet" (v 22). Jesus also said that He came to 'give us life and life abundantly.' And that means *spiritually*, not just physically.

Verse 23: "And bring the fattened calf and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry." Let's have a feast; let's have a celebration; this is a great day!

Verse 24: "For this my son was dead, but is alive again; and he was lost, but is found." And they began to be merry."

Now here comes the obedient son. He didn't recognize he had a problem. This also applies to all of us, because what are we going to do when God calls someone who's really been through the mill, and have done things we have never done, and committed sins that were only fleeting things in our minds, compared to them. Let's not act like the son who stayed back.

Verse 25: "But his elder son was in a field; and when he was coming *back*, and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. And after calling

one of the servants nearby, he inquired what these things might be. And he said to him, 'Your brother has come *home*, and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has received him safe and well.' Then he was angry and would not go in..." (vs 25-28). Now comes out his sin—self-righteousness, hatefulness toward his brother.

"...As a result, his father came out and pleaded with him. But he answered *and* said to *his* father, 'Behold, I have served you so many years, and never did I transgress your commandment; yet, you never gave me a kid, so that I might make merry with my friends; but when this son of yours came, who has devoured your living with harlots, you killed the fattened calf for him.' Then he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that *is* mine is yours. But it was fitting to make merry and rejoice because your brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, but is found'" (vs 28-32).

Let's take this another step further. What is it that we do after God leads us to this point? In many times this is quite an emotional and traumatic experience. Then we have to do something that God requires, because God just doesn't give eternal life out like lollipops. It's not like the Protestants say. You watch Joel Osteen, I watched him one day for five minutes, was all I could take. He says, 'Pray this prayer with me. You say, *Lord, I confess my sins. And, Lord, enter into my heart.*' And he says, 'You're born again.' That's a false Christ, that's a false way. There is no deep repentance involved.

When repentance is of the level that God wants for sin, we are to be baptized, Acts 2:38: "...Repent and be baptized each one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for *the* remission of sins, and you yourselves shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

God gives you what you need now so you can have the spiritual tools to overcome the sins that you have been living in. You want those washed away. In order to do that, you have to enter in to a covenant with God. The covenant is this: '*God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him may not perish, but may have everlasting life.*' God has already performed His part of the covenant, now He wants you to become a part of that covenant through baptism. Baptism, then, becomes your pledge and your covenant with God. This is what the Protestants don't understand. They don't understand covenant law.

Covenant law is this: ***You demonstrate to God by a sacrifice that you pledge that you will perform what you have committed yourself to do or you will become like that dead animal.***

So, baptism then is a *spiritual death*. You bury the old self and sin in a watery grave (Rom. 6). In this God does a spiritual thing that is very amazing: Since Christ was the Lord God of the Old Testament Who came as Jesus Christ in the New Testament, He was Creator of all human beings that have been or will be. As such, His death—because ‘the wages of sin is death’—will pay for all the sins of all human beings because He gave us a nature because of the sin of Adam and Eve that is sinful. That’s why all human beings sin. Now He’s saying, ‘I am going to give you eternal life if you pledge your life unto death as Jesus gave His life for you, but I’m going to make it easier. It will be by water baptism.’

Romans 6:1: “What then shall we say?....” Because of what God has done; Christ died for us at the appointed time. We have the Passover coming up, and that was the set appointed time. The counterfeit is Easter. The Truth is the Passover.

“...Shall we continue in sin, so that grace may abound?” (v 1). We’ve got our lives in a mess. We want them straightened out. We don’t want to go back to the old way of living because that’s going to create the same problems or worse. Just like a drug addict. They know that if they slip back in it’s going to get worse. So likewise, we have to overcome sin. God gives us the tools to do it with His Spirit.

We’re not to “...continue in sin that grace may abound. MAY IT NEVER BE! We who died to sin... [That’s what you die to. That’s what baptism is all about. **You die to the way of sin!**] ...how shall we live any longer therein? Or are you ignorant that we, as many as were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death?” (vs 1-3).

Now we have a joint operation of God going on in our lives. God is going to do something special, because if the Father draws you to Christ, and through Christ you come to the Father, through repentance, now God is going to make an eternal covenant with you, but you’ve got to die first through the watery grave of baptism. Notice how he expresses it here and this is why Jesus becomes your personal Savior, because He’s personally involved in forgiving you, and He’s personally involved in helping you overcome sin and to grow in grace, grow in knowledge, and develop the mind of Christ.

Verse 3: “Or are you ignorant that we, as many as (were baptized into Christ Jesus, were baptized into His death? Therefore, we were buried with Him through the baptism into **the** death...” (vs 3-4). What does that mean? *That means that God the Father is taking that sacrifice of Jesus Christ and is personally applying it to every repentant sinner!* And furthermore, puts us in a relationship with God,

that as we grow and change and overcome sin within:

- we need to have our minds changed
- we need our hearts changed
- we need our emotions changed

so that we can come to God and have those sins forgiven whenever we confess them. That’s quite an exchange! Here is what it is:

“...buried with Him through **the** baptism... [there’s only one] ...into **the** death... [Christ’s death] ...so that, just as Christ was raised from *the* dead by the glory of the Father, in the same way, we also should walk in newness of life” (v 4).

We’re not going to now walk in the way of sin. We’re going to walk

- in the way of Christ
- in the way of the commandments of God
 - ✓ led by the Spirit of God
 - ✓ with Christ in us
 - ✓ God the Father in us

Spiritually! ‘Walk in newness of life!’

Now notice what God does with this operation, because a covenant is absolutely binding. You don’t walk away from a covenant. It’s irrevocable. Christ’s death was irrevocable. God is applying that to our sins.

Verse 5: “For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death...” Taking the death of Christ, applying it to you in that watery grave, so you are conjoined in that perfect sacrifice of God and that is your life. That’s quite a tremendous thing!

“...if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of His resurrection” (v 5).

Put in your notes there Rev. 1:13 about the glory of Christ. Matt. 17 this gives us a little vivid picture of it. We put to death the old model. Now let’s see the promise of the new model that we will be in the likeness of His resurrection. He took Peter, James, and John with Him up to the Mount of Transfiguration.

Matthew 17:2: “And He was transfigured before them; and His face shined as the sun, and His garments became white as the light.” God wants us to be born again into His kingdom as spirit beings, His very sons and daughters, and to live forever. This is what Christ looks like in spirit.

Verse 3: “Then behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah talking with Him.... [this is a vision showing what it’s going to be like] ...And Peter answered *and* said to Jesus, ‘Lord, it is good for us to be here. If You desire, let us make three

tabernacles here; one for You, and one for Moses, and one for Elijah.' While he was speaking, a bright cloud suddenly overshadowed them; and behold, a voice out of the cloud said, 'This is My Son, the Beloved, in Whom I delight. Listen to Him!'" (vs 3-5).

So likewise, when Jesus' sacrifice is applied to us and we're conjoined to that death, we're going to be raised in the likeness of what Christ is like now in His glorified form. That's why we need to listen to Him.

Later then He said, v 9: "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of man has risen from *the* dead."

This becomes so awesome, so fantastic of what God is going to do for us that to use the modern phrase, it is 'mind-blowing.' God's calling is greater than anything we can imagine. It gives us some hints of it here:

Philippians 3:20: "But for us, the commonwealth of *God* exists in *the* heavens, from where also we are waiting for *the* Savior, *the* Lord Jesus Christ; Who will transform our vile bodies..." (vs 20-21). I tell you, the older we get the more run down we become, the more we understand what it means 'vile bodies.'

"...that they may be conformed to His glorious body according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself" (v 21).

Rom. 6 takes us from where we were to where God wants us to go. It takes us from what we are and were to what God wants us to become. That's why it says that the glory that God has for us is not worthy to be compared with the things that are in the world.' This is why we are in that covenant. The covenant of conjoined death, as if we, because of our sins, were crucified on that cross with Christ, because Paul says, 'I am crucified with Christ, nevertheless, I live.' That's through the operation of baptism.

Romans 6:5: "For if we have been conjoined together in the likeness of His death, so also shall we be *in the likeness* of *His* resurrection. Knowing this, that our old man was co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed..." (vs 5-6).

After we come up out of the watery grave. And by the way, if you didn't come up out of the watery grave, you would be dead. That's why God gave it easier for us. We are symbolically crucified, we die in the watery grave, die to sin and are conjoined to the very sacrifice of Christ, so that the body of sin, which is all up here between our ears—this is where most of the sin goes on. It takes place

here before it's manifested out openly. So, now we begin working on overcoming.

"...co-crucified with *Him* in order that the body of sin might be destroyed, so that we might no longer be enslaved to sin; because the one who has died *to sin* has been justified from sin. Now, if we died together with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with Him, knowing that Christ, having been raised from *the* dead, dies no more; death no longer has any dominion over Him. For when He died, He died unto sin once for all; but in that He lives, He lives unto God" (vs 6-10). Here becomes the dedication of our lives from this point forward.

Verse 11: "In the same way also, you should indeed reckon yourselves to be dead to sin, but alive to God through Christ Jesus our Lord. Therefore, do not let sin rule in your mortal body by obeying it in the lusts thereof. Likewise, do not yield your members as instruments of unrighteousness to sin; rather, yield yourselves to God as those who are alive from *the* dead, and your members *as* instruments of righteousness to God. For sin shall not rule over you because you are not under law..." (vs 11-14). You have been forgiven. This does not mean that you do not keep the Law. But that means you are not under Law for this relationship with God

"...but under grace" (v 14). How to keep the commandments and everything else is explained later. This does not have anything to do with doing away with the laws of God as the Protestants misinterpret it. That's what God is doing. He continues to do it in our lives today. When we're going through all the troubles. I'm going to talk about some troubles. I'm going to talk about ***political solutions do not solve spiritual problems.*** We're going to talk about some of the things that we may be immediately confronted with.

ObamaCare is not just healthcare, it is *control and it is communist oppression!* Because ***this nation, blessed of God, has turned its back on God,*** and that's the punishment for us.

How many people will recognize that ***that is God's judgment upon us*** for treating God and His Word and His way, as a nation, the way that we have and repent? *Don't know, we'll have to see!*

Remember, ***God creates crises for the purpose of judgment and repentance!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) Matthew 22:14
- 2) Matthew 13:18-23
- 3) 2-Chronicles 15:1-9
- 4) John 6:44-45

- 5) Revelation 1:4-5
- 6) Revelation 5:6
- 7) John 14:6
- 8) John 6:44
- 9) Luke 15:11-17
- 10) Romans 2:3-4
- 11) Luke 15:17-20
- 12) Isaiah 55:6-9
- 13) Luke 15:20-32
- 14) Acts 2:38
- 15) Romans 6:1-5
- 16) Matthew 17:2-5, 9
- 17) Philippians 3:20-21
- 18) Romans 6:5-14

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- 2-Chronicles 16
- Revelation 2; 3
- John 4
- Ecclesiastes 3
- Isaiah 1
- Revelation 1:13

Also referenced: Book: *Quitting Church* by Julia Duin

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