

See Your Calling

Fred R. Coulter – April 27, 1991

Many people are asking today, what is wrong with the world? And everybody sees so many things that aren't working right, that are going wrong. Government isn't working right. Schools aren't working right. Nothing seems to be going right, and everyone is asking, "why?" *We need to have better education.* Well, you can't teach without standards. You can't teach without values. And if there's any one thing about the public schools that's true, they cannot have any values. Teachers cannot say, "Children, this is right" and "Children, this is wrong." Neither can you do that in society, because society has gotten to the point that they are told that right is wrong and wrong is right. And those who do wrong and those who do evil you shouldn't condemn.

Let's go back to Isaiah, the fifth chapter, because God talks about time, and prophecies of a time, just like we live in today—exactly like we live in today. And it causes a lot of difficulties even for those who are called of God. Isaiah 5:20: "Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil..." And of course, we know—and we will see—that it is the leaders, all kinds of leaders.

Turn back to Isaiah 3:12. Of course then, you have a lot of people growing up in society that now we have generation upon generation—3-deep and 4-deep and 5-deep—that don't know anything about God. Yet, it's ironic that the Bible is the most published, the most studied, the most read book in the world. But society has also rejected God. And it's the leaders that have done it. Verse 12: "*As for my people, children are their oppressors...* [Anytime in history this is more true than ever before. *Why? Because the teachers teach the children that the parents are the enemy, and that the parents are wrong.* And the whole curricula, the whole modus operandi and philosophy of the schools is: we must save the children from their parents. And therefore, the parents have no input into the school. Oh, they say, 'Come and participate in PTA, we want to hear it.' But they never listen and they never act upon it.] ...and women rule over them.... [That is so true—women rule over men. And there's nothing more damaging or frustrating than that. And that's the way that it is because God made it that way.] ...O my people, they which lead thee cause *thee* to err, and destroy the way of thy paths." So it's the leaders: the teachers, the politicians, and the religious leaders in particular.

Now let's go back to Isaiah 5—these are the ones that are saying that "evil is good and good is evil"—v 20: "...that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto *them that are* wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto *them that are* mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink" (vs 19-22). And the same principle would apply to drugs. And they're still trying to legalize drugs. And can you imagine what would happen to this society. We are being

assaulted. Some people call it 'a cultural war.' Well, it's more than a cultural war. It's Satan going around 'seeking whom he may devour.' And we, as the people of God, have to live in this terrible, evil world, and figure out somehow how do we survive? And of course, let me just mention here: 'strong drink'—don't think that didn't know about what we would call 'opium.' Maybe they didn't know about what we call 'heroin,' today; because they didn't have kerosene to break it down like we do today. But they certainly had drugs. They certainly had marijuana. Hashish, by the way, is one of the oldest things that people have smoked and taken in all of history. And do you think those in Southeast Asia just let the poppies grow until all of sudden one day someone decided, 200 years ago, "Oh, let's get opium out of this"? No, they had it for centuries. So, it's possible that 'strong drink' could refer to those things that have drugs added to them. Do you think that the craving for drugs by carnal people is any different today than the carnality of people back then? *Hardly, hardly at all.*

"Which justify the wicked for reward... [And all you have to do is just look at congress. Just look at the judges, just look at the society.] ...and take away the righteousness of the righteous from him!... [For even people who are wanting to do good, don't know whether it's really worth it to do good. Because, after all, they're like fish going upstream, and there's only a little trickle of water there that's left for them to stand in. All the water is rushed by them. There's nothing left. But here's what's going to happen]: ...Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, *so* their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel" (vs 23-24).

There's going to be absolutely no changing society until you reverse what I just read here. Till the society runs by the laws of God. And of course, you know that's not going to happen in our lifetime. It's going to happen when Jesus returns. No political movement. No organization of churches is going to change what God has set His hand to do, period. It's going to happen. But we look around and we see the society deteriorating around us.

Let's go to Romans, the first chapter, and we will see again, reiterated for us, when any society rejects God, that when any society gives itself over to the ways of the devil, then these things are bound to happen. Look at the Soviet Union. They proclaimed that they would bring the Egalitarianism—which is another high-sounding name for Communism—to everyone in the Soviet Union. They would bring wealth. They would bring riches, and all the workers would work together and "we will have wonderful society." They are suffering the penalty of rejecting God. *Yes, they are!* Because ***no nation can survive when it rejects God.*** That's not to say that a nation is going to be perfect, but the

Bible says, “Blessed is the nation whose Lord is God.” And even Gorbachev had to go hat-in-hand and literally bow at the feet of the Pope, and acknowledge that even this paganized Christendom of Roman Catholicism is better than what they had in the Soviet Union. And then the final coup-de-grace on them has been the Chernobyl incident. So, the Soviet Union is going down, but every other nation is also in varying degrees of disintegration and degeneration because of the same thing. So here in America and the Western society where we have the knowledge of God, what are we doing? *We’re denying it. We are turning our backs on God. We are going backwards!*

And here is how the whole thing works: Romans 1:18: “Indeed, *the* wrath of God is revealed from heaven upon all ungodliness... [ALL ungodliness is going to have some kind of correction, some kind of penalty, some kind of wrath! Now, just to show you—well, I’ll cover it a little bit later when we get into the deceptiveness of the human mind. It’s really interesting what has just happened here recently.] ...[so it’s revealed against] all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness... [Now immediately for those of you who know your Bibles, when we hear the word ‘Truth’ what does this spring in your mind? *Your Word is Truth.* Jesus said He was the Truth. He was the way. So they hold the Word of God in unrighteousness. They hold the Truth in unrighteousness. Now let’s see what happens.] ... Because that which may be known of God is manifest [revealed] among them... [And it certainly has been. And everything, as we will see, that has been made] ...for God has manifested *it* to them; For the invisible things of Him are perceived from *the* creation of *the* world, being understood by the things that were made...” (vs 18-20).

And I always get a kick out of these astronomers. They’re striving like crazy to put up more instruments into the heavens; to have bigger and better telescopes with which to see the heavens; discovering countless billions of galaxies; looking out into the heavens and declaring that maybe they have even seen the center of the universe—which I doubt. And they don’t know what to make of it. And now the “big bang” theory doesn’t work any longer—and all of their other theories don’t work either. But God has shown them the magnificence of His creation and His glory. But they turn around and just ignore it. So a penalty comes on everyone for that! And eventually down to the society.

These things reveal “—both His eternal power and Godhead—so that they are without excuse... [No astronomer is going to say, ‘Well, when I had education, I was taught the theory of evolution.’ God is going to tell him, ‘You should have known when you looked up and saw these stars and you saw these planets, and you saw all of these magnificent things that you could see with the technology you have.’ Because when they knew God, they glorified *Him* not as God, neither were thankful... [So God has to have the glory because He’s Creator. And after all, can the created say to the Creator, ‘What are You making?’ *No he can’t.* So

here’s the first thing that happens when you don’t recognize God. When you don’t give Him the glory. When you’re not thankful. When you do not give God the power and glory that is due Him. Now, to understand that, you do not even have to know about the commandments of God. We could say that you could understand moral good and still acknowledge God and then you wouldn’t bring a lot of these difficulties upon you. But, when people reject God and reject His Word, then this happens]: ...but they became vain in their own reasonings, and their foolish hearts were darkened” (vs 20-21).

This is what is the guiding principle of the politics of this world today, right here. And they’re just bringing one penalty after another penalty upon this whole society. And we’ll see what those things are in just a minute.

“While professing themselves to be *the* wise ones, they became fools And changed the glory of the incorruptible God into *the* likeness of an image of corruptible man, and of birds, and four-footed creatures, and creeping things.... [And we have that today manifest in all of this ‘save the animals but abort the babies.’ Completely perverted, wrong, upside-down and silly and stupid and vain and foolish values. And where does that lead? *Well, we’ll see, because God does something.* It’s not just happening to happen, but there comes a point then in which God intervenes and He does something. He causes something to happen. He gives them over to their own evil.] (v 24): ...For this cause, God also abandoned them to uncleanness through the lusts of their hearts, to disgrace their own bodies between themselves.... [as we are confronted in this society with every evil, with every gargantuan thing concerning sex and that’s where it begins. If you’re going to reject God, then somewhere down the line, shortly after that, you’re going to have beginning of perversion of sex, which then is an escalating and multiplying factor in the value and morals of society.] ...Who exchanged the truth of God for the lie... [And of course, the ministers are the ones who say, ‘Well, you don’t have to do this, you don’t have to do that, you don’t have to do the other thing. Well God, way back then, that’s a different God than we have today.’ And of course, that is a lie.] ...and they worshiped and served the created thing more than the one Who is Creator, Who is blessed into the ages. Amen. For this cause, God abandoned them to disgraceful passions; for even their women changed the natural use *of sex* into that which is contrary to nature; And in the same manner also the men, having left the natural use *of sex* with the woman, were inflamed in their lustful passions toward one another—men with men shamelessly committing lewd *acts*, and receiving back within themselves a fitting penalty for their error” (vs 22-27).

One of those final payments is AIDS. Now, it is coming from the religious leaders. How many heard this week what the Presbyterian Church was voting on and discussing. Did any of you catch that in the news? *None of you did.* The Presbyterian Church now has said that “we have to give up all of these old standards. We cannot condemn homosexuality. We cannot condemn pre-marital sex.

We cannot condemn masturbation. None of those things can be condemned at all, because we live in an enlightened age.” Now this follows on the heels of what the Episcopalians have done. And I read part of this before, but needless to say, there is an article in the religious section from Time Magazine where this so-called Episcopal bishop, who is the one who ordained a homosexual priest, married two homosexual men, says there’s no such thing as the virgin birth—that it’s all a myth, it’s all a fairytale. And so what we really have, we have those who are pretending to be religious leaders, leading the way into the total degradation of the society. And you can see it reflected in everything in the whole world. Not only the way people talk, the way people think, the way they act; their sex morals; their standards, their ethics—the whole thing. You can see it on television. You can hear it in the movies. And all of these things are a result of God gave them over to these things. That’s the penalty! That is the wrath of God that is revealed from heaven—on a continuous, ongoing basis.

“And in exact proportion as they did not consent to have God in *their* knowledge, God abandoned them to a **reprobate mind**...” (v 28). [Now, what is a ‘reprobate mind’? A ‘reprobate mind’ is a mind that cannot think correctly. And I call you to typical examples: homosexuals—male and female; ministers—like the ones I have referenced here, the Episcopalians and the Presbyterians and any other minister who would do those things; our judges; our courts; our police system; our political system. They cannot think. They cannot reason. Now, just to give you one example. We’ve been inundated to death with this beating of the policeman beating this man—what was his first name: [Rodney] King is his last name. And it showed what they did. Now, I’m not agreeing that he should be beaten like that. I’m not saying that was in any way right to do.

But just to show you the perversity of the human mind with the same circumstances. The reason that these police are in trouble is because a man stood on a balcony with a TV [camera] and recorded the whole thing. Which showed down in the lower right-hand corner the time of the day and the minutes and everything like that, as it was going on. Well, last night the police confiscated the TV camera from some thugs, caught robbing and stealing and beating. And they recorded all of this on a video. It showed the time, the day, showed the ones doing it, showed the ones that they beat up and robbed—and it was black on black, by the way, for those who have any prejudice involved. Guess what the defendant’s attorney said? To show you perversity of reasoning. The same attorney, if he were to prosecute the policeman who beat up on the man, would say this proves and concludes what they have done is wrong. Turns around—now it’s not the same attorney, but you know how attorneys are?—he turns around and says in the case of these thugs that recorded their own, by their own hands, recorded their own crime, bragged about it, did braggadocio interviews afterwards. The attorney for the defendants say that we shouldn’t be able to use this video because it’s been shown on TV and it’s

discriminatory against “my defendant.”

Don’t even have the brains to realize that the camera can’t lie. The camera can’t do a thing but record what was done. But you see the perversity in the thinking of two almost identical cases. Now you can take that same kind of reasoning, where down is up and up is down, and right is left and left is right, and three is four and seven is ten—and that’s the way that people think today.

God gives them over to that. Now as a result of what happens after they’ve been given over to this kind of thinking and reasoning—verse 29: “Being filled with all unrighteousness... [Now, I’m going to read you your TV guide, right here in just a few verses. This is your TV guide]: ...all unrighteousness, sexual immorality, wickedness, covetousness, malice; full of envy, murder, strife, guile, evil dispositions; whisperers... [Oh, and aren’t people tried in the newspaper today? Oh, yes! Just like this *Unauthorized Biography of the Reagans*. What was her name? Kitty Kelley—wasn’t that her name, she put it out. She never even talked to them. People she claimed she interviewed, never even talked to them! Complete hoax. And that’s one little, teeny, little just almost nothing in the blip of the evil that’s going on in the world.] ...Slanderers, God-haters, insolent, proud, boasters, **inventors of evil things and practices**; disobedient to parents, Void of understanding, covenant-breakers, without natural affection, implacable *and* unmerciful; Who, knowing the righteous judgment of God, that those who commit such things are worthy of death... [Now, there’s New Testament doctrine, which says what ought to be done with these people. They are worthy of death! And the Apostle Paul, the apostle of grace—who in the rest of the book of Romans tells us about the grace of God—says these people are worthy of death.] ...not only practice these things themselves, but also approve of those who commit them” (vs 29-32).

Now in the midst of all of this, we have a lot of religious people, don’t we? We have them preaching, we have them teaching—let’s go to Matthew, the seventh chapter. And Jesus told us about these kinds of things and these kinds of preachers, and these kinds of episodes that would take place. Matthew 7:15—Jesus warns: “But beware of false prophets... [There are many kinds of false prophets. They’re not just prophesying false things. They are teaching false things. They are acting upon false things. They are telling other people to do things, which are false and wrong. Not just in the religious sense alone. But when you get down to it, everything in life that has to do with God, which is everything—then has some sort of what you would call religious overtone as far as people would perceive it. But there are a lot of religious pretenders out there who follow right along with this]: ...who come to you in sheep’s clothing, for within *they* are ravening wolves. You shall know them by their fruits. They do not gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles, do they? In the same way, every good tree produces good fruit, but a corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree cannot produce evil fruit, nor can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. Every tree *that is* not producing good

fruit is cut down and is cast into the fire. Therefore, you shall assuredly know them by their fruits” (vs 15-20).

That is by their lives. By the way that they live, which means that as Christians we have excise and put away from us more and more of the things that are emanating from Hollywood, from movies, from TV, from the literature, from the newspapers. We have to protect ourselves from this thing—and we do. And it’s difficult for us living in the world, isn’t it? I mean it’s one thing to stand up and say, “Oh look, the world is all this wrong.” or “Look, these religions are wrong.” But what do we do? We have to get down and ask that question, which we will see here in just a little bit.

“Not everyone who says to Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but the one who is doing the will of My Father, Who is in heaven.... [So you’ve got a lot of religious pretenders out there.] ...Many will say to Me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy through Your name? And *did we not* cast out demons through Your name? And *did we not* perform many works of power through Your name?’ And then I will confess to them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from Me, you who work lawlessness [iniquity]’” (vs 21-23) In the Greek it is ‘anomos’ which means *against the law*.

What did the Apostle John say concerning these religious pretenders? There were religious pretenders there. Let’s go back to 1-John, the second chapter. Let’s see how then we can judge these things, and how then we can begin to protect ourselves from this sort of thing. I mean, let’s think about it for a minute: Are we affected by the world around us? *Yes!* Look at Lot and his family living in Sodom. Was his family affected by it? Was Lot affected by it? *Yes!* 2-Peter 2 says that he was frustrated every day because of the deeds of the wicked. But remember what happened when Abraham intervened to try and spare Lot. God said that if there were only ten people in Sodom that he would spare the whole city, if there were ten that were righteous. So the angels came to take Lot and his family out and his son said, “Oh, don’t bother me, dad, with that nonsense. You and your religion.” And he was even so bad that when the angels came to the door and all the homosexuals came beating down the door to try and get hold of these angels for their ‘night of convenience’ that Lot went out and even offered his own two daughters to them—which shows you that it did affect Lot! I mean, how would you feel if you were one of the two daughters and your own dad went out there and said, “Look now fellas, leave these other guys alone, but you can take my daughters.” Now, how would you feel? So it did affect him. Okay, so the angels solved the problem so it wasn’t done—they struck them all blind.

Then what happened after they fled. Well, his wife turned around because she didn’t believe what the angels said, and she turned into a pillar of salt. And then, Lot didn’t want to go into the mountains, so then the angels said, “Go to Zoar, which is this little city over here and I’ll let you go over there.” Then when they got of there, where did

they go? *They went up into the mountains to a cave.* Then what happened? He was so despondent he got drunk and the two daughters said, “Oh, we’re here alone and how are we going to have children?” So they committed incest with their father. And so each one of them had a baby by their own father—called Moab and Ammon.

So, does the society around us affect us? *Yes!* Well, let’s hope it doesn’t affect people that much that they get into it. But here is the guide that we can know. Anything that comes to us—whether by words that we hear in person or on radio or television or record or recording, whatever, or by friends and acquaintances—here is how we judge it: 1-John 2:3: “And by this *standard* we know that we know Him: if we keep His commandments. The one who says, ‘I know Him,’ and does not keep His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (vs 2-3). That’s a very basic way for you to keep your sanity. You don’t necessarily have to be rude to these people. Sometimes you do. Sometimes you have to be absolutely rude to them because there’s nothing else they understand. And that comes under the category of hating evil. In other words, to keep this thing from coming in upon you and upon your life, you have to be firm to them. And the only way to get rid of them is to do like Jesus did, insult them. Sometimes you have to. I’m not saying go out and insult people. Please do not misunderstand.

Now, Abraham was in a similar society, wasn’t he? Way back when. So, if you feel like you’re alone, you are! Abraham was alone. God came and said, “Abraham, I want you to leave the home of your father and your mother and I want you to go into a land that I’m going to show you. And I will bless those who bless you and curse those who curse you.” So Abraham obeyed and he got up and he left. Well, I won’t go through the whole story of Abraham, but was not Abraham alone? Was not even Abraham affected by his own human weaknesses? *Yes, he was.* Remember when he went into Egypt, he said, “Utt-oh, now what am I going to do? My wife is so gorgeous [even though she’s older], that the Pharaoh’s going to ‘Oh ho boy!’ He’ll kill me and take her for his wife.” Shows a lot of faith in God, doesn’t it? And so what did Abraham do. He said, “I know what I’m going to do. You’re my sister.” And then you know the story that happened. Pharaoh found out and said, “Now, why did you lie to me and say that she was your sister when she was your wife?” Abraham had nothing to say.

Then we come down to the time when he’s about ready to receive the inheritance—about 12 years from it—and he’s striving like mad to have a son, because God said that out of his own loins he would have a son. So Sarah said, “Now look Abe, this isn’t going to work, here’s my handmaid.” So now we’ve got this Arab/Israeli problem from that day to this. So the society and the events around us *do affect us!* But we still have to live in the world and keep our sanity and keep right with God. So, let’s see how we can keep our minds on that and really understand what we need to do.

Let’s go to Luke 5:32—and here is something that is absolutely, completely, always

true. And this is for all those religious pretenders. “I did not come to call *the* righteous, but sinners to repentance.” So don’t feel as though you’ve done so badly that you cannot repent. And God is going to cast you aside. If you feel guilty or struck because you’ve done something you shouldn’t do, God came to call “sinners to repentance.” And so, that’s what’s to keep in mind. God knows, God understands, and He realizes. How much has God done to go out of His way to bring us out of this mess; to help us out of the world? o we’re out here in the world and things don’t go the way we think they ought to go and we fall down flat on our face. Now what do we do?

Let’s go to Romans 5 and we’ll see. God did this before we even existed, before you could even say we were even thought of. Sometimes we are, we just seem to be overwhelmed with the way the world is. Now, sometimes we can get away from it and get in and close the door behind us and we feel must better, much relieved—and pray and study and do the things we need to, and of course, that is true. But here in Romans 5:6: For even when we were without strength... [just like people in the world we had no control over what we were doing. We didn’t know right from wrong. We didn’t understand good from evil. We didn’t understand God from anything else. And we certainly didn’t understand what Jesus Christ has done for us. And we didn’t understand what God did for us through Jesus Christ.] ...at the appointed time Christ died for *the* ungodly. For rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, although perhaps someone might have the courage even to die for a good man. But God commends His own love to us because, **when we were still sinners, Christ died for us**” (vs 6-8).

Now that’s how we are rescued out of this world: by coming to God, and by realizing that God has called us. So if we want to put any title on this sermon, we could entitle it, *You See Your Calling*. Now that’s how we can survive in an insane world. ***By seeing our calling***, that’s how we can survive; and seeing that God has provided the way for us. And lots of times we’ll go out and we’ll just be going on our way and we know we shouldn’t be doing this, but we’re still doing that and our conscience convicts us and we still go ahead. And then God works out circumstances to keep us from really doing bad. Have you ever had that? Well, God doesn’t want you to do it, so God is there to warn you, to rescue you before you go too far. Why? ***Because “God commends His love toward us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”***

“Much more, therefore, having been justified now by His blood, we shall be saved from wrath through Him. For if, when we were enemies... [Enemies of God! Enemies of Righteousness!] ...we were reconciled to God through the death of His own Son, much more *then*, having been reconciled, **we shall be saved by His life**” (vs 9-10). Because Christ lives—and that is what is most important.

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Let’s go to Matthew 22:14—and here’s a

very encouraging verse if we understand it correctly, which I think we do. “For many are called, but few are chosen.” And why are few chosen? *Because few repent!* God chooses those who repent. He calls us. His goodness, His grace LEADS us repentance. We see the love God has for us. And we continually go back to this. So I want to focus in on the calling. And what is the thing that we need to do so that we can survive in this world, is to focus in on that calling. Because every single one of us are going to have circumstances around us which are against us. We are going to have circumstances which cause us to be discouraged and despaired; cause us to wonder why am I going through this. I want you to focus in on this: “that many are called but few are chosen”—and let’s see what this has for us.

Let’s go to John, the sixth chapter. You get discouraged, you get down, you’re tired of fighting the world. You’re tired of being against everything that’s around you because everything is so filled with sin and wretchedness and rottenness and you want to just pick up your TV and throw a rock through it—or whatever you want to do. Or you’re sitting there watching a least a decent show on television and then comes on an X-rated ad of some kind. It’s absolutely incredible. And it just destroys your thoughts and everything like that, because it will happen.

John 6:44—here’s what the focus in on the calling: “No one can come to Me unless the Father, Who sent Me, draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day.” Did God call you to succeed or to fail? *God called you to succeed.* God called you because the One Who controls the universe—the *Father*—He activated in your life and *chose you!* So therefore, there aren’t any circumstances, which can be against you as we’ve covered in other things before. ***GOD has chosen you.*** So you can’t go around and say, “Oh boy, I’m the most important person on earth. Ha, Ha, Ha.” You don’t go to that extreme at all—but GOD has called you. ***You are His.***

Now let’s focus a little bit more on this calling. Let’s go to 1-Corinthians, the first chapter, and let’s see what it is that God has for us. He has called us through His grace. 1-Corinthians 1:3: “Grace and peace *be* to you... [Now ‘grace’ is the most important thing that you can consider and think on and realize. God’s grace to you, which means that:

- God called you.
- God knows what you are.
- God knows your weaknesses.
- God is not going to condemn you for those weaknesses IF—when they get the better of you—you repent and return back to God and focus in on your calling.

That’s what’s so very important. If you get discouraged and down, focus in on the calling of God. And what it will do: it will not lift you up in pride, but it will humble you in awesome—as we sang in the song—adoration of God and what He has done for us.] ...Grace and peace *be* to you from God

our Father... [directly from God the Father to you] ...and *the* Lord Jesus Christ. I thank my God always concerning you, for the grace of God that has been given to you in Christ Jesus; And that you have been *spiritually* enriched in Him in everything, in all discourse and knowledge..." (vs 3-5).

Now, this is important. Notice how he starts out 1 Corinthians, because after the third chapter, the rest of Corinthians is a disaster, as far as the behavior of the brethren. As far as their own personal problems. But notice what he starts out here in verse 6: "According as the testimony of Christ was confirmed in you; So that you do not lack *even* one *spiritual* gift while you are awaiting the revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ, Who will also strengthen you to *the* end... [I want you to understand that. 'To confirm that...'] **He will see you to the end**, whatever the end may be. Like it was for the Corinthians here, they all lived and died before Christ's return. That's going to happen to some of us. But God is going to 'confirm us to the end.' Or whether we live to see the return of Christ. I used to think, boy it's going to be great, living to see the return of Christ. I'm not so sure of that now. I'm not so sure that I necessarily want to live physically in the flesh, to go through all of the events to the return of Christ. I don't know if I can bear that. If I have to, God will give me the strength to confirm it to the end.

- So God isn't going to leave you alone.
- God is not going to reject you.
- God is not going to cast you aside—
if you keep your eye on your calling.

"...*that you may be* unimpeachable in the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.... [Blameless—without blame, without fault.] ...God *is* faithful, by Whom you were called into *the* fellowship of His Son, Jesus Christ our Lord" (vs 6-9). Tremendous isn't that? Tremendous encouragement. And that's what we need to focus in on.

Let's come clear over to here to v 26—now there are many things we could read in between, but I want to focus in on our calling. And remember, Jesus came to what? *To call sinners to repentance*. And of course, we're all sinners, continuously, all the time because we are not perfect. And there is one way then we can really keep our minds focused on our calling, as we will see in a minute. "For you see your calling, brethren, that *there are* not many who are [mighty] wise [men] according to the flesh, not many who are powerful, not many who are high-born *among you*. Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world, so that He might put to shame those who are wise... [And if there's anything that you can see that is absolutely true, that is it. Now, anytime anyone gets to feeling that they really know something, Paul says, 'You know nothing as you are.' And anyone who gets to thinking that they are something, remember what happened to King Nebuchadnezzar—go back and read Daniel 4, if you don't remember that.] Rather, God has chosen the foolish things of the world, so that He might put to shame those who are wise; and God has chosen the weak things of the world..." (vs 26-27).

Yes, we're weak in the flesh. What did Jesus say: 'The spirit is willing, the flesh is weak.' What did Paul say: 'The things I really want to do—that is to please God—I don't do them. When I want to do good, evil is present with me.' And so he's got this battle going on continuously. We're weak. Does God know that that is so? That we are weak? Does God understand that? Now some have different weaknesses. Some have physical weaknesses. Some have character weaknesses. Like Abraham, he had a character weakness in that he really fudged on the truth, when he shouldn't have. And even his son, Isaac, did it. And it runs in the family, I guess. And then look at what happened to Jacob. You go through the whole story there. And then, poor Jacob, poor guy, he had a miserable life. It's tough enough with one wife, but he had two wives and two concubines and it was miserable—and 12 kids. And look at the way his kids treated him! Look what they did to Joseph. And there were 17 years of pretending that the other sons of Jacob let Jacob think that Joseph was dead. So much so, that Jacob would go out and sit under the tree and hold that bloodied coat of Joseph—that they put he goats blood on it and said, 'Well, your son is dead.' Then you know how God turned that all around.

So there are the weaknesses! "...the weak things of the world so that He might put to shame the strong things. And the low-born of the world, and the despised has God chosen—even the things that are counted as nothing—in order that He might bring to nothing the things that are; So that no flesh might glory in His presence. But you are of Him in Christ Jesus, Who was made to us wisdom from God—even righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption..." (vs 27-30). Now that is what God is doing *for* us and *to* us. And I think sometimes if we learn the lessons of living in this evil world—not that you're out there in it partaking of it and doing the things that the world does—but you're still affected by it. And if you can let those things affect you in a way to turn to God, to see your calling, to see what God has done for you—

- then you can survive this world;
then you can survive the things that are going on;
then you can realize, well, there's even hope for them, and the day is coming when God is going to change all of that, too, including every one of them.

Now, let's focus in on something else here concerning that. Let's see 1-Corinthians 6:9. Paul makes quite a statement here concerning what people are that God has called. Remember, he called sinners to repentance. "Don't you know that the unrighteous shall not inherit *the* kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor abusers of themselves as women, nor homosexuals, Nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners, shall inherit *the* kingdom of God. And **but you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God**" (vs 9-11). So what should this cause us to do even more? *Respond to God in the same kind of love that He responded to us in.*

Let's go to Mark 12—here's what we need to do. Here's the key on keeping our bearings in this

world. Here's what we need to do to keep our minds on the calling that God has given us. We don't look to the circumstances around us, because the circumstances around us—and if the economy keeps going the way it is the circumstances around us are going to become third world very quickly. It could happen very quickly. So we don't look to the circumstances around us as the primary factor in our lives. Now, that's hard to do. You can't ignore what's around you. **But your salvation does not depend on the circumstances around you.** That's what I want you to understand. You have to ignore them enough that you can overcome the frustrations of it, and so that you don't fall into the pitfall and trap as Lot did with the coming out of Sodom.

Mark 12:30—and here is the very key that is important. We need to do constantly! “And you shall love *the* Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength.” This *is* the first commandment.... [This is the first thing to do. This is how we keep our sanity in such an evil, topsy-turvy, corrupt, Sodom and Gomorrah world that is here. We love God with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our soul, with all of our being—

- and think on our calling;
- and think what God has done to call us;
- and think what God has provided for us.

Study on that. Pray on that. And do as we need to do: ‘bring every thought into captivity unto obedience to Jesus Christ.’ And put in the good and take out the evil, through the very power and Spirit of Christ.] (Then He says): ...And *the second is* like this: ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (vs 30-31). And of course, the brethren, as Christ loved us. And that's what's so important. That's what's so special with the Sabbath, and our getting together with God's people. That's what the Church and fellowship is all about. Not all of the other problems and difficulties that we've associated with in the past: of organization and control and power and who's in charge, and all of these things. That doesn't mean a ‘hill of beans.’ God could care less. Unless you love God; unless you love your neighbor; unless you love the brethren, then all of the other is really meaningless. So that's why we need to focus in on it.

But, what I'm talking about here is your individual self-preservation in this world. The self-protection that you need does not come from yourself, but it comes from God. And that comes from loving God in this way: with all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul and with all of your strength. That's where it's at. That way then, you don't have to run around and realize the world is condemned and all you are is doom and gloom and misery and rottenness. Because the world is going to become more miserable. The world is going to become more rotten, and there isn't a thing you can do about it.

Tell me—even though I commend all of those who are doing the operation rescue in trying to stop abortions—where does abortion really begin? In

the clinic or in the minds of the individuals involved? *In the minds of the individuals involved.* And that's why I said before, if this French abortion pill ever comes on the market, then abortion is no longer a question as to a political movement. Abortion becomes the decision of the individual woman. And it still is! And living in the world where good is called *evil*; and evil is called *good*, there is nothing that you can do about it from the point of view that you're going to change the world. Now, maybe you can help one person; maybe you can help some people; but you're not going to change the world because why: Jesus said, “My Kingdom is not of this world.” So that's why if you focus in on the world, you're going to get discouraged and despondent.

Let's go back to 1-Corinthians, the second chapter, and let's see the tremendous blessing and gift that God has given us. Focusing in on the calling, he said, “Brethren, see your calling.” What of this calling that we are to see. It is going to be something which only God can provide us with. And if we turn to God with this kind of love, He will provide for us what we need. 1-Corinthians 2:9: “But according as it is written, ‘The eye has not seen, nor the ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, *the* things which God has prepared for those who love Him’.... [Notice the key there: ‘those that love Him.’ How? *With all your heart, with all your mind, with all your soul, with all your being.* That's how!] ...But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit... [because God has called us, and God has given us His Spirit, and God has given us the understanding. And sometimes the world crowding in, we get so concerned with getting along in this world, that we get our minds off our calling. And we don't respond to God the way that we need to. So therefore, we're not loving God the way that we need to. So we need to do the things we know we need to. And we know we need to when we know we're not, don't we?] ...But God has revealed *them* to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things—even the deep things of God. For who among men understands the things of man except *by* the spirit of man which *is* in him? In the same way also, the things of God no one understands except *by* the Spirit of God” (vs 9-11).

Because God has called you. **Focus in on that calling!** Whatever the thing is which weighting you down. Whatever the circumstances in the world is that is bothering you. Whatever the trouble. Or whatever it may be. **Go to God!** If you repent, there is no sin that God cannot forgive. Because if you don't repent, then you've committed the unpardonable sin, because you haven't repented.

- Did God forgive Saul for murdering Christians? *Yes!*
- Did Jesus forgive the harlot that washed His feet with her tears and her hair? *Yes!*
- Did Jesus forgive the man with the withered arm? *Yes!*
- Did He let the woman go who was falsely condemned, taken in adultery? *Yes!*
- Did He heal the man who was blind who did no sin? *Yes!*

“Now we have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit that *is* of God, so that we might know the things graciously given to us by God... [You can't earn it. You can't work for it. But God has freely given that to us. And that is fantastic.] ... Which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in *words* taught by *the* Holy Spirit *in order* to communicate spiritual things by spiritual *means*. But *the* natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God... [And that's why the world is so frustrating to Christians, because you don't want to receive of the world—and yet, you are in it. So what we have to do is pray the prayer that Jesus prayed. He said, 'I pray for them, Father, that You keep from the evil one. I pray not that you take them out of the world (sometimes we wish God would) but that You keep them from the evil one.' That's what we need to pray; that's what we need to focus in on.] ...for they are foolishness to him...” (vs 12-14).

Let's go to Ephesians, the second chapter, and let's focus in on this love that God has for us. Ephesians 2:2—and these are basic Scriptures which we've covered before. But the thing that I want to focus in on is this: There is nothing that can hold you back from God if you put away all of the weights and the difficulties and the problems and the crushing in of the world around you. God can relieve you of that. “In which you walked in times past according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that is now working within the children of disobedience... [And is now working with ever increasing power, with ever increasing intensity; with ever increasing means to try and get to those who are true Christians to get them to give up on their faith.] ...Among whom also we all once had our conduct in the lusts of our flesh, doing the things willed by the flesh and by the mind, and were by nature *the* children of wrath, even as the rest of *the* world. But God, Who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us... (*For you have been saved by grace.*)” (vs 2-5). That's what we need to focus in on:

- Our love to God,
- God's love to us,
- God's calling to us,
- our responding to Him.

And that's what becomes important.

Now, let's go to 2-Peter 1—while we are turning there, we'll just reiterate the last verse of 2-Peter 3, which says—v 18: “Rather, be growing in *the* grace and *the* knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” That's what we're to do Spiritually, constantly. And that's what is encouraging. And that's, brethren, why we have the Sabbath. That is our little island of rescue from the world—*every week!* And I'm so thankful for the Sabbath. And you stop and think, where on earth would you be without the Sabbath? Because as human beings, we don't have the intestinal fortitude nor the mental or spiritual ability to resist and fight the world if we didn't have the Sabbath—our little island of sanity every week. We would soon get worn down like everybody else in the world.

Now, 2 Peter 1:10: “For this reason, brethren, be even more diligent to make your calling and election [and that should be ‘selection’—God elected to select you. In other words, God chose to select you. And that's what ‘election’ means. You didn't vote for God and say, ‘I raised my hand for God.’ That's like when Peter said, ‘Oh Lord, we're not going to let you get crucified.’ You don't raise your hand in an election for God.] ...sure; because *if* you are doing these things, you will never fall at any time.” ***Never fail, brethren. Never fail!*** Remember what the Apostle Paul said, ‘To confirm it to the end.’ ***Never fail!*** And here's what we need to do—again focusing in on the calling of God.

Let's go back to 2-Peter 1:2: “Grace and peace be multiplied to you in *the* knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord... [So, it's to be multiplied, to be increased.

- How? *Spiritually.*
- How? *By love!*
- How? *By obeying God!*
- How? *By responding to Him! By letting God—with His Spirit—help us close off the world that so often is like it's crushing in on us.]*

...According as His divine power has given to us all things that *pertain* to life and godliness... [Every tool you want is in the Bible. Every tool you need, and power, comes from God's Holy Spirit. It's tremendous, isn't it? Here we can live completely the opposite life of what's going on in the world, through Jesus Christ.] ... through the knowledge of Him Who called us by *His own* glory and virtue; Through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises...” (vs 2-4).

Now why would he say, ‘exceeding great and precious promises’? Which are beyond our knowledge and expectation. Remember, Peter was one of those who went on the Mt. of Transfiguration and saw Jesus transfigured before his very own eyes. And that's what he said a little later in the chapter that he had burning in his mind. And what John said, ‘We saw! We handled the Word of Life.’ And these are great and precious promises—*exceeding* as it says here. “...Through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises, that through these you may become partakers of *the* **divine nature.**... [and boy, that's what all of us need to be focusing in on, because this old human nature, and this old flesh, it gets old and it wears out and that's just the way that it is. And again, there's very little that we can do about it. God says that if we live to be three score and ten, that's fine. If it's four score, that's by God's blessing. If it's any longer than that, it's by God's mercy.] ... Through which He has given to us the greatest and *most* precious promises, that through these you may become partakers of *the* divine nature... [and that is right now though the Spirit of God that we have. So what did the Apostle Paul say: ‘Stir up the Spirit which God has given you.’ And how do we do that? *By focusing in on the calling that God has given.* And then we take these steps, as we will see here.] ...partakers of *the* divine nature... [And of course we know what is the ultimate of it: *be resurrected and be in the Kingdom*

of God, correct?] ...having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust” (v 4). So we can escape it. That’s why the Sabbath is an escape, right? Yes, it is!

There are times when on the Sabbath, I think, “Boy, what am I going to preach on?” And on Thursday I don’t have a clue. On Friday, I’m still thinking on it, praying about it. Then on the Sabbath, God gives me what is necessary to bring what God wants me to bring. And that is no credit to me, because it’s the Sabbath and it’s God’s Spirit and it is God that is doing it. But because we escape the corruption of the world that is around us—by our little island of the Sabbath, which we have every week—then God gives a special blessing because of that.

Now it says, continuing here: “And for this very reason also, having applied all diligence besides, add to your faith... [here are the steps] ... add to your faith, virtue... [doing the things that are right] ...and to virtue, knowledge; And to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, endurance; and to endurance, godliness; And to godliness, brotherly love; and to brotherly love, the love [agape] of God” (vs 5-7). That’s how we make our calling and our election sure.

Now, let’s go to 1-John, the third chapter. We alluded to this, but I want to read it into the record, so that we have it here for sure. Verse 1: “Behold!... [means pay attention, look to, understand] ...What glorious love the Father has given to us, that we should be called the children of God!... [the children of God: ‘teknon’—that means His very own offspring.] ...For this very reason, the world does not know us because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are the children of God, and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be; but we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him, because we shall see Him exactly as He is.... [Now that is something to look on, isn’t it? We won’t have to worry about anything in the flesh. We don’t have to worry about the world that is going on. God knows the things that are in the world and God is going to take care of them in His due time and in His due way. So this then is HOW we survive in the world. Focus in on the calling and the promises of God.] (v 3): ...And everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, **even as He is pure**” (vs 1-3). What did Jesus say? ‘Father, I will that they become **one** in Us. I in You and You in Me and Me in them that they may become **one** in Us.’ Now that is tremendous!

Now let’s close by going to Ephesians, the third chapter. This is the most encouraging place in the Bible, and I really think is one of the tremendous and wonderful things of the Bible that we need to focus in on. But let’s go back to chapter one before we go to chapter three. Ephesians 1:17 ^[transcriber’s correction]—and here’s the whole prayer that the Apostle Paul was praying, leading up to this. Then we have forgiveness of sin through His blood, that God called us for His very own will and His pleasure and His goodness. “That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him.

And may the eyes of your mind be enlightened in order that you may comprehend what is the **hope of His calling**... [and that’s the hope that we have in us, that we are going to be like Him, because we’re going to see Him as He is; and we are the very children of God. And that’s what we need to focus in on to be inspired to block out the world and to sort of shut off the world and all the evil that is there, because God has to handle that. We have to work on what we need to do, and here’s how we do it:] ... what is the **hope of His calling**, and what *is* the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, And what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the inner working of His mighty power” (vs 17-19).

Now let’s go to Ephesians 3:14—and as those of you have heard me preach before, this is one of my favorite places in the Bible. This is the most inspiring and the most uplifting portion of the entire New Testament—in my own opinion and my own experience. And that when I’m in trouble and when I’m in difficulties, this is where I turn to so that I can turn to God and it’s not me doing it, but God doing it because of what is said here. “For this cause I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Of Whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named, That He may grant you, according to the riches of His glory... [From His very inner most being to you] ...to be strengthened with power by His Spirit in the inner man... [God’s Spirit *in you*—that is going to block off the world around you. That is going to keep you in focus on your calling, so that you understand and make sure your calling] ...That Christ may dwell in your hearts by faith... [That God is going to—through Christ—live in you!] ...*And* that being rooted and grounded in love... [To love God with all your heart and mind and soul and being—and that’s what it is there.] ... you may be fully able to comprehend with all the saints... [Because this is an ever-expanding thing. As I mentioned the other day, God’s way in word and plan, is like a sphere. It’s not like a line. And it’s not like a circle. It’s like sphere—it is full, it is dense, it is tremendous. There’s an awful lot in it, and that’s why Paul says right here that you may be able] ...to comprehend with all the saints what *is* the breadth and length and depth and height... [of the knowledge of God’s plan and His calling] ...And to know the love of Christ, which surpasses human knowledge; so that you may be filled with all the fullness of God” (vs 14-19).

Now, right at this minute if that doesn’t block the world out of your mind and heart and take away all of the evil that is there, and unite your heart spiritually with God—I know it does; you know it does—it does with me right now at this very minute, and I know it does with you right now at this very minute. And here’s the key: “Now to Him Who is able to do **exceeding abundantly**... [because the ‘eye is not seen nor the ear heard nor has it entered into the heart of men the things that God has prepared for those that love Him’] ...above all that we ask or think, according to the power that is working in us, To Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all generations, *even* into the ages of eternity” (vs 20-21).

Brethren, *that is how you can survive the world that is around you—by focusing in on the calling of God!*

Scripture References:

- 1) Isaiah 5:20
- 2) Isaiah 3:12
- 3) Isaiah 5:19-24
- 4) Romans 1:18-32
- 5) Matthew 7:15-23
- 6) 1 John 2:2-3
- 7) Luke 5:32
- 8) Romans 5:6-10
- 9) Matthew 22:14
- 10) John 6:44
- 11) 1 Corinthians 1:3-9; 26-30
- 12) 1 Corinthians 6:9-11
- 13) Mark 12:30-31
- 14) 1 Corinthians 2:9-14

- 15) Ephesians 2:2-5
- 16) 2 Peter 2:18
- 17) 2 Peter 1:10: 2-7
- 18) 1 John 3:1-3
- 19) Ephesians 1:17-19
- 20) Ephesians 3:14-21

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