

What is Our Father's Greatest Work?

Rick Railston

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For those of you who were part of the Worldwide Church of God from the late '50's and on, we heard for decades to do the work. We have to do the work. All of us back then, sacrificed money, time, and energy, doing the work. Looking back on it, I think it's safe to say that there were a few hundred million dollars spent on booklets—hundreds, thousands of booklets—multiple magazines, television, radio, world travel, doing the work. We all remember that.

By way of introduction, what do we have to show for that today? What are the fruits—not then—but right now? Herbert Armstrong began that work and we know that, those of us that were around at that time. He died in 1986 and that work died with him. Today, there are many groups trying to resurrect the Worldwide model to do the work. Despite that, the results frankly have been underwhelming. It just has not materialized. There is a lesson there when you think about that. This is not our subject today but as we approach the title, the question is, what was the greatest work our Father has ever done or is doing? What is the greatest work? You could think, what about bringing Israel out of Egypt. Think about that. Egypt was the most powerful kingdom on earth at the time and God took Moses to lead this rag-tag bunch of slaves out from the greatest kingdom that existed up to that time. He had the plagues, the pillar of the cloud and fire, the parting of the Red Sea, the destruction of Pharaoh's army down to every last man and all the war implements buried in the Red Sea. Is that God's greatest work?

What about the creation of all that is? Not just the earth, which is beautiful and complicated and works all together, but what about everything that exists—the universe. Could that be His greatest work? Much has been learned about His universe in the last fifteen or twenty years which just boggles the human mind. Most of that has been made possible by the Hubble telescope which was launched in 1990. Then after some hiccups and some repairs, they launched what was called the Hubble Ultra Deep Field exploration in 2003. The Hubble had been upgraded and they put on new detectors to reach farther out into space. They then pointed the Hubble to an empty part of the sky. When I say empty, certainly empty to the human eye and empty to every telescope on earth up to that point. There were parts of the sky that were absolutely black having no evidence of any celestial entities being there.

They pointed the Hubble telescope to that point in the sky and they left it focused in a very small area for eleven days. This was to allow any light out there the possibility of coming into these new detectors so they could see if anything was out there. Most of the scientists thought it was just going to be black---just an empty portion of space. After eleven days and the information was downloaded, they saw on the computer screens and could identified 10,000 galaxies. No stars—galaxies—in a tiny, tiny portion of the sky. That has just revolutionized the thinking for the cosmologists over the last ten or fifteen years. Now they are talking about, not hundreds of millions of galaxies, but

trillions of galaxies. Each galaxy with billions of stars. One scientist said this proved the point—he did some calculations—and he said,

“There are more stars out there than all the grains of sand on all the beaches on the entire earth.”

That’s how big the universe has become in our comprehension and maybe there’s still more out there that we don’t even know about.

My question is, is the creation of the universe God’s greatest work? The creation of the human body and human brain; is that our Father’s greatest work? That is the title of the sermon today:

What is The Father’s Greatest Work?

To set the background we are going to have two points in the beginning, to answer the question.

1. The Creator has allowed mankind to choose his own path, to make his own decisions.

Go to Genesis 3:1. You will know where we are going. There were two trees in the Garden of Eden which symbolized something. To understand what God our Father’s greatest work is, we need to understand these two trees.

Genesis 3:1 *Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. [The serpent, we know to be Satan and we need to keep that in mind going forward.] And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?*

2) *And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:*

3) *But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.*

4) *And the serpent said unto the woman, [don’t worry about it, God is pulling the wool over your eyes, He is trying to deceive you] Ye shall not surely die:*

5) *For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (KJV)*

We know the rest of that story and how it developed. Now go down to verse 22.

22) *And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live forever: (KJV)*

We have to stop that. What we see is that Yehovah could not let humans, who listened to Satan, who are motivated by Satan, to have eternal life; He couldn’t let that happen.

23) Therefore, the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. (KJV)

Verse 24 out of the NIV.

24) After he drove the man out, he placed on the east side of the Garden of Eden cherubim and a flaming sword flashing back and forth to guard the way to the tree of life. (NIV)

So, from that day forth, no human could have access to eternal life except those given a special calling from God; from the Almighty, from our Father. Now in Acts 2:38, we normally focus on the beginning of these verses, but we want to focus on the end of verse 39, so we are going to read verse 38 and 39. Peter is speaking to a huge crowd at Pentecost and he pricked their heart and told them that because of their sins, Christ had to die. They said to him, what on earth are we going to do and he answers in verse 38.

Acts 2:38 *Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*

39) For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even [and he tells us who these are] as many as the Lord our God shall call. (KJV)

We see here that, except for this special calling, eternal life is closed to the balance of humanity. At this time, where we sit today, only a few have the opportunity for eternal life. Looking back to Genesis, we see there are two trees and this is no secret; we are covering ground that has already been plowed. There is a tree whose fruit reveals the knowledge of good and evil. In a way it's like the internet today. You can sit with a computer on your lap, press a button and you can have good, or you can have evil, at your command. What Adam and Eve chose was the computer that is hooked up to the internet where we can have whatever we want. That's the first tree.

The second tree is a tree whose fruit opens the door to salvation. It doesn't guarantee salvation, it just opens the door to it. The point is, Adam and Eve made a choice, they made a decision to choose their own path. To take that laptop, put it on their lap and press whatever they wanted; that was their choice. As a result, after that time, we have not only human nature to deal with, but we have the provocations and influence of the being that influenced them in the Garden in the first place. So, we have human nature and satanic broadcasting, if you want to put it in those terms, motivating man's choices. And look at the result. Gale was talking about that in the sermonette. We didn't communicate this at all, but we're close to midnight. 6,000 years of misery and destruction and we are on the cusp of destroying everything. So that's the first point, in the background. God has allowed man to choose his own path.

The second point we need to make in approaching this subject is:

2. Our Father allows human suffering for a reason—for a purpose.

How many times have we heard from the skeptics, from the atheists and the agnostics that if there was a loving God, how can you explain all the evil in the world? “I can’t believe in a God that allows all this”. We know the answer—it’s in God’s Word. It’s because mankind has taken upon himself to choose his own path. So, the Father allows suffering and as a result; “we reap what we sow”. He is allowing mankind to reap what he sows. There are two reasons—there are others of course—but two major reasons that the Father allows suffering.

2A. He is showing the world that man’s way doesn’t work.

He leaves man to himself, lets him go to see if he can solve his own problems. See if he can have peace, health, lasting prosperity; if he knows how to govern himself. The answer is a resounding “No”. Humanity is learning, that apart from God the Father, the result is pain, suffering and death. Life is hard; we have pain and suffering and then we die; that’s the end of it as far as human beings apart from God the Father are concerned.

2B. He allows suffering for the benefit of those He is calling to teach us lessons we would not learn otherwise.

Suffering and pain are great teachers. He allows suffering in our lives to teach us lessons that we cannot learn in any other way. We don’t like them, it’s difficult, but if you take the long view—the Father’s view—it is to get us from point A to point B. Point B being His Kingdom. In Acts 14:22; we break into a trip with Paul and Barnabas where they are visiting disciples in various areas. This the context of these verses.

Acts 14:22 *Confirming the souls [meaning the lives] of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, [to not give up] and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God. (KJV)*

That is a given, that is a requirement; it’s a requirement for all mankind because ultimately, all mankind will have to face trials, tribulation and suffering. All mankind will have to face Satan at some point, before any human being will be allowed into the Kingdom of God. With that in mind go to Hebrews 2:9 and read verses 9 and 10.

Hebrews 2:9 *But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels for the suffering of death, crowned with glory and honor; that he by the grace of God should taste death for every man. (KJV)*

Verse 10 is out of the NLT.

10) *God, for whom and through whom everything was made, chose to bring many children into glory. And it was only right that he should make Jesus, through his suffering, a perfect leader, fit to bring them into their salvation.* (NLT)

Through *suffering*—the Greek means “hardship or pain”—it was the Father’s plan to have His Son go through that to be the forerunner of our salvation. That word *forerunner* is used in chapter 6:20; it means “the pioneer”, “the one that runs ahead setting the example”.

For us who are called, the sufferings that our Father allows are for our long-term benefit. We think short term, we think of “today”. As I have said before, we look at life through soda straws and see this, but don’t see all of this—God does. He has a long-term plan for us and what He allows or what He causes is for our long-term benefit. We know the familiar scripture, Romans 8:28. We are told “all things work together for good for those who love God” and the last part, “to them who are called according to His purpose.”

No matter what God allows or causes, it’s for our long-term benefit. We cannot forget that, especially in a long-term trial. So, ending this second point about suffering, our Father allows suffering for a reason; to teach His young children lessons that His young children would not otherwise learn.

With this background, let’s get to the third point because we are going to answer the question:

3. What is our Father’s greatest work?

Somebody could argue about it. But we are going to focus on this great work and when you think about it, it’s hard to argue that it is not at least right there at the top. As we have seen, the Father allows mankind to choose his own path. He allows that to happen. At the same time, for those whom He has called, in the past—righteous Abel, Seth, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, the list goes on and on—and now those He calls in the present today and on into the future. He gives all of us the opportunity to do this, given those first two points. To willingly choose to love Him and to obey Him and to put Him first in all things. He gives us an opportunity—it’s not a guarantee, not a given—to love Him and to obey Him from the heart and to put Him first in everything that we do. If a human being chooses to do that—to love Him and obey Him with all their heart and put Him first—then, what is the result? It’s eternal life.

When you think about it, God the Father could have preprogrammed humans to be obedient and to love Him. But if you are in the Father’s position, who wants to be loved by a robot of your own making? Who wants that? We don’t want that. We want our husband or our wife to love us because they want to. The Father does the same thing and that’s the plan of salvation. He wants to create conditions so that human beings who have free choice, free moral agency, will come to the point where they willingly love Him, willingly submit to Him, willingly obey Him. He is trying to get us to that point.

He could have had a plan that disobedience would be so painful that man would be forced to obey. Let's say that when you had the wrong thought, all of a sudden you would be slammed with the worst migraine headache imaginable that would take you right down to your knees. Do you think people would, just to remove that pain, stay on their knees and ask God to forgive me for what I just thought or just did or just said? Of course. God could have made disobedience so painful that they would outwardly say they love Him. They would say, "Yes of course I love you", in order to have the pain removed. But that's not coming from the heart, that's not coming from inside, it's because "I just don't want to suffer anymore". It's like when you put a gun to somebody's head, that human being is going to obey with a gun to their head, mostly all will. But it won't be from the heart. You take the gun away and then the man with the gun walks away over the hill and the human goes back to what they were doing before and that is not what God wants. The fact is, the reality is, the way the Father has designed everything, when you think about it, no one can be forced to love. You cannot force anyone to love. You could force them to obey. You could force them to say the right words, but to love from the heart, you cannot force anybody to do that. Love only comes from the will and from the heart.

Take two human beings, maybe one wants to get married and the other doesn't. The one who wants to marry, can't force the other one to love them—it just doesn't happen. God has designed it so that He will not force someone to love Him. They have to do it of their own free will. What our Father wants, are human beings who are willing to give up everything, even their own lives, because they love the Father and His Son. That's the bottom line. He wants humans to be willing to give up everything.

With that in mind, go to Mark 10:17. Christ is with the disciples and this gives us a hint of what He wants. If you think there is a theme at the Feast, you are absolutely right. Gale said it in the sermonette, Wil said it at the close of his bible study and several have said it all through the Feast.

Mark 10:17 *And when he was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to him, and asked him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? (KJV)*

You could see, if he had had pants on, he would be grabbing the cuff of His pants and just begging Him to answer this question.

18) *And Jesus said unto him, why callest thou me good? there is none good but one, that is, God. (KJV)*

Referring to His Father; it's amazing how people deny that out of the words of Jesus Christ.

19) *Thou knowest the commandments, do not commit adultery, do not kill, do not steal, do not bear false witness, defraud not, Honor thy father and mother.*

20) *And he answered and said unto him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. (KJV)*

Verse 21 is interesting.

21) *Then Jesus beholding him loved him ... (KJV)*

Isn't that interesting? Perfect stranger, probably down on his knees, begging Christ and Christ beheld him and loved him. What Christ is saying is out of love for this man.

21 continued) *... and said unto him, one thing thou lackest: go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow me. (KJV)*

This sounds to me like an offer of discipleship; come right now, sell it all and follow Me.

22) *And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions. (KJV)*

He was rich so this is a test; what are you going to put first—riches or Me?

23) *And Jesus looked round about, and saith unto his disciples, how hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom of God! (KJV)*

Let's stop a minute. The fact is, when you look at us today, we have more riches than the kings of those days. In fact, I was talking to a fellow yesterday who had been to Africa to help people get clean water and toilets and he was describing how cold it was in the United States relative to Africa. This one man looked at him with wide eyes and said, "What do you do? How do you get heat?" He said, "I just turn the thermostat up." and this man said, "What's that?" He explained how electrical wires go to this thing and he said, "What's that?" Here we are, we live greater than kings lived back in those days.

24) *And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches [here's the key, where is your trust] to enter into the kingdom of God!*

25) *It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God.*

26) *And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, who then can be saved?*

27) *And Jesus looking upon them saith, [this is a huge lesson we are going to learn over and over] With men it is impossible, but not with God: for with God all things are possible. (KJV)*

No matter how bleak our condition is, no matter how bad the trial or the persecution, all things are possible with our Father.

28) *Then Peter began to say unto him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee. (KJV)*

He was absolutely right; the disciples had left all when you think about it. They left their jobs, the fishing nets were there by the beach, the boats were there by the beach and they just followed Christ. They left their wives, their children, their home, their little village and just took off. They didn't get on their cell phone and say they were going to be gone for a while, they just took off. What Peter said was true, except he said they gave up all but they hadn't given up their lives yet and that would come soon enough.

29) *And Jesus answered and said, Verily I say unto you, there is no man that hath left house, or brethren, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my sake, and the gospel's,*

30) *But he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, [that's interesting] houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands ... (KJV)*

Because now you have brothers and sisters in Christ, you have people who are older than you, who are your elder mom or dad in Christ or children in Christ. So, you will have multitudes of those because we are the Temple of God after all. Notice the later part of the verse.

30 continued) *... with persecutions [it's not a free ride]; and in the world to come [if you endure all of this] eternal life. (KJV)*

The point is, Christ was telling the disciples and by extension, us today that we are being offered eternal life. That is if we are ready to give up everything because of our love for our Father and His Son and what They have done for us and Who They are. What is the Father's greatest work, when you think about it? Bringing carnal human beings who have the freedom to choose and who are bombarded by Satan and bombarded by Satan's world, to bring those carnal human beings to the place where they will willingly choose to love and obey the Father whom they have never seen. What a work is that? Where they clearly understand who the Father is, versus who they are—who we are—looking at us and seeing this gigantic gulf and then willingly love Him and willingly submit to Him from the heart because we want to. I think this is a greater work of our Father than creating the universe, pulling Israel out of Egypt and all of the other miracles put together. When you can take a carnal human, bombarded by Satan, living in Satan's world and then despite all of that, is willing to give up everything including their own life, to love God Almighty whom they have never seen.

That leads to the next point. Given the two choices before mankind which we have talked about, is where the rubber meets the road, as they say.

4. There will come a day of reckoning and a day of judgement.

That is going to happen, but we as humans like to put those things off and those thoughts off. We don't like to think about a time of judgment, but that is coming.

Daniel 12:1, talks about a time that we are going to see and that we celebrated at Trumpets.

Daniel 12:1 *And at that time [let's figure out what that time is] shall Michael stand up, the great prince which standeth for the children of thy people: and there shall be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation even to that same time [that sounds like tribulation, trumpets, wrath of God coming on man]: and at that time thy people [the firstfruits] shall be delivered, every one that shall be found written in the book.*

2) *And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake [resurrection], some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt. (KJV)*

The context here appears to be the spring harvest. We see that there is a resurrection of the firstfruits but Daniel also says there is going to be—as it seems to me in putting it together—that those who rejected their calling, rise at the same time. In other words, there are two groups here. Those who are willing to give up everything and those who are not. Just to let you know, the Elders and Deacons are studying this matter because of what Daniel says. We have to think about—you should think about it. If you have any thoughts, send it to one of us. The point is, there seems to be two groups rising up; one who has done what God wants and one who has not. The point I am making is that there is a coming day of reckoning and a time of judgment. With that in mind, go to the New Testament and Matthew 13:24. Christ is putting a parable before those who are with Him.

Matthew 13:24 *Another parable put he [Christ] forth unto them, saying, The kingdom of heaven is likened unto [any time we read that, our antenna should go up and we should pay attention because we want to be there] a man which sowed good seed in his field:*

25) *But while men slept, his enemy came and sowed tares among the wheat, and went his way. (KJV)*

So, we have two plants in the same field; wheat and tares.

26) *But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the tares also.*

27) *So, the servants of the householder came and said unto him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? [didn't we clean out all the chaff and all the wrong seeds and everything like that—how did we get these tares?] from whence then hath it tares?*

28) *He said unto them, an enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?*

29) *But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them.*

30) *Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them [I don't think that's an inconsequential term]: but gather the wheat into my barn. (KJV)*

So, we have another situation where you have good and you have evil and they are both being dealt with at the same time. I've always wondered about scriptures like this—Daniel 12—and thought, is this an event? A real event? Back in my decades in the church, I was always told that's a metaphor; a picture of the way things might happen, just drawing an analogy of good and bad. Is it a metaphor really? It's something to consider; something to think about. The point is, in Matthew 13 there is a coming a day of reckoning.

Go to Matthew 25:31. We've been in Matthew 25 quite a bit during the Feast. We are going to start in verse 31.

Matthew 25:31 *When the Son of man shall come in his glory [not setting a time frame], and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: (KJV)*

The context appears to be long after Trumpets, after Daniel 12:1. This appears to be Tabernacles time; He is sitting on His throne, He came in His glory.

32) *And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: (KJV)*

We have two groups, same time—sheep and goats. Good and bad.

33) *And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left.*

34) *Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (KJV)*

Well done good and faithful servant; you have shown Me that under all circumstances, you will put Me first, you will obey Me and that you love Me from your heart. He asked how that was demonstrated.

35) *For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in:*

36) *Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. (KJV)*

Demonstration of belief. Then they asked, when did we do that to you? When were you hungry or thirsty or when were you in prison or in the hospital? When did we see you sick? In verse 40 the King answered.

40) And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me. (KJV)

So now they understood. They were practicing what they believed. They were doing what they were committed to do. They didn't just talk about it, they did it. Then in verse 41 we get to the other group, the second group. They are both there at the same time in front of Christ.

41) Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, depart from me, ye cursed ... (KJV)

Think about that. How would you like to be in that group and you're looking at Christ sitting on a throne of glory and looking down at each one of us and said, "you cursed".

41 continued) ... into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: (KJV)

I was naked, you didn't clothe Me, I didn't have a place to stay, you didn't take Me in, I was in prison, I was sick, you didn't visit Me. Of course, they came back and said, when did we do that to you? His answer was, verse 45.

45) Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. (KJV)

This is their fate, verse 46.

46) And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal. (KJV)

The context to me appears to be the fall of the harvest. We have the righteous and the cursed dealt with at the same time. Something to think about. The point is, as far as what we are talking about today, there is a day of reckoning, a day of judgment.

With that in mind go to Romans 2:1 out of the NIV.

Romans 2:1 *You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else [have we ever done that?], for at whatever point you judge another, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgment do the same things. (NIV)*

If we're brutally honest with ourselves, we have all done that. We have accused somebody or attributed motives to somebody that we have had. Paul is saying, you don't have an excuse.

2) -Now we know that God's judgment against those who do such things is based on truth. (NIV)

Why? Because the Father and His Son know our hearts; they know what is in our minds, they know what our motivation is, more so than what comes out of our mouths and what our deeds are.

3) So, when you, a mere human being, pass judgment on them and yet do the same things, do you think you will escape God's judgment? (NIV)

Think about that. What we just read, there is a judgment coming, there is a day of reckoning and Paul is talking about this very fact. Do you think somehow you are going to skate in because you are in God's church or you sit in this seat or you follow this guy? Do you think you are going to skate in because of that?

4) Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? (NIV)

He is saying God shows us kindness, tolerance and puts up with us, so how can we not do the same for our brothers and sisters. Don't you realize that God gives this to us in our vanity and pride, so are we going to withhold that from our brothers and sisters?

5) But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath ... (NIV)

Every time we do that, we are creating a storage tank of wrath—God's wrath. Every time we judge our brother. Every time we return good with evil or we don't return good with good, God's wrath is building up in this storage tank that has our name on it.

5 continued) ... when his righteous judgment will be revealed. (NIV)

That's what we've been reading in Daniel 12 and what we read in Matthew 13; His righteous judgment will be revealed at a point.

6) God will repay each person according to what they have done." (NIV)

Paul is quoting Psalm 62:12 and other verses—you reap what you sow.

7) To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honor and immortality ... (NIV)

If we persist in doing good.

7 continued) ... *he will give eternal life.*

8) *But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth ...* (NIV)

And how many people have rejected the truth about who the Father is, who His Son is, what Their titles are and what They have done in the record of scripture; how many have knowingly rejected that.

8 continued) ... *and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.* (NIV)

Stored up over time to be spewed out toward those who do such things at a moment in time.

9) *There will be trouble and distress for every human being who does evil: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile;*

10) *-but glory, honor and peace for everyone who does good: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile.*

11) *For God does not show favoritism.* (NIV)

We reap what we sow. The point is, ending this fourth point, there is a coming day of reckoning and I do this to myself—picture yourself at that time where the rubber meets the road. Two groups: Those who have practiced evil, those who do not love God with all their heart. Those who do not fully obey the Father and then those who with all their heart love the Father, love the Son and are growing and overcoming and making progress. Which group do you want to be in? It's very simple. That picture is very clear when you think about Christ walking up to His throne and sitting down and there are two groups assembled. Am I in the right group? You don't know which one is which yet. Which group do you want to be in at that time? The point is, we need to be working now to make sure we are in the right group; that's up to us, nobody else.

5. Some humans will not want to participate in God's greatest work.

They just don't want to do it. They will not want to be part of the Father's greatest achievement because they would rather continue to practice evil than follow the Creator's way of life. There will be people who would prefer to molest children than to follow the Father's way of love. There are those who will prefer to torture and kill other human beings rather than follow the Father's way of love. There are those who would rather eternally die than not be able to practice their evils ways; they would just rather not exist. Revelation 21:7 describes these people. We talked about overcoming, the third word in this verse mentions that.

Revelation 21:7 *He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.* (KJV)

Verse 8 out of the NIV.

8) *But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.*” (NIV)

There will be people who would rather do this than obey the Father and His Son. Hebrews 10:26 describes these people. They are so perverted and so polluted or they rejected God in some other way—some of the Pharisees at the time of Christ did that. They knew He was the Son of God and rejected Him—they have their time. Hebrews 10:26, out of the NLT.

Hebrews 10:26 *Dear friends, if we deliberately continue sinning after we have received knowledge of the truth [we know at some point, all mankind will receive the knowledge of the truth; that will come to all mankind], there is no longer any sacrifice that will cover these sins.* (NLT)

Christ’s sacrifice does not cover these sins. Notice the future of these people.

27) *There is only the terrible expectation of God’s judgment and the raging fire that will consume his enemies.* (NLT)

That is their expectation. Sometimes we kid ourselves thinking, God allows a certain amount of sin. It’s like the Evangelist who said—I’ve told this before—God winks at my sins because of what I do for the work. That is just not true. That is justifying wrong behavior. Raging fire that will consume His enemies. Now notice Luke 19:27. For those who think that Jesus Christ is all about love, love, love, everything is going to be okay, let’s just sit by the campfire, hold hands and sing Kumbaya and everybody will come to Me—it’s just not going to happen. There will be those who just don’t want to participate in our Father’s greatest achievement.

Luke 19:27 [Christ speaking] *But those mine enemies [Christ has enemies], which would not that I should reign over them [there were some there at the time when He walked the earth, what is their fate?], bring hither, and slay them before me.* (KJV)

He wants to watch because He wants to make sure that those who are opposed to Him and His Father are gone forever. They will never resurface, they will never be resurrected, they will be gone. If a man or a woman refuses to willingly love and obey their Creator and put their Creator first, wanting rather to choose their own way, then God, in His mercy, will make it so that it will be as though they never existed. At some point it will be as though they never existed. Go to Isaiah 26:14 and see that.

Isaiah 26:14 *They are now dead, they live no more, their spirits do not rise.* (KJV)

We know in other scriptures when someone dies, their spirit goes up to be with the Father, but here we are told that their spirit doesn't rise. It sounds to me like this is a permanent death.

14 continued) ... *You punished them and brought them to ruin; you wiped out all memory of them.* (KJV)

This shows God's wonderful mercy because there is going to be someone's mate who doesn't make it. Children whose parents don't make it or one parent doesn't make it or parents whose child doesn't make it and to live for eternity with that memory of a child or a dad or mom that didn't make it, would be torture. The Father is merciful and at some point, He wipes out the memory banks and it's as though that person never existed. The message in point number five is, not everyone is going to be in the Kingdom of God. That is obvious from the scriptures we've read.

For sake of time I'm going to have to combine point six and seven.

6. How do we become part of our Father's greatest work?

The fact is, once we repent and are baptized and receive the Holy Spirit, our part starts with the two great commandments. We won't turn there for the sake of time, as it's been covered several times at the Feast, Matthew 22:34, going on through verse 38. A lawyer asked Christ what were the two great commandments and He said,

"Love God with all your being and love your neighbor, your fellow man as yourself".

What is the common denominator between these two commandments? It's love—that's the common denominator. As I said earlier, love comes from the will and comes from the heart. You can't make somebody love somebody—you can't do that; only God's spirit gives us love to do it and to have the will to do it. Nothing else matters if we have not love. I have 1 Corinthians 13, Gale read it during the sermonette, Wil mentioned it last night at his bible study and his sermon, several other speakers have mentioned it and it tells us we can have all the knowledge in the world, we can have faith that moves mountains but it doesn't mean a thing.

Our part is to love at all times, under all circumstances. Christ loved those who were plotting to kill him. He loved the one who put the sword in His side, that scourged Him. Once we are converted, we learn over time, through circumstances that our selfish way doesn't work; it just doesn't work. Mankind is learning that today and when we think, where are we going to be next year, mankind is going to learn next year that their way doesn't work. It will be a greater mess next year, we can pretty much count on that.

Our Father teaches us through circumstances and experience and part of that is suffering. He teaches that the only way that works is His way; the only thing that is best, the only thing that lasts. Proverbs 16:25 says:

“There is a way that seems right to a man but in the end, it leads to death”.

We are learning that. One of my favorite scriptures is Jeremiah 10:23. Jeremiah is pleading with Yehovah and says,

“Yehovah I know that the way of man is not in himself. It is not in man who walks, to direct his steps”.

We don't know how to put one foot in front of another apart from you. If God is not behind it, it's going to blow up in our face.

Will Rogers—I think everybody has heard the name—was an old Oklahoma cowboy and a writer, a humorist, a publisher and a lecturer who died in 1910 and he said this:

“Good judgment comes from experience.....

Our Father is giving us that experience now.

...Most experience comes from bad judgement.”

Isn't that the truth? We learn by our mistakes; we learn by our sins, if we are going to God with them. In Psalm 143:10, David is speaking. This is something that should be our prayer to God every day, our talk with our Father to start the day, this is the way I want to start the day.

Psalm 143:10 *Teach me to do thy will; (KJV)*

How many times have we wanted our will? We knew our will was right. We headed off and plowed through other people. We didn't listen and then found out that our will wasn't God's will.

10 continued) ... *for thou art my God: thy spirit is good; lead me into the land of uprightness. (KJV)*

The only way we can get to the “land of uprightness” is to be led, not to push our way. As Elders and Deacons in the Pacific Church of God I think one thing we have learned is that we want to do the Father's will, not our will. That is the only lasting thing we can do, the only worthwhile thing we can do is to do the Father's will on the Father's time table and not our will on our time table. In the model prayer in Luke 11, what did Christ say about how to pray? He said pray to the Father, “hallowed be Your name”. How can you make God's name hallowed if you don't know His name? We have been talking a lot about that. Then what did He say after that? “Your Kingdom come”, then “Your will be done as in heaven—[as it is right now in heaven]—and so on earth”. God's will is being done. We might not like it right now, but God's will is being done. Our part in the greatest work of the Almighty is to love Him and to love our fellow man with all our heart. It is to do His will at all times and to understand that the Father is watching us as

we are storing up eternal life in our tank—up in heaven so to speak, I'm creating a metaphor. Or are we storing up the wrath of the Almighty in our tank?

Seventh and last point, we will make this short.

7. Our job is to become like our Father and like His Son.

The plan is so simple. If we love God with all our heart, with all our will, with all our might, wouldn't we want to be like Him and His Son? That involves changing from the old person to the new person; pretty simple. In Ephesians 4:22 and 23 we are told to put off the old man and to put on the new man, to be renewed in the spirit of your mind, according to the will of God.

In Colossians 3:8, from the New King James, gives us the nitty gritty of putting off the old person and putting on the new person. At the end of the day, sometimes it's good to read this and say, how do I measure up? Where are my chalk marks today on which side of the ledger are they?

Colossians 3:8 *But now you yourselves are to put off all these [meaning the old man]: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth.*

9) *Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds,*

10) *and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him [Christ] who created him, [Christ set the example]*

11) *where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcised nor uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave nor free, but Christ is all and in all.*

12) *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies [this is how to be holy and be beloved of our Father], kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering;*

13) *bearing with one another [the Greek word for bearing means to "put up with one another"; with our faults, our shortcomings, our quirks], and forgiving one another [there are some who have a very hard time with that and hold grudges.*

You cannot go into the Kingdom of God with a grudge], if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. (NKJV)

It's not a suggestion, it's a requirement.

14) *But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.*

15) *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts ... (NKJV)*

It doesn't say the peace of God comes in and takes a little portion of your heart, it says the peace of God is to rule in your heart.

15 continued) *... to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. (NKJV)*

That is why the name Pacific exists, because we want the peace of God to rule in all of our hearts and we are called in one body that will be peaceful. Because we love one another, we forebear, we have humility, meekness and kindness; that is our goal in everything we have read up to this point. Verse 24

24) knowing that from the Lord you will receive the reward of the inheritance; for you serve the Lord Christ. But he who does wrong will be repaid for what he has done, and there is no partiality. (NKJV)

There is coming a time of reckoning if we don't become somebody that our Father and Son can recognize. It would be like us saying to somebody,

"I like him or her because we are like each other, we have the same goals and values".

If the Father and Son can't see that in us, why would They give us eternal life and be around us? Obviously, They wouldn't. For someone who is not like the Father and the Son, they will be thrust into the lake of fire on the day of judgement.

Final encouraging scripture in John 10:27; John 10 is the parable of the sheepfold and the thief comes in to steal and to kill and to destroy. Christ is summarizing this and here is the good news.

John 10:27 *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me: 28) And I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand. 29) My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; [what a concept and yet people refuse to believe that] and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand. (KJV)*

We are here to demonstrate that during our lives, we will put the Father first, that we will willingly submit to Him, from our own will and we will love Him from our heart, from our inner most being and we will love our neighbor from our innermost being. We are here on this earth right now to demonstrate that to God the Father and His Son and if we do that, we are guaranteed eternal life. If we do not do that and take this opportunity then we face a fiery, angry death and none of us wants to go there at all.

In closing, remember with our Father, all things are possible. If we put Him first, if we honor His Son, we will be there at this day of reckoning. Wishing you a safe trip home, a wonderful year ahead for yourselves personally, getting closer to the Father and His Son. It is going to be a tough year for the world and we're going to have to watch it endure it and be part of it. The onus is on us. The Father is watching us to see how we handle the world that comes our way. Are we going to succumb and get angry and bitter and upset? Or are we going to look to our Father, look to His Son, to take us by the hand and lead us through this mine field that is the world in which we live. If we do that, our Father will bring us through and we will have eternal life in His Kingdom.