

What Godly Traits Should We Be Developing To Prepare To Serve on This Last Great Day

Last Great Day

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This sermon is going to be basically a continuation of the one I gave on the first day of the Feast of Tabernacles. As we know, this is the harvest season. That first night, we had a big harvest moon out there. Farmers are in the middle of their harvest all around the northern hemisphere.

Let's be turning to Revelation chapter 20. The first harvest is the harvest of the firstfruits and we've been celebrating that for the previous seven days, but look at verse 4 of Revelation 20 just as a reminder.

Revelation 20:4. *And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, ... (KJV)*

[There are] tough times ahead, maybe for some.

Revelation 20:4b. *... which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. (KJV)*

That's something we've been talking about and speaking about and fellowshiping about for seven days.

But today (Last Great Day, LGD) is the Great Harvest, the Final Harvest. Look at verse 11.

Revelation 20:11. *And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them.*

12) And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

13) And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works. (KJV)

What a time! This resurrection is not of the dead in Christ but, rather, the ones who have never known Christ.

As I mentioned last year, I've done some research. And it's obviously a big estimation of the number of people who have ever lived. In the last year, they've bumped that estimation up from 106 billion to 108 billion people. As Tom was talking about and James was talking about with the limited capacity that we have, it's hard to grasp 108 billion. But, as I mentioned last year, if you had 108 billion people in one line and they were an arm length's apart, one behind the other as we used to do in the military, how long would that line be? It would wrap around the earth 1,600 times if you lined up all the people who have ever lived.

Another way to put that in perspective is that if you spent two seconds calling out each one's names, Tom ... Smith, one second for the first name, one second for the last name, if you started naming them at the time of Adam, you would still have another 750 years to go to name every one of the 108 billion people. That is a lot people. And they are resurrected within a very short period of time.

If these people were resurrected with today's land mass (the mountains where they are, the ocean where it is, the rivers where they are) that would be about 1,858 people for every square mile on the face of the earth. That means 1,858 people on a square mile on the top of the Himalayas; 1,858 people in a square mile in the middle of a Florida swamp. That's a pretty high population density. It's the same population density as Salt Lake City or Shreveport, Louisiana or Lubbock, Texas or Tallahassee, Florida but it's all over the world—every available piece of land all the world. We can see why the mountains need to come down and the oceans rise to accommodate comfortably that number of people.

But the point is that this day represents the biggest event in the history of humanity. Sometimes we lose sight of that. We focus on ourselves. We focus on being the firstfruits and our resurrection and all of that. Yet that pales in comparison to resurrecting 108 billion people within a very short period of time all over the world!

We want to focus, as we get into the sermon, we want to understand that each one, each individual one, is a child of God—each one! And each one individually deserves a proper chance, deserves an opportunity. And, frankly, most have never had that.

Look at the people today in Africa or China or Afghanistan. And ask yourself, "Do they have a chance? Where they grow up, in the environment they grow up in, do they have a chance?" They sure don't. This will be their chance.

And each one deserves to be individually educated God's way—individually educated God's way. Each one deserves to be guided and counseled God's way. And each one individually needs and deserves a mentor, a guide, a teacher. Each one needs and deserves that.

Now, who do you think is going to do all of that? It's us! We're going to do that. We can think.... I think sometimes we think when this resurrection occurs, God is going to wave His magic wand and we're just going to sit on the sidelines and watch Him do everything. That is not the case. We are not going to be spectators. We are going to be participants. And we need to understand that we're going to be instrumental in dealing with those who are resurrected on this day.

Let me give you the title of the sermon. It's a long one, but what we want to focus on today is between now and the next Feast, a year from now, what specific godly traits do we need to be developing to prepare ourselves to function and serve and help on the Last Great Day when it is actually fulfilled?

*What specific godly traits should we be developing
between now and the next Feast
to prepare to serve on the Last Great Day?*

Frankly, these are the same traits that are necessary to help the people that live over and come through the Great Tribulation. It's a similar situation, but today, it's going to be infinitely greater as far as the number of people and dealing with those people. So, we're going to talk about four character traits, four things we need to be developing.

The first one is that:

1. We must have love for every human being that has ever existed on the face of the earth. We must have that!

Some believe God only loves the firstfruits. Some believe God only loves Israel. Some believe God only loves the Jews. And some people believe God only loves Republicans (laughter from audience), but that's not the case. Is it?

We know that intellectually, but we have to know it in the heart. We have to know it inside because God wants us to have love for each individual person that has ever lived because each one is His child.

All people, all of mankind are God's children. And who are we to say, "I'm not going to love this one or that one." If God loves them, how can we not love them? How could we say, "Well, I'll love 107 billion, but that last billion I'm not going to love because I've got a problem with this one and that one and the other one."

If we do not love every one of them, we're not going to be there because God is not going to have somebody in His kingdom who doesn't have love for all His children. It's as simple as that.

Let's look and see what God says about the enemies of Israel. Let's turn over to Isaiah chapter 19. We think God—He obviously did—He took His wrath out on the

enemies of Israel. But what's going to happen this day? What's going to happen on this day? Isaiah 19 verses 24 and 25. Notice this. Sometimes we tend to overlook these facts. Isaiah 19 verse 24:

Isaiah 19:24. *In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the [middle] of the land: (KJV)*

Notice verse 25 of Isaiah 19.

Isaiah 19:25. *Whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt... (KJV)*

Does He say, "My enemy?" He says:

Isaiah 19:25b. *...my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel [my] inheritance. (KJV)*

God is saying to Israel and to us, "I love the Egyptians just as much as I love you. I love the Assyrians just as much as I love you." And shame on us if we can't get to that point!

Christ, when He was on the earth, set us the example. He fellowshiped with all kinds of people. Let's go to Luke chapter 15 and just see an example. The publicans, the sinners, the Pharisees, and the scribes all gathered around because they wanted to hear this man speak. Luke 15 verse 1:

Luke 15:1. *Then drew near unto him all the publicans and sinners to hear him.*

2) *And the Pharisees and scribes [they were muttering on the sidelines], saying, This man [talks to sinners; He receives them and He even eats] with them. [Think of that!]*

3) *And he [spoke] this parable unto them, (KJV)*

Meaning: the Pharisees and the scribes, those who condemned Him for doing this. He said in verse 4:

Luke 15:4. *What man of you, having an hundred sheep, if he [loses] one of them, [doesn't] leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness, and go after [the one] which [was] lost, until he [finds] it?*

5) *And when he found it, he [laid] it on his shoulders, rejoicing.*

6) *And when he [came] home, he [called] together his friends and neighbours, saying unto them, Rejoice with me; for I have found my sheep which was lost. (KJV)*

Then He is, obviously, just looking the scribes, the Pharisees right in the eye and He says:

Luke 15:7. *I say unto you, that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that [repents], more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance. (KJV)*

Notice when He says “one sinner,” there is no mention of race; there is no mention of nationality or country; there’s no mention of background; there’s no mention of status. One sinner that repents and heavens rejoice.

Christ did not look down on or condemn others. And we can’t either. Let’s go to John chapter 8. We’ll begin in verse 1. Christ went to the Mount of Olives and then He went into the temple and He started teaching. What a blessing that we have these words here today to focus on. John 8 verse 1:

John 8:1. *Jesus went unto the mount of Olives.
2) And early in the morning he came again into the temple, and all the people came [with] him; and he sat down, and [He] taught... (KJV)*

And He is sitting down and teaching us today as we read these words. But notice:

John 8:3. *And the scribes and Pharisees brought unto him a woman taken in adultery; ... (KJV)*

She was guilty, but she was taken. She was dragged in front of him.

John 8:3b. *...and when they had set her in the midst,
4) They say unto him, Master, this woman was taken in adultery, in the very act. (KJV)*

How on earth did that happen? Was somebody tailing her and all of that? Well, it was obviously a set-up and they had an ulterior motive. Verse 5:

John 8:5. *[They said to Him,] Now Moses in the law [commands] us, that such should be stoned: what [on earth do you say, Master?] (KJV)
6) They [were], tempting him [testing Him rather, and this they said testing Him], that they might have [a reason] to accuse him. ...
(KJV)*

And if Christ said—they were thinking this to themselves—if Christ said, “Stone her,” then they would accuse Him of taking the authority of the Roman government. And, then, He would come into condemnation. If Christ said, “She should not be stoned and free her,” then, they would accuse Him of breaking God’s Law. So, they were trying to box Him into a corner where no matter what He answered, they could accuse Him. Some people are very skilled at doing that.

Now notice the latter part of verse 6. Guess what? Christ didn't say a word. Did He?

John 8:6b. ... *But Jesus stooped down, and with his finger wrote on the ground, as though he [did not hear] them...* (KJV)

And this is the only recorded time that Christ wrote anything in the New Testament, the only recorded time of Him writing something. Verse 7:

John 8:7. *So when they continued asking him, he [stood] up, and said unto them, He that is without sin among you, let him ... cast a stone at her.* (KJV)

And, of course, this is one reason why we don't believe we should serve on juries. Christ said, "You take care of that, if you're so righteous." Verse 8:

John 8:8. *And again he stooped down, and wrote on the ground [again].* (KJV)

We don't know—possibly names, dates, places of their sins. Verse 9:

John 8:9. *And they which heard it, being convicted by their own conscience, went out one by one, beginning [with] the eldest, even unto the last: and Jesus was left alone ... standing in the [middle].* (KJV)

Now, we have to ask the question. What was His reaction to her? Did He have a rod of iron and begin accusing her and beating on her? Putting her down, making her feel just like the scum of the earth because she was caught in the very act of adultery? Verse 10:

John 8:10. *When Jesus had lifted himself [up], [He] saw none but the woman, he said unto her, Woman, where are those [your] accusers? [Has] no man condemned [you]?*
11) *She said, No man, Lord. ...* (KJV)

And my guess is she was coming to the realization that He was no mere man. But my guess also is that she was expecting Him to condemn her.

John 8:11b. ... *And Jesus said unto her, Neither do I condemn [you]: [He said,] go, and sin no more.* (KJV)

Now notice what He didn't say. He didn't say, "Your sins are forgiven." He didn't say that at all. He just says, "Don't do it again," because right then was not her time. Today is her time. And He knew that. He just said, "For your own good, for your own benefit, don't do it again."

But what did He do? He treated her with love, respect, kindness. Not excusing her sin, not belittling her sin, not ignoring her sin. But He encouraged her to change her life. He didn't beat her up. He encouraged her to change her life.

And there's a lesson for us. We should not love what people do today in this society, but we should still love them as future children of God. And the reason we should love them is because we know they are as blind as bats, just as we were before God reached down and called us. We're no better than they are. We need to keep that in mind.

How can we hate certain people today and, then, turn around and love them and help them and nourish them on the Last Great Day? I'm sure some people on the Last Great Day are going to walk up to us and say, "Do you remember what you said to me?" or "What you did to me?" And we're going to cringe and have the opportunity to apologize and explain. But the fact is who are we to hate people today who we're going to have to love and nurture tomorrow. We can't do that.

We need to follow Christ's example of living a different and a better life. Remember what Christ... We won't turn there, but in John 15. We read it before the Passover, Christ's last time He's with His disciples. Remember what He said to them? "You are my friends if you do whatever I command you."

We've made friends here at the Feast, new friends—people we've never met before because we're all here following God's commandment and that is a wonderful thing. But what Christ is telling us is on this day we have the opportunity and the obligation, even though we're spirit beings, to make all people on the face of the earth our friends, to get to know them, to love them, to help them, to nurture them irrespective of their past, their race, their language, their color, whatever.

And should we not have the same attitude that Christ had in these last two scriptures that we've read about His example, should we not have that same attitude toward all people on the face of the earth? As God now does with us, whatever we do for people in this life and in the next life, whatever we do should be for their ultimate good. If it's the cashier at the grocery store, if it's the guy that just ran into you and smashed your bumper, if it's somebody that kind of glares at you, shouldn't we treat them the way Christ treated this woman? Shouldn't we do that and start practicing today and learning those characteristics today?

This way is God's love in action. And we need to start developing it today. We can't wait. We just can't wait till our change comes. We have to develop it. We have to practice it today of loving **all** of God's people.

Now the second big character trait that we need to develop is that:

2. We must treat all people with equality (equally) and with respect.

Today we have many in the greater Church of God that look down on those who are not part of their group. How dare we! They are God's people in the greater Church today.

But what about those all around the world? They are still, ultimately, the children of God. And who are we to look down our nose at them? Or to judge them or condemn them?

The disciples did that. They had the same problem we have today. Let's go to Luke chapter 9. And I'm going to read this out of the New Living [Translation]. It says something... When I first read this translation, it blew my mind because it's something all of us have said. Luke chapter 9, we're going to read verses 49 and 50. John, the disciple John, was coming up to Jesus Christ and telling him something that happened. And remember John is one of the sons of thunder. He's one of the ones that wanted to call fire down from heaven, but wound up to be the apostle that stressed love. But he hadn't had the change yet. He hadn't had his attitude readjusted yet. So, in Luke 9 verse 49, it says:

Luke 9:49. *John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons. We tried to stop him..." (NLT)*

And this is the mind-blowing thing of this translation.

Luke 9:49b. *We tried to stop him because he isn't in our group." (NLT)*

And you think "Wow!" Whoever wrote this translation must have been watching the Church of God for the last thirty years. I'll read it again.

Luke 9:49. *John said to Jesus, "Master, we saw someone using your name to cast out demons. We tried to stop him because he isn't in our group." (NLT)*

Now, think of what... We have a crossroads here. What could Christ do? Christ could say, "You're right. He's not one of us and you should go and tell him to cease and desist." But what did Christ say in verse 50?

Luke 9:50. *But Jesus said, "Don't stop him! Anyone who is not against you is for you." (NLT)*

And we need in the greater Church of God to have that same attitude if they are preaching the truth, if they are keeping the Sabbath. And if you look at the different groups in the greater Church of God, I bet 95% of the doctrines are the same. Now with some that's not true, but most of them. Ninety-five percent I'd say, maybe even greater than that. And there are converted people in every group. There are converted ministers, so as far as I know, in every group.

But remember this is the apostle John, son of thunder. And we don't want to be sons of thunder! This day, you don't want a son of thunder walking around with a club.

Today, too many say—and I've had this happen—"I'm not going to pray for you because you're not part of my group." I've heard that said.

This has happened to Dorothy and me. "You can't visit us on the Sabbath. You can't come and visit us because you're not part of our group." We were stuck in a city and had no where else to go on the Sabbath. And we called some "friends" and said, "Can we come and fellowship with you?" [They were in] another part of the group. This happened five years ago. And they told us, "No. You can't. You're not part of our group."

And we had recently—a couple of years ago—a man who was in a different group. His mother is in the Pacific Church of God. He would not give her a ride to services because it was a different group. His own mother had to scratch around and find a way to get to Church because where she went was different than where he went.

Christ condemns this—looking down on others, segregating ourselves from others as though we're so much better. Christ kept company with the very people the Jews looked down on.

We won't turn there, but, in Luke 19, I'll just paraphrase for you. He fellowshipped with a publican—a tax collector! And not only that, Zaccheus was a chief tax collector. That means he was more despised than your average tax collector because he was one of the chief ones. And, if you remember, he was up in a tree—he was a short man apparently—trying to see Christ in the procession coming by. And Christ looked up to him in the tree and said, "Hurry up! Come down because today I'm going to eat in your house." And He said it out loud in front of everybody. And, oh the judging! And oh the gossip and condemnation! Because he said that to a tax collector, a chief tax collector!

Let's go to James chapter 2. The apostle James hit this right on the head. And we have all been there and we have done that and we cannot any longer do what James describes. I have done it and I'm sick with myself because I have done it in the past. James 2 verse 1, he says:

James 2:1. *My brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory, with respect of persons. (KJV)*

You can't do that. He says:

James 2:2. *For if there [comes into] your assembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and [then] there comes] in a poor man in vile raiment;
3) And (you) have respect to him that [wears] the gay clothing, ... (KJV)*

That shows you how much the English language has changed since this was written in 1611, but I think you know what I mean.

James 2:3b. ...and [you] say [to this man that's wealthy]... (KJV)

He's dressed very well—comes in with a \$2,000 suit—and pulls up in front of a church in a Mercedes or something like that. And you say:

James 2:3 continued. ... Sit [you] here in [this] good place; and [then you] say to [this] poor [person], (KJV)

We would say somebody like a street person—somebody walks up to Church with a grocery cart filled full of stuff, maybe hasn't taken a bath in a couple of weeks and holes in the clothes and all of that, but he still wants to come in, he [James] says:

James 2:3 continued. ... [You] sit [down] here under my footstool: [You sit at my feet.]
4) Are [you] not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts? (KJV)

He's saying by the way you're treating them, you're judging the outward appearance. You're judging their clothes and, in effect you're judging what's in their heart and in their mind. And you can't do that because none of us know the heart and the mind of an individual. Yes, you can judge the fruits, but you're just talking about people walking in the door for the first time. Verse 5:

James 2:5. [Listen], my beloved brethren, ... (KJV)

He's pleading with the people and us today.

James 2:5b. ... [Has] not God chosen the poor of this world... (KJV)

1 Corinthians chapter 1: the weak of the world, not the high, not the mighty.

James 2:5 continued. ... [Hasn't He] chosen the poor of this world rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he [has] promised to them that love him?
6) But [you] have despised the poor [based on appearance]. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment seats?
7) Do not they blaspheme that worthy name by the which [you] are called? (KJV)

Verse 8, here we get down to where the rubber meets the road. He says:

James 2:8. If [you fulfill] the royal law according to the scripture, [You love [your neighbor] as [yourself, you] do well: (KJV)

Because that's what we should do, but:

James 2:9. *But if [you] have respect of persons, [you] commit sin, and are [convicted] of the law as transgressors. (KJV)*

And, I think, in the past we didn't view it as sin to look down our nose at somebody. We didn't view it as a sin that we can go into the lake of fire for by judging others based on appearance or background or race or color or whatever. I've heard people in the greater Church—even to this day—that despise certain racial groups. "Oh, they're all the same...." And they go on and tell you all the negative things about a certain racial group or an ethnic group or whatever. We've got a lot to learn.

The point is: We are not going to be there if we show favoritism!

How could God allow somebody to serve on the Last Great Day if they favored one group over another group? Or they favored one person over another person? God is not going to allow that. And we have to stop that in our minds—and I'm talking to myself, too—because those little thoughts kind of pop into your head every once in a while. We are not going to be there if we can't treat all people with dignity and respect and treat them equally.

Let's go to Luke chapter 18. This is a very famous parable. Christ said, "I'm going to give you this parable and I'm going to talk about those who trust in themselves." Boy, if that isn't a direct parable related to the Laodicean era, I don't know what it would be. We have need of nothing. We're okay. Luke chapter 18 verse 9:

Luke 18:9. *And he [spoke] this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves... (KJV)*

What?

Luke 18:9b. *...that they were righteous, and [they] despised others: (KJV)*

Amazing! And, so, we see here that in verse 10, "Two men went up to the temple to pray." They were both appearing before God—one a Pharisee, and one a publican.

Luke 18:11. *The Pharisee stood and prayed thus... (KJV)*

It's interesting these two words "*with himself*." Meaning: God wasn't listening. The prayer never went above his forehead. He says:

Luke 18:11b. *... God, I thank [You], I am not [like] other men... (KJV)*

And what he's saying is, "I thank You that I'm better than other men." That's what he's really saying. He says:

Luke 18:11 continued. ... [They're] extortioners, [and] unjust, [and] adulterers, even as this publican [standing over here]. (KJV)

And he says, "Look at me."

Luke 18:12. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess.

Then Christ contrasts that with the publican who stood far off at the back of the room. I'm sure the Pharisee was standing up front, in center, right in the center of the spotlight saying, "Look at me, God. I'm here. I'm ready." We would say today, "All you have to do is change me because I'm almost there. I've got a foot in the kingdom already." And there are people who love the limelight and actually claim that for themselves.

But the publican, he was at the back of the room.

Luke 18:13b. ... [He wouldn't even] lift ... his eyes [up], but [he hit on] his [chest, saying, God [just please] be merciful to me [because I am] a sinner. (KJV)

And, then, Christ tells us how He views that. He said:

Luke 18:14. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that [exalts] himself... (KJV)

... above others, is going to have a problem. He's going to have a problem.

And the scriptures are clear. That kind of person will not be here on the Last Great Day to serve mankind as they are resurrected. We must never look down or condemn anyone. Look at what Paul says in Philippians 2.

We'll get to verse 5, but verse 5 is the verse that got burned into my head a decade or two ago about we have to have the mind of Jesus Christ or we're not going to be there. We're not going to make it.

Philippians 2 verse 3—and, as several speakers have said reflecting on the condition of the greater Church today, verse 3 is a condemnation of that. He says:

Philippians 2:3. Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory; ... (KJV)

(To glorify the self or glorify our group or glorify us as individuals.)

Philippians 2:3b. ...but [he says] in lowliness of mind let each esteem [the] other better than themselves. (NKJ)

That is the attitude that Christ wants that the Pharisee did not have and the publican did have.

Verse 4; he says, “Don’t look on your own things.” I mean, yes, pay attention to the basics you need to pay attention to, but don’t just focus on that to the exclusion of everything else. He says:

Philippians 2:4b. ... *[You need to focus] on the things of others. (KJV)*

Meaning: Your concern should be what they’re concerned about.

Look at Gary Klar. Our concern right now is about him and Judy. We’re focused on their things. And we need to do that and not just selfishly focus on what we’re concerned about.

And, then, the summation is verse 5. The way you achieve this is by having the mind of Jesus Christ. That is the way the transformation occurs from selfishness to selflessness. It occurs by the mind of Jesus Christ.

Now, let’s just think for a minute about a problem in the early New Testament Church that we don’t relate to today because we don’t have slaves today—certainly in the western world. We cannot appreciate that slaves and owners of slaves attended the same congregation together. Now you think about that. James talks about the guy in the gay clothing versus the bag lady that comes in. But here in the same congregation you had owners and the slaves that they owned sitting out in the audience.

And I’m sure when it started off the slave owners expected preferential treatment. And the slaves expected to sit on the floor because that’s their life. That’s the way they were treated. There was great potential for conflict in those churches because of that and we don’t appreciate that today.

Let’s go to Galatians chapter 3 where the apostles had to address this, but, by extension, they’re addressing our prejudices today, our bigotry today. They’re addressing this, Galatians 3 verse 26 through 28. Right in front, Paul says to this Church in Galatia that had slave owners and slaves within the same congregation; he says:

Galatians 3:26. *For [you] are all [emphasis on all] the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. (KJV)*

He’s saying, “You are here because you have repented and you have been baptized and you have God’s spirit and you are developing the mind of Christ. Therefore, you are all children of Jesus Christ.”

Verse [27]:

Galatians 3:27. *For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.*

(Through the laying on of hands and the indwelling of God's spirit.) Verse 28, he says:

Galatians 3:28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, ... (KJV)*

And in those days, there was great prejudice between Jews and Greeks. The Hellenistic Jews looked down on the more conventional Jews and the Greeks looked down on both of them. [There was] great prejudice in the Church.

He says:

Galatians 3:28. *There is neither Jew nor Greek, [He says,] there is neither bond nor free, ... (KJV)*

He says, "Because you have freemen here in the congregation; you have slaves here in the congregation. In fact, some of you slaves, your master is sitting right here with you in the same room as you."

Then he goes on to say:

Galatians 3:28 continued. *...there is neither male nor female: (KJV)*

Because, in those days and in those cultures, women were viewed as a possession of the man. And unfortunately, the Worldwide Church of God followed in that—that women were men's possessions and they had to obey no matter what the abuse. We got that one **way wrong!** And there are some—I'll have to say it—some husbands today, some groups today that stress that. But that is contrary to the Bible.

Galatians 3:28 continued. *...there is neither male nor female: for [you] are all one in Christ Jesus. (KJV)*

And, if we have prejudice (male to female, race to race, status to status, free or bond), then we fall into this trap and we are condemned. And we **will not be** in the Kingdom of God. We must not allow the hatred and the bigotry and the prejudice in this world to come into us or to come into the Church. We just can't allow it, because, if we do, our salvation is in jeopardy. So, we have to treat everyone with dignity, with respect, with equality. And we have to learn that now. We can't wait until Christ returns.

The third area, the third character trait that we must develop is that:

3. We must develop kindness and tenderness and patience.

Now, when I say that, you can say, “Yeah, of course. We know that’s the fruit of God’s spirit. That’s a characteristic of Christ.” And we kind of blow it off. But think about the condition of the people the moment they are resurrected on this day. Gary very eloquently talked about those who have suffered in the greater Church and the hurts that people have suffered, all of us have, the abuses and all of that. But in addition to that, think about who is going to be resurrected today. Think of these people because they have all died.

Historically very few people have died peacefully in their own bed with their family surrounding them. Of the 108 billion people, a very small fraction died peacefully in their own bed with their loved ones around them. For the majority of the history of mankind that has not happened.

Occasionally, it has happened. Dorothy’s dad—when he died, she was right there and she was holding his hand and family was around. But that is rare compared to the experience of most of the people who will be resurrected today.

Now put yourself into the mindset of somebody like this. Let’s think about this. Millions—they can’t estimate it. I googled it, searched it several months and there is no estimate available of the number of people who have died in war. It is just too much. Now, we know over 50 million died in World War II. That we do know—plus or minus 10 or 20 million. But we know that those died, 50 million. And guess what? How many of them died peacefully? [None of them.] They were blown to bits, shot, cut up, tortured, whatever it might be.

Think about starvation. How many billions have starved to death of the 106, 108 [billion], rather, that will be resurrected? Today, how many children die of starvation in one year? Children—not adults. Children. It’s over 6 million die in a year. That means 16,400 every day. And since I started talking about 1400 children have died of starvation since I started talking. And starvation is a hard death. It is not an easy death. It has gone on for millennia. It continues to this day. Many of those people have starved to death and they are going to be resurrected. Think of what’s in their mind when they regain consciousness.

How about disease? Many, many billions are going to be resurrected who died of horrible diseases. Remember the bubonic plague in Europe in the 1300s? Twenty-five million died over a five year period. That was a third of the population! Just in a 100-year period - one 100-year period, twenty-five million died of this horrible plague. Sores develop pus. Their flesh begins to deteriorate. They had high fevers. All of that and you think they had to carry that disease to the point of their death and what it was like when they died. It was a tough death, a hard death.

Today, malaria—just malaria—guess how many people die from malaria in one year today? They don’t know, but a minimum of 655,000 up to a million die of malaria each year. And that disease is a hard, hard death. You just waste away. You see

the little kids with the flies crawling up in their nose and in their ears and out of their mouths. Their mouths are hanging open and they just have an ounce of life left in them. When they get resurrected—all the people I've talked about today—what is going to be on their mind? What is going to be their reaction to being resurrected?

That's not to mention the people who have been tortured to death. Millions, untold millions have been tortured. That is the hardest death of all. You think of the drawing and quartering in the Middle Ages. You could look into that and it is just awful what man did to man. Just awful! And all of the cruel and sadistic ways people can be tortured and the last thing they remember is some gruesome horrible torture. And, then, they're resurrected. And we're going to be there. Now think about that mindset.

Comforting and stabilizing the traumatized can only be done one way and that's through the love of God—comforting these traumatized people.

Now, if you want to read a book that epitomizes man's inhumanity to man, read the book The Rape of Nanking (Nan-jing). It was written about the Japanese invasion of China and they invaded China prior to the start of World War II and kept up that invasion throughout World War II until Japan was finally defeated.

I'll just give you one example. As they invaded a city, a woman had her little baby and was running from the invasion force. A Japanese soldier came up ripped the baby out of her hand, threw the baby up in the air and caught the baby on his bayonet. Now, that baby, obviously, when that bayonet punctured that baby, that baby squealed and cried for a few seconds, a few minutes. Then he slung the baby off the blade of the bayonet and then put it into the mother's belly. Now, think of that woman when she is resurrected. Think of the horror that she just saw and she's popping up and she's alive. What's going to happen?

Think of the people, bringing it into the current day, think of the people that jumped out of the Twin Towers on 9-11. You're in the Twin Towers. You don't know what has happened, but the building is on fire. And the flames are coming towards you. You don't know what to do. So, you break out one of the windows. Unknowingly that allows the fire to get more air and it's coming to you even faster. All of a sudden your flesh is starting to burn and you're hanging half out of the window and you have a choice to make. And we've all seen the pictures. They called them "jumpers" and they jumped because they couldn't stand to stay where they were. And, yet, they're thinking of their mates, they're thinking of their children, and they're burning alive, and they jump out of that building. The last thing they remember is the ground rushing up and maybe thinking of their family. Now think of their mindset when they're resurrected. Think about that.

Those people that I've described, which is probably the majority of the 108 billion, do they need a harsh dictatorial ruler standing beside them with a rod of iron? Is that going to work? Is that showing the love of God?

God is teaching us today how we should treat others tomorrow. Let's go to 2 Corinthians chapter 1 and we're going to read verses 3 and 4. These verses apply obviously to God and to Jesus Christ, but it had better apply to us because we need to apply this in the Last Great Day. 2 Corinthians 1 verse 3, notice how Paul describes God the Father. 2 Corinthians 1:3.

2 Corinthians 1:3. *Blessed be the God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, ... (KJV)*

Notice His description.

2 Corinthians 1:3b. *...the Father of mercies and [the] God of all comfort, (KJV)*

This 108 billion people are going to need the Father of all mercies and the God of all comfort. And these people are going to need spirit beings who have the same attitude to stand beside them and calm them down when they are resurrected. Verse 4:

2 Corinthians 1:4. *[The Father of all comfort] comforts us in all [of] our tribulation [today], that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, ... (KJV)*

Oh! What he's saying is we see the example of how God comforts us today. Not only can we comfort one another today, but we're going to be there to comfort these people who are resurrected tomorrow and we have to have that same tender mercy and comfort for them. He says:

1 Corinthians 1:4b. *...that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. (KJV)*

We have to take the love and the mercy and the tenderness that God shows us every day. We have to build it and develop it and have it at a peak when this resurrection occurs on this day; because, believe me, this 108 billion people are going to need it.

Now you think of the magnitude of what's going to happen on this day when these people come up and the trauma and the abuse and the persecution and the pain and the suffering they have experienced right to the moment of their death (their loss of consciousness) and now they pop up. Do they need somebody with a whip and a chair after them? [No.] We got it all wrong. We're going to be dealing with people who have spent a lifetime learning and practicing the wrong way. They need not somebody with a rod of iron. They need somebody who will be a friend, who will put their arm around them, who will be a mentor and somebody who says, "Let me show you a better way."

Let's go to Colossians 3 and verse 12. I'll read it out of the New King James. This says it all. This is the way we must be. And, if we're not that way now, we have a short time to become that way. Colossians 3:12, New King James:

Colossians 3:12. *Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, ... (KJV)*

He says this is what we need to do.

Colossians 3:12b. *...put on tender mercies, ... (KJV)*

Do you think these people that are resurrected today might need some tender mercies because they haven't been shown tender mercies in their lives, most of them.

Colossians 3:12 continued. *...kindness, ... (KJV)*

Somebody that would just come up and be kind to them as opposed to brutalizing them.

Colossians 3:12 continued. *...humility, ... (KJV)*

They've suffered dictators. They suffered in the Middle Ages, the landlords that just beat them up and abused them. They have suffered all kinds of persecution and trouble. For somebody to come up with humility and say, "Hey, I used to be there. I've been through this." Here put your arm around them. "Let's go talk. Calm down. Take a deep breath. Let's go talk."

Colossians 3:12 continued. *...meekness, [and] longsuffering; (KJV)*

Because, as I said earlier, they've spent a lifetime learning the wrong way, they're not going to change overnight. They're going to take a step back for every two steps forward. And we have to be patient and kind and longsuffering with them. Take the long view. Our goal is down the road, as they grow and mature, to have them have the mind of Christ. If they slip and fall, if they screw up, if they go back to their old ways in their thinking and their deeds, we have to have some patience. We'll be there to not let it go too far, but they will have the advantage of having somebody who is a mentor that is kind and gentle and meek and is understanding. All this—Colossians 3:12—is *agape* love in action. Not in words, but in action.

Now the fourth and the last point of the three characteristics we've talked about today so far, the last point is aimed at us.

4. We must develop and practice these characteristics in advance of this day, meaning: Now!

Meaning: Now!

It's funny how I wrote this long before James gave his sermon and we never even talked about it. But it's an erroneous view that when we become spirit we will immediately have all knowledge, all wisdom, and all experience. It's erroneous. God is not going to wave His magic wand and just give it all to us. That's not going to happen. James eloquently brought that up yesterday. We're going to spend an eternity learning from God and Christ. God is not going to wave His magic wand and the minute we're resurrected we're going to be like God in every way. That's not going to happen. It's just not.

I can remember an example. A man said a few years ago. He had a bad... He was hooked on sin in a certain area and he battled it and battled it and battled it for years. Then, he finally said, "Well, God's going to have to fix that in me after the resurrection." It's not going to happen. That's a very dangerous attitude to have. It's not going to happen. That has to be fixed now through the power of God's spirit. This is why it is so important for us to learn and to practice now.

As spirit beings, we're going to have infinite capacity to learn but we will not have infinite knowledge and infinite experience. Compare us when we're resurrected and the experience that we have had to that point with God's eternal experience. How can we have that? We're going to spend a lifetime learning from Him and His eternal experience. We'll have infinite capacity to learn. We won't have foggy brains like we do now. We won't get tired. Our synapses sometimes now don't work all the way that they should but that won't be that way. We will have infinite capacity. And we're going to be taught by God and Christ and we will learn as has been brought up before.

Therefore, because of that, do you think it might be a good idea to start learning and developing and practicing the characteristics we're going to need on this day, and that we will also need with the people who come through the Great Tribulation? We need to learn what we need and we need to learn about it and develop those character traits that will be necessary when we're immediately changed and we have this desolated world, and then we have today (LGD), down the road a thousand years later.

Let's go to James 1:27. We need to practice these now. And I beat myself up. Have I made every phone call I need to make? Have I touched every widow I need to touch? Have I looked after this person or that person? And you come up short. James 1 verse 27, you know the scripture. What is "pure religion" and what is "undefiled," meaning unpolluted, "before God and the Father?" It is:

James 1:27b: ... To visit the fatherless and widows... (KJV)

These are a prelude of what we're going to be doing today (LGD)—fatherless, widows, people in trouble, people who have been abused, people who have been put down, people who have been tortured, people who have died unspeakable deaths.

We get to practice now by paying attention to the fatherless and to the widows “in their affliction,” because the majority of the 108 billion people who are resurrected today have been afflicted. We need to practice now.

And, while we do that, we have to be “unspotted from the world,” which is Satan’s world. So, we have to practice for the future while keeping ourselves from being unspotted today. Let’s go to Galatians 6 and verse 1. This has been covered before. Just about every scripture I’ve used has been covered before, but we want to look at it in relation to the Last Great Day. Galatians 6:1, it talks about us reaching out and helping a brother today. Galatians 6:1:

Galatians 6:1. ...if a man be overtaken in a fault, [you who] are spiritual, restore such a one... (KJV)

You have to do it:

Galatians 6:1b. ...in the spirit of meekness; considering [yourself], lest [you] be tempted. (KJV)

So, we must change now. We have to change now.

Let’s go to Romans 12 and we’re going to read verse 2 and then jump to verse 17. I’ll read it out of the New King James. Romans 12, this is how we practice what we need to practice today. Romans 12 verse 2:

Romans 12:2. And do not be conformed to this world, ... (NKJ)

[This is] just what we read. James says “be unspotted from this world.” Paul says:

Romans 12:2b. ...but [rather] be transformed by the renewing of your mind,... (NKJ)

[This is] what we read in Ephesians, having the mind of Christ.

Romans 12:2 continued. ...that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. (NKJ)

Now, verse 17, this is the hard part. This is where the rubber meets the road.

Romans 12:17. Repay no one evil for evil. ... (NKJ)

This is so hard. But we’re going to have people on this Last Great Day who are going to try to do evil back to us because that is all they know. And we have to have patience and kindness and gentleness with them.

Romans 12:17b. ... Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. (NKJ)

We will teach them those good things. Verse 18:

Romans 12:18. *If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. (NKJ)*

To have peace it takes two. But you can do your part so that you stand before God and say, "I've tried to make peace. I've done everything I can do." And then you just have patience and wait on the other person.

Verse 19:

Romans 12:19. *Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; ... (NKJ)*

We've all tried to avenge ourselves. We've done it. And what we have to do is not do it anymore. As Christ said to the woman caught in adultery, "Don't do it again. Don't sin anymore." We need to change. He says:

Romans 12:19b. *...rather give place to wrath; ... (NKJ)*

Bury it! We don't want Christ's wrath against us. So, we should not subject some other human being to our wrath.

Romans 12:19 continued. *...for it is written, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay," says the Lord. (NKJ)*

So, after the Feast, let's determine to show all people that we come in contact with—everybody—our example. I've talked to people here that work at the facility here. And they are just amazed at this group. They've been amazed that we have a dance and let the kids dance and include the kids. They're amazed at the conduct of the kids. They're respectful. They have fun, yes, and they're kids, but they're respectful. And they are amazed at the cooperation. Nobody is yelling and screaming at them or the front desk or the people that clean the rooms. And that is an example. We're showing God's way by our example.

In the World Tomorrow, we are going to have to change the hearts and the minds if these 108 billion people. We do it by teaching and by training. And, guess what? By our example! Because we're going to be among them. Sometimes we think we're going to be on this ivory tower up here. We're going to look down and bark orders or do whatever. No, we're going to be there right among them.

Isaiah 30, let's go back to Isaiah 30 and read this from a standpoint that we're going to be mentors and teachers and helpers of the 108 billion. Isaiah 30 verses 20 and 21.

Isaiah 30:20. *And though the Lord give you the bread of adversity, ... (KJV)*

And we've all had the bread of adversity from time to time.

Isaiah 30:20b. *...and the water of affliction, yet shall not [your] teachers be removed into a corner any more, but [your] eyes shall see [your] teachers: (KJV)*

That's us! We're not in the penthouse with a rod of iron. We're mixed in with the people and we're going to teach them and train them and be a mentor to them. I can't wait for that—to be among the people and to show them a better way!

Verse 21:

Isaiah 30:21. *And [your] ears shall hear [the] word behind [you], saying, This is the way, walk in it, ... (KJV)*

And, yes, we're going to do that. We're going to say, "Ah. Ah, ah, ah. Come here. Let's go over in the corner and talk. [That's the] wrong thought, the wrong action. Let's have a teaching moment here and let's learn."

Isaiah 30:21b. *...when [you] turn to the right, and when [you] turn to the left. (KJV)*

We're going to have a close personal relationship.

No 5,000 foot drops that Jack talked about. That used to be a laughing stock in the Church. "If they don't believe, I'm going to run them up to 30,000 feet and I'm going to let them go. Then I'm going to talk to them on the way down and before they go splat on the ground (just like the jumpers in 9-11), then they're going to obey me." As I mentioned on the first day, oh yeah, they will say whatever you want them to say, but they're not going to internalize it. They're not going to make it part of their being.

And we're not going to rule that way. We have to develop the same patience and kindness and forbearance that God has shown to us. We need to develop that so that we can show it to others. Not with a rod of iron. We will show them a better way. Christ said (we won't turn there) in the Sermon on the Mount, "You have heard"... We've all heard a lot of stuff. He says "You've heard 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth,' but I say unto you, 'Walk the extra mile. Turn the other cheek. Don't return evil for evil.'"

Then Christ said, "You have heard, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy,' but I say unto you 'Love your enemies. Do good to those who persecute you and hate you.'" We are going to teach that lesson to a 108 billion people. "No, you can't have vengeance. No, you can't do what you're thinking. And here's why. Let

me talk to you about it because I tried it and, believe me, it doesn't work." So, you talk.

And Christ said if you do all of this, the goal is perfection. That means completeness. And we will be there to help complete their lives and to complete their character in the image of Jesus Christ. We will directly teach them this way. Directly—eyeball-to-eyeball, face-to-face.

But in this last point, I'm emphasizing we have to put it in practice now. God is not going to wave his magic wand and just have it happen. We have to put it in practice now.

How can God use us to help traumatized and afflicted people if we can't get along with our mates now? Think about that. Why would God trust us to teach others if we can't even have a good marriage?

How can God use us to help the traumatized and the afflicted if we can't get along with our brothers and sisters, Christian brothers and sisters in the Church? Think about that. Is God going to use somebody who is kind of gruff and agitated and causes problems wherever they go? Is He going to use them to teach people today (LGD)? No, He's not going to do that. It's not going to happen.

And how can God use people to help these traumatized and afflicted people who are going to be resurrected today (LGD) when they throw rocks at other groups and condemn other groups? But these people today (LGD) are going to be [from] different religious backgrounds, different economic backgrounds, different colors, different languages, all of that. And here we in the greater Church of God throw rocks at each other and then we expect God to say, "Oh, come and teach these people." It's not going to happen. It's just not going to happen.

We need to get the big picture. All the people in the greater Church of God today are tiny in numbers relative to a 108 billion people. And God looks down on us and we're just squabbling and fighting and throwing rocks and kicking dust at each other. And He's saying to us, "And you want me to trust you to teach and train people in the Last Great Day?"

As I've said before, we look at the world through soda straws and we're just stumbling around, bumbling around, can't see. We need to get God's picture, the big picture. And the big picture is we have to prepare ourselves through the spirit of God to serve and help and teach and train and mentor 108 billion people. And we have to start today. If we don't, we're not going to be there.

The bottom line is:

Before Christ comes, we must prove to God that we have developed the character traits that are necessary to serve the 108 billion.

God has to know that when we are made spirit and we're turned loose on this 108 billion, we will do it the right way. If He's not convinced, we're not going to be there. Because, after all, these character traits are nothing more than the mind and the character of Jesus Christ.

Salvation is not a matter of where we sit. Oh, I wish the greater Church would learn that!

Salvation is a matter of: Can God use us to serve His children or not? And if He can't use us, we're not going to be there. But if we have learned the lessons and we are eager to serve and help people today as well in the World Tomorrow, then we will be there.

So, let's go away from this Feast determined to develop and practice these characteristics because we're going to need them in the World Tomorrow. Let's go away from the Feast today determined to heal the hurts and repair relationships so that we can fulfill them in the World Tomorrow.

We all need to look forward to the scripture (I won't read it again) that Tom quoted in closing in his sermonette, Revelation 21:3-4.* Let's determine to develop the characteristics necessary to serve and help 108 billion people traumatized, abused, fractured. We need to develop those characteristics **now**.

Just a couple of closing remarks.

We need to thank God and Jesus Christ for what they have done here at the Feast.

Look at this beautiful place! Beautiful country. They made it. They provided this building. We didn't do anything. We made it. They made it. People made it. It's just a beautiful facility. I've never seen as good a weather at a Feast as we've had here.

Also God has blessed us with good health. The number of anointings has been very small. No flus, colds sweeping through the congregation. What a blessing!

And, then the messages that we've had! God gets all the credit. It's not a human being. It's just guys willing to humble themselves before God and say, "God, you do it." That's all it means.

***Revelation 21:3.** *And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God.*

4) And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (KJV)

And I want to thank you for coming here to Kellogg and allowing God's spirit to work inside you to make this a most wonderful, wonderful Feast.

So, as we go back, please stay close to God. Please stay close to each other, especially if you've made new friends or renewed acquaintances. Stay close to each other through the dark days of winter. And continue to love God with all your heart. Continue to love your neighbor as yourself. Continue to be obedient to God in every way. And especially to seek God's will in everything that we do. Every decision we make, every thought we have, every deed, make sure it is according to God's will.

And let's practice being the kings and priests that we will be in the World Tomorrow so that we can teach and train people the right way. And if we do that, let's all look forward to coming back in 2013 and take up, where we left off, next year.