

## Welcome to the Feast of Tabernacles—2015

Fred R. Coulter—September 27, 2015

Greetings, brethren! Welcome to the Feast of Tabernacles! As we have seen, time marches on, and very swiftly, indeed!

As we look back and see how everything has gone from the time that we have been called, things have not worked out exactly as we have figured. However, they are exactly as God is working it out. Even the problems and difficulties within the Church so that He can test us and see whether we truly love Him or not.

The Feast of Tabernacles pictures from the time of the Garden of Eden clear to New Jerusalem and the new heavens and the new earth. The longer that we study the Word of God and the more that we look to the Word of God and understand the Word of God—as He leads us to understand it, because it’s spiritually understood—the more fantastic and great His plan is; *beyond the scope of human imagination*.

Even the things that He tells us in His Word, the complete Bible, is very interesting, indeed! These are the basic things that we need. So, we’re told, we’re commanded, to assemble together. Today that is becoming more difficult because of the way that the world is and the condition that people are in today.

Here in America we have 13 Feast sites, including two in Canada—western and eastern Canada. We have three Feast sites in Australia, one each in New Zealand, South Africa, the United Kingdom and probably one in the Netherlands, as well. This is really a tremendous thing that we are able to be a part of. We hope and pray that all the Churches of God at this time:

- will draw close to God
- that the brethren will learn
- that they will grow and overcome

***We are being prepared to dwell with God!*** Just think on that for a minute, and how all encompassing and all inspiring that that is.

In addition to all of the Feast sites that we have, we have probably 200 smaller fellowship groups that for various reasons are unable to travel. We have sent them all that they need for the Feast of Tabernacles.

God’s brethren are scattered across the world. But as we know with Pentecost, the day is coming when we’re all going to be gathered together.

As we look at the church experience that we have all been through, some of us have gone through some very difficult times, indeed!

- having to *stand for the Truth*
- having to *fight off false teachers*
- having to *fight off false brethren*

All of those things have caused us to be really on guard. It has made it very difficult in some ways. Perhaps the most difficult that it has caused it to be is something that is very important that I want to emphasize as an overview for the Feast, starting right now at the welcoming to the Feast of Tabernacles—2015!

That is that we need to really follow ***the commands of Jesus Christ of loving one another!*** I bring this up from this point of view: at the elder’s conference in May, one of the things that kept coming up from all the different fellowship groups and people, as well as letters that we receive in Hollister, is that there is:

- fighting among the brethren
- fighting among the elders
- accusations hurled back and forth

It’s really very difficult, indeed!

Let’s understand that James says, ‘The wrath of man does not equal the righteousness of God.’ ***Only from the righteousness of God, and God Himself, can come the love that we need!***

Think on this: Since the Feast of Tabernacles pictures *dwelling with God for all eternity*, don’t you think it would be nice if we would—right here at the Feast—practice what Jesus taught:

- to love one another
- look out for one another
- take care of each other

Those who are widows or widowers, or lonely, be with them, spend time with them. Don’t just spend time with your own friends that you already know. That can get a little cliquish.

John was the apostle that Jesus loved, and John was the one who wrote more about the love of God than any of the other apostles. Jesus spoke these words (John 13) on the Passover night, and it’s very important for us to understand that the Passover begins our relationship with God. Every year the Passover and all the Feast days we keep and observe:

- so that we can *grow in grace and knowledge*
- so that can *grow in understanding*

- so that we can *be prepared to dwell with God*

That's the very reason that we were created.

John 13:33: "Little children, I am with you yet a little while...."

- they didn't know what was going to transpire
- they didn't know what was going to happen at midnight
- they did not know the trial that was coming for Jesus
- they did not understand about the crucifixion

Jesus had to teach them that after He was resurrected from the dead. These words mean a lot:

"...You shall seek Me; but as I told the Jews, 'Where I am going, you cannot come'..." (v 33). You cannot, it's impossible to go where Jesus is unless you are a spirit being. That's the whole story of the Bible! Think about it, that we will be with God the Father and Jesus Christ.

I'm projecting ahead to so some of the things that I'm going to bring out in the messages for the Feast of Tabernacles; but forever, for eternity.

Verse 34: "A new commandment I give to you: **that you love one another...** [What is the standard?] **...in the same way that I have loved you...** *You love them:*

- by serving them
- by teaching them
- by correcting them
- by opening their minds when the Holy Spirit came

A wonderful thing, indeed!

"...that you love one another in the same way that I have loved you, that that *is how* you are to love one another" (v 34).

I've been to the Feast of Tabernacles where there is this little group over here, this little group over there; this is years and years ago. So many things were going on in the Church and so much corruption was taking place and false ministers were infiltrating and bringing false doctrines. There were accusations against this one and that one, and it was really a difficult time to stay faithful to God and not get caught up in the vortex of all the carnality that was going on.

Sidebar: A man mentioned to me as I was talking to him—he had never been in any of the other Churches of God, coming after all the splits and scattering—that those who have come from

WCG, CGI, UCG, Philadelphia, whatever other church you want to mention, that you can tell that they have been wounded. That experience has left its mark upon them. That is certainly true. That is really, really true.

One of the reasons that it did was because we put too much faith in a man, and he did not teach us to constantly look to God the Father and Jesus Christ. There were many other things that were wrong that God had to correct, but that is the basic sum of it.

Verse 35: "By this shall everyone know that you are My disciples—**if** you love one another." For some of the elders we have sent their messages out, and one very important message by Steve Durham *The Value of Forbearance*. We are to forbear one another. That is understand and get along and love one another in spite of the difficulties that someone may have.

God has worked it out this way: we all come from a different backgrounds, different heritages, different races, and now different languages. In bringing us together as brethren, we're going to see that we did not choose this.

It's easy to choose people you want to love and be friendly with, because 'birds of feather tend to flock together.' You get around people that you like and people who like you, and that's very easy to get along in an amiable way. But when we have the mix that we have within the Church of God:

- the young
- the old
- the in-between
- the children
- the seniors
- the widows
- the widowers
- those who have had difficulties in their lives,
- those who have had a lot to overcome
- those who have had experiences that are very traumatic

*and on top of that*

- those of us who have gone through the Church splits and scattering

It sort of puts a callousness to our personalities:

- we don't want to be duped again
- we don't want to be hated again
- we don't want to be messed up again

Sometimes we're kind of on edge, because we feel as though we need to protect the scars of those wounds.

That's understandable! However, let's not

use it as something where it divides us. But let's use it as something that draws us together with the love of God and the Spirit of God.

Here's what Jesus said, and it begins with God and Jesus Christ. It comes from the Father. Let me just mention that one of the things today that is really a dividing factor is all of these ridiculous calendar schemes, sacred names and other doctrines. If any of you have any of those doctrines, please don't come to the Christian Biblical Church of God and try to evangelize us to *your way of thinking*. We all have to be conformed to the way of the thinking of Jesus Christ. ***We are to have the mind of Christ and Christ is to be in us!***

Notice what Jesus told the apostles. This is so fundamental and so important, and this has bearing on the Feast of Tabernacles and its meaning.

John 14:15: "If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments." Keeping the commandments is the love of God. But the love of God also has personality. The love of God has expression through each one of us.

Then Jesus says that He will give the Comforter, which is the Spirit of Truth. Verse 21 is the most important thing of all, perhaps one of the most profound verses in the entire Bible. Think about this for a minute: ***If*** we don't love God the way we ought to, and we are at odds with our brethren, think how difficult that is with what I'm going to read here. We need to be at peace with one another. We need to be in harmony with one another, *but first of all we must be in agreement with God!*

Verse 21: "The one who has My commandments..."

- Do we have them? *Yes, we do!*
- Do you know them?
- Have you gone through the Bible?

Remember, before Jesus came in the flesh He was the Lord God of the Old Testament. That includes an awful lot, ***if*** you have them:

"...and is keeping them..." (v 21). How do we keep them? *In the spirit through the Spirit of God, which is a higher level than the letter of the Law!*

"...that is the one who loves Me..." (v 21). We have to love Jesus and we have to love the Father, and They—through Their Spirit—give us the love of God so we can love each other.

Just like anything that comes spiritually, there are going to be some difficulties, some obstacles, and we need to overcome them. If you have anything against anyone why don't you take

this Feast—and if they're keeping the Feast with you—go reconcile! Don't you think that would be pleasing to God? *Yes, indeed!*

Let's look at the other side of the coin: Do you think in the Kingdom of God, as resurrected human beings, now spirit beings at that time, that we're going to have the fighting, the arguing, bickering and stupidity that we see going on now among the brethren in the Churches of God? *I tell you, NO! It will never be!* As Jesus said, 'Nay! It is not so!'

"...and the one who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will manifest Myself to him" (v 21).

You tie that in with v 23; these two verses tell us the whole goal and purpose of everything that Jesus wants us to do. It's a summary, an overview, but it is specific. It's attached to everything that is in the Bible and everything that we do.

Verse 23: "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word...'" That's why:

- you need to know the words of Jesus
- you need to know the message
- you need to understand what He has said
- you need to use the Spirit of God

so that you can apply it and use it, to not only love God but love the brethren.

"...and My Father will love him, and **We**..."—God the Father and Jesus Christ. Everywhere in the Epistles of Paul, he always starts out with 'Grace and peace from God the Father and our Lord Jesus Christ. Very interesting, isn't it? That's where it comes from. Lots of times in the Epistles of Paul we fail to read that, but that tells us Who inspired it and where these words came from.

We are the recipients of the work of God spiritually that He has done with His apostles; to whom He said, 'You're going to go to the ends of the earth.' They never got there, but their writings have, and in 450 languages, the whole Bible; nearly 2300 languages for the New Testament, and some in addition that don't have the full New Testament, the book of Mark. It's gone to the ends of the earth! How is that for a prophecy fulfilled? That's pretty spectacular—*isn't it?*

Always remember this: God fulfills the prophecies to the maximum, not the minimum, whether for good or whether for destruction. That's what the book of Revelation is all about.

"...**We** will come to him and make Our abode with him" (v 23). That is ***dwelling with Him***, meaning *with the Spirit of God!* That's what's

important. How many times do we fall into the problems and categories that the scribes and Pharisees fell into? Did they not have the Word of God? *Yes, they did!* Look at their behavior and their thought and how they reacted. Why? *Because they esteemed their ways, their traditions, their politics greater than God's!*

Whenever we do that... We're going to see that that's a very important thing to understand, because if we're going to dwell with God for all eternity ***know that we will never get there if we try and tell God what to do!*** That is the greatest sin of any human being.

John 5 tells us a lot of very important things, as well. We know how the Scriptures are put together: *line upon line; precept upon precept; here a little, there a little.* When we go back over the Scriptures and over the Scriptures, don't you think that's why we have the Sabbath every week? Don't you think that's why we have the Passover and Holy Days every year? *Yes, indeed!*

When we go over them we learn more and more, because He didn't say how many 'lines upon lines.' He didn't say how many 'precepts upon precepts.'

John 5:37: "And the Father Himself, Who sent Me, has borne witness of Me. You have neither heard His voice nor seen His form at any time. And you do not have His Word dwelling in you..." Think about that. You can multiply this in different ways:

- the Word is the whole message of God
- the words are the in particular parts of the whole message of God
- the Word refers to Christ

'In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,' and we are to have Christ dwelling in us. We are to have the Father dwelling in us.

Does this happen to people in the Church who get hung up on little picky things that cause division? *Very well could be!*

"...for you do not believe Him Whom He has sent.... [they didn't believe Jesus] ...You search the Scriptures..." (vs 38-39). How many times did Jesus say, 'Have you never read? Didn't you read? What did this one say? What did that one say?'

"...for in them you think that you have eternal life..." (v 39). But eternal life, with the exception of the prophets and a few of the kings, was not granted because the Holy Spirit was not given until after the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

"...and they are the ones that testify of Me" (v 39). Yes, you can preach the whole Gospel from

the Old Testament through the person of Jesus Christ. Isn't that how the apostles started with their preaching?

Remember, the New Testament was not finished and compiled until toward the end of the life of Paul, Peter and then John. Philip and Andrew were probably with John as well as Mark to canonize the New Testament.

Let's add to what He is saying here: the fact that we have the whole Bible. With every sermon and every Bible study we bring our Bibles, we have it all, complete! Think about what God says when you have it all...

He told the Israelites, 'When you go into the land and you have your houses and all of these things, your herds are multiplied, your gold and silver are multiplied and everything that you have is multiplied, and you live in goodly houses, He says, 'BEWARE! Lest you forget the Lord your God!' That happened to them, so let's not let it happen to us.

Verse 40: "But you are unwilling to come to Me, that you may have life. I do not receive glory from men" (vs 40-41). That's why the ministers are not to exalt themselves above the brethren. Our job is to teach all the brethren to go ***direct to God the Father and Jesus Christ!*** And with the Holy Spirit of God to remain connected with Them.

Verse 42: "But I have known you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves." Isn't that an interesting and powerful statement? Think on that!

Can we say that we have the love of God when we hate brethren? When we despise those whom God has called? They may be weak, have troubles and difficulties, but maybe you should help them overcome them rather than condemn them and despise them. That might be a project for some.

How about if you do this, I give you a challenge: Those in your mind that you say you hate and despise—and are your brother or sister in Christ—go to that person and confess your sin to them. That 'this is what I thought and I ask your forgiveness.' You really change, overcome and learn to love one another. "...you do not have the love of God in yourselves."

Verse 43: "I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; *but* if another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How are you able to believe, you who receive glory from one another, and do not seek the glory that *comes* from the only God?" (vs 43-44) Think on that, as well!

Verse 45: “Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is *one* who accuses you, *even* Moses, in whom you have hope.” Isn’t that interesting? A Greek *accuses* is in the present tense meaning that the words of Moses and the Law of God that God instructed Moses to write down are still applicable in their day, which also means *they’re still applicable in our day! And magnified!* Jesus magnified the Law and raised it to a higher spiritual standard.

Verse 46: “But if you believed Moses, you would have believed Me; for he wrote about Me. And if you do not believe his writings, how shall you believe My words?” (vs 46-47).

Let’s see how we are to apply this. Let’s love one another! Let’s forbear whatever problems and difficulties that someone has! Those deep-rooted things in your mind, don’t you think it’s about time to get them out with the Spirit of God and replace it with the love of God? Wouldn’t that make a greater and nicer Feast for you and everybody else? *Yes!*

John 15:4—Jesus is the vine and we are the branches: “Dwell in Me, and I in you. As a branch cannot bear fruit of itself, but only if it remains in the vine, neither *can* you *bear fruit* unless you are dwelling in Me.” Christ in us; we in Christ. The Father in us; we in the Father.

If you try to do anything while not remaining in Christ, you just have another ‘religion’ that is no different than the world. Think on that!

Verse 5: “I am the vine, *and* you *are* the branches. The one who is dwelling in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; because apart from Me you can do nothing.” That’s a very important and profound statement. He made it simple to understand!

Break off a branch—if you’re someplace where you can do that and you’re not destroying the tree—and keep it through the entire Feast. Just bring it in to where you are, maybe set it on a table or put it on top of a cabinet and check it everyday. You’ll see that it dries up, *dries up, dries up*, and by the eighth day it’s worthless. Compare that to how you will be if you’re not loving God and dwelling in Christ. “...apart from Me you can do nothing.”

Verse 6: “If anyone does not dwell in Me, he is cast out as a branch, and is dried up; and men gather them and cast *them* into a fire, and they are burned.” It’s another way of saying that you have to choose always:

- to do *God’s* will, not your own
- to do *God’s* agenda, not your own private agenda
- to love God
- to love Jesus

- to love the brethren

This is what He’s saying! If not, don’t you think this refers to the Lake of Fire? *Yes, it does!*

Here’s another promise, because the truth is this: ***God’s way is always right!*** That’s why we have to understand it from the way that God intended it to be understood. Not our private interpretation.

Peter said, ‘The Word of God did not come by anyone’s own private interpretation.’ *No!* God inspired them to write what ***He*** wanted written! These are the words of God, and Jesus came and spoke these words. ***We are to obey the voice of the Lord our God!*** Are we not? *Yes, indeed!*

Here’s a great promise, v 7: “***If*** you dwell in Me, and My words dwell in you, you shall ask whatever you desire, and it shall come to pass for you.”

- How about if the desire is that you want to love the person that you haven’t loved?
- How about if the desire is that you want to get over the bitterness and difficulties that you have been having in your life?
- How about if you desire to overcome the bitterness and hostility that you have buried in your mind and you put on a show so you think that no one will know?

Remember this: ***God knows!***

- How about if you pray about getting rid of it?
- How about if you go that person and work everything out?

*It can be done!*

Verse 8: “In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples.... [here’s another key, important verse]: ...**As the Father has loved Me, I also have loved you; live in My love.**” (vs 8-9). That’s what God wants. We can put it together this way:

- we *stand* in the grace of God
- we *walk* in faith
- we *believe* in hope
- we *live* in love

That’s what we need to do, “...**live in My love.**”

Verse 10: “***If*** you keep My commandments, you shall live in My love; just as I have kept My Father’s commandments and live in His love. These things I have spoken to you, in order that My joy may dwell in you, and *that* your joy may be full” (vs 10-11). That’s what we want at the Feast of Tabernacles.

- the love of God

- the joy of God
- all the brethren dwelling together in peace
  - ✓ that's why we come together
  - ✓ that's why God has called us
  - ✓ that's why we are here

We have the goal of the Kingdom of God and dwelling with God into the ages of eternity. That will have to be through the love of God.

Verse 12: “This is My commandment: that you love one another, as I have loved you. No one has greater love than this: that one lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends, **if** you do whatever I command you. No longer do I call you servants, because the servant does not know what his master is doing. But I have called you friends because I have made known to you all *the* things that I have heard from My Father” (vs 12-15).

- How much of the plan of God do you know? *A tremendous amount!*
- Where did that come from? *From Jesus Christ and God the Father!*

That's why we need to be eternally grateful for what God has given.

Verse 16: “You yourselves did not choose Me, but I have personally chosen you, and ordained you, that you should go *forth* and bear fruit, and that your fruit should remain; so that whatever you shall ask the Father in My name, He may give you. These things **I command you, that you love one another**” (vs 16-17).

Brethren, let's keep these things in mind. Let this be the keynote for the Feast of Tabernacles, 2015: ***Love one another as Jesus has loved us!*** That's what we are to do!

***Have a wonderful Feast!***

Scriptural References:

- 1) John 13:33-35
- 2) John 14:15, 21, 23
- 3) John 5:37-47
- 4) John 15:4-17

Also reference: Sermon: *The Value of Forbearance*  
(Steve Durham)

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