

Last week's passage was a pinnacle in the book of Hebrews. The Spirit made it clear that our journey is toward fully experiencing Christ, sharing in His holiness, or said another way, being filled with His Spirit. But He knows that our journey is more than difficult as the enemies which occupy territory within our soul are ferocious, and it is only through war that they will be removed from our "land" and destroyed. Hence, the suffering we endure, under the hand of the Lord's correction, discipline, and punishment (which are all Biblical synonyms for love), is how the Lord wages war against the enemies within our soul.

On average, fear occupies way too much space within our soul. Self obsession, with all its tentacles, is another large and terrifying enemy. Then of course there is pride and lust, and all manner of wrong belief and unbelief which provides these enemies a safe haven to darken our soul and corrupt our lives. Each of these enemies slows us down in our race to the goal: which is the fullness of Christ.

Our Father loves us so much that He will do whatever it takes to bring the union that we all really want with Christ. In fact, the only reason most of us are here tonight is because we want that union with Christ; we want to know His peace, His rest, and the fullness of His love.

In that regard, the suffering which God allows in our lives works to tear down these enemies. It weakens their hold in our life and enables us to reach a place where we can discern between things of the Spirit and things of our flesh. And when we reach this place we suddenly find that we are able to choose to not let those enemies have power or control over our lives. It is at this point that battling sin becomes a real choice and not just some white knuckled experience.

If we let suffering have its way in our life, it will play out in choice; as victory is found in our choice to trust ourselves to God and let Him be Lord over our lives.

As I have been thinking over these passages in Hebrews, one thing that has impacted me so deeply is the true nature of sin and what sin has done to each one of us. It's horrific. Sadly, the word "sin" has been so overused that we really do not give it the proper weight or even have a suitable understanding of its impact in our lives. We still think of sin in terms of doing something bad. But that is not at all what sin is about; "bad" behavior is just an indicator of the depth of the sin that lurks within our soul.

Sin is like an entity, a cancer within us, filthy ooze which has so thoroughly sullied our souls that everything in our lives (at least all that does not come from God) has been corrupted, eroded, soiled, tainted, marred, mutated, and totally damaged by sin. There is not a single part of us that has escaped its mayhem and wanton destruction.

For example, left to ourselves we don't even know how to have healthy relationships. All we want is to love and be loved; yet, even that seems to be a worldly impossibility as our love is corrupted with selfishness, self-protection, jealousy, paranoia, and control. Everything has been damaged and destroyed by sin.

So why do we resist and loath God's correction and discipline? I think if we really understood how much destruction has been wrought in our lives by sin we would embrace God's discipline in our life knowing that He is saving us from a life of destruction and decay. If we could clearly see the darkness in our souls, I think

we would want Him to “bring it on” so we could find freedom from the stench of sin in our lives.

And since true Christianity is never about “me and God” but “we and God,” the Spirit has tied together our own suffering with the lives of others around us so we can all grow together. There is a part that each of us must play in this journey. The Lord uses our lives to pave the way, so to speak, so others can follow and walk in our footsteps on their way to experiencing the fullness of Christ.

Let’s pick up now in **Hebrews 12:14** as the Spirit drives home this notion of “we and God” and further explains what He expects from us in terms of our relationships in this body. I am going to read this passage first from the ESV and then from Young’s Literal Translation as I think Young’s captures it better.

Hebrews 12:14-17

Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one fails to obtain the grace of God; that no "root of bitterness" springs up and causes trouble, and by it many become defiled; that no one is sexually immoral or unholy like Esau, who sold his birthright for a single meal. For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears. [ESV]

Peace pursue with all, and the separation, apart from which no one shall see the Lord, looking diligently over lest any one be failing of the grace of God, lest

any root of bitterness springing up may give trouble, and through this many may be defiled; lest any one be a fornicator, or a profane person, as Esau, who in exchange for one morsel of food did sell his birthright, for ye know that also afterwards, wishing to inherit the blessing, he was disapproved of, for a place of reformation he found not, though with tears having sought it. [Youngs]

What we have here is a pretty intense passage that says we have a big responsibility when it comes to this body and those that God chooses to send to us. This responsibility is intended to 1) prevent a bitter root of unbelief from arising that will corrupt many, and 2) prevent anyone from living as a spiritual fornicator or a profane person.

We are instructed to pursue peace with all, and the separation (or the holiness), apart from which no one shall see the Lord. Let's stop there. These two thoughts are tied together (peace and separation) and I believe the first part of this phrase has to be understood in light of the second part of this phrase.

In the Greek, the word "peace" literally means to join or have an absence of separation. Therefore, we are to pursue the elimination of all obstacles or obstructions in our relationships with each other and with God. Now let me jump to the second part of the phrase and then I will come back around to this idea of pursuing peace and tie both of these ideas together.

We are to pursue with all, the separation (or holiness), apart from which no one will see the Lord. This is talking about the separation from our flesh, or the holiness, that the Spirit brings to us in our ***New Creation***. He is holy and we are holy because of Him. His holiness dwelling within us is our ticket to His presence.

Thus, this is saying that we have a role in furthering the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit in each other's lives; or, said another way, we are to help each other war against all the enemies of God which hinder our being filled with the Spirit of God. This is not about trying to control behavior, but it is about belief; helping each other choose to believe the truth about God and thereby walk by faith in the Spirit of God.

We do this by being involved in each other's lives in such a deep and intimate way that we know precisely how the Lord is warring and what He is trying to accomplish through His tools of correction and discipline. We are then to help each other through these times, hurt with each other, cry with each other, be there for each other, and be a part of the Lord's war against His enemies of wrong belief and unbelief. This also means that we must know the truth and be willing to help each other stand in the truth, and in so doing we will fan the flames of faith.

I want you to take note of the word "pursue." It is in the present active tense, which means it is to be a very practical part of our relationships. Our role in each other's lives is not to observe what is happening and make comments to a third party, or to passively participate by dropping a hint or two because we are too afraid to upset the other person. Not at all; we must be actively engaged.

The Lord wants us to pursue this holiness, or separation, for each other in each other's lives. We are to help each other know why we can trust ourselves to Jesus and how to trust ourselves to Jesus.

To sum this up, we are to be a big part of helping each other remove all the obstacles of faith that hinder our ability to be joined together (our ability to experience peace in this body and peace with the Lord). Now as we know, this is

not a peaceful process and it creates a lot of tension and friction between people; it often gets quite messy. And that is ok; it is necessary.

The goal, what we are pursuing, is peace; the literal joining together of each other as one body in Jesus Christ. But to achieve peace we must be a part of the war, for there will be no peace as long as the enemies dwell in the land (whether it is in your soul or my soul).

Often people ask me what is different about Pathway Fellowship. I say that depends on what you are looking at. When it comes to our Sunday gathering, there is probably not much difference, except for the fact that we keep things really simple. This is our time to study the Word of God (which is necessary to the health of our body) and we worship as a way to prepare our hearts for His word and to honor Him and enjoy Him.

But our difference comes not in this routine, but in how we live together outside of our collective gathering. For us “church” is not about our Sunday; that is just a part of church. We all need to broaden our understanding of that word. Our church is about being involved in each other’s lives and doing the hard work to help each other know Jesus as our “literal” Lord not just our “theoretical” Lord.

Many people are not used to this kind of environment and do not particularly care for it (I understand that); but if you choose to stick around here you will soon find that many people pursue this kind of peace and separation for your life—sometimes more than you even want to. That is what we are about; that is what defines us and how the Lord has asked us to live together.

Clearly, then this pursuit necessitates a meaningful integration into the deepest parts of each other’s lives which is often very disturbing, at least to our *Old Sinful*

Nature which really just wants to dig in and preserve its place in our soul as an enemy of God. But we have learned that a war takes an army; it is not just a one man or one woman job. God elicits our involvement because that is how He designed His body to work and function; it is His way.

Therefore, we need others to help fight for us, to fight with us, and at times to fight against us. It is all so necessary, as it is impossible to win a war with an army of one. Again, we have to understand that New Testament Christianity is never about “me and God,” it is always “we and God.” We must war for each other, with each other.

Let’s look at the intensity of the language the Spirit employs in **11:15**, “looking diligently.” The NASB and the ESV both say, “See to it” and the New Living says, “Look after each other.” In the Greek, this is in the present active plural tense; so again this is not to be understood figuratively at all, but ever so practically and even aggressively. As a group, it is our job! We are to look diligently lest anyone be failing of the grace of God, lest any root of bitter unbelief springs up causing many to be defiled and less anyone become a fornicator or a profane person.

I hope some of you are curious as to why I added the word “unbelief” to this phrase as it is not in the original quote. I did this purposely because this phrase comes from the Old Testament in **Deuteronomy 29** where it deals with the issue of unbelief resulting in the worship other so called gods. Let’s look at this passage.

Deuteronomy 29:14-18

But you are not the only ones with whom I am making this covenant with its curses. I am making this covenant both with you who stand here today in the

presence of the Lord our God, and also with the future generations who are not standing here today. You remember how we lived in the land of Egypt and how we traveled through the lands of enemy nations as we left. You have seen their detestable practices and their idols made of wood, stone, silver, and gold. I am making this covenant with you so that no one among you—no man, woman, clan, or tribe—will turn away from the Lord our God to worship these gods of other nations, and so that no root among you bears bitter and poisonous fruit.

The Spirit pulls from this Old Testament passage in order that we might know that we are warring against the sin of unbelief, turning away from the Lord, the disastrous sin where people choose to worship something else other than the living God who has saved them from Egypt, or in our case saved us from the world and from all the detestable things the world has to offer.

Consider for a moment the enemies in your land and what they entice you to do. They wrap you in so much fear and wrong belief about God that you don't even want to relinquish control over your life to the Lord; at least not to the "lord" that they have convinced you is real.

They get you so confused and disappointed in God that that you are tempted to look to yourself to be the lord of your own life. The temple of the "me" literally becomes your house of worship. Your enemies convince you that you are able to care for yourself and reason through the issues in your life setting your own course and direction. And unbeknownst to you, this is poison to your soul.

Again, we are to look diligently so that this unbelief does not sprout a bitter root that spreads amongst us by which many will be defiled with its poison. So if

you wonder why it sometimes seems that we are all over you like a spider monkey in terms of your trusting in Jesus, this is why. The unbelief which lurks within your soul is dangerous not just to you but to me and to all of us in this body; for the sin of unbelief is a poison that spreads and often quite quickly. Like I was talking about at the beginning of this teaching, we cannot downplay the impact of the sin of unbelief in our lives; it leads to idolatry!

You might be thinking what unbelief what idolatry? Well, I think you should go back a couple of weeks to our study in **12:1-3** and look at that list of what just the book of Hebrews says about who Jesus is, what He has done for us, and who we are to Him, and evaluate whether or not those are your truths. I am not asking whether or not you intellectually agree with that list; I want to know if that list defines your life. If not then you have a bitter root of unbelief growing within you and that is why we war.

Just so you know, in Bible terms “fornication” is often an alternate word for spiritual idolatry (which again was the main thrust of the passage in **Deuteronomy 29**). **Ezekiel 23** makes this comparison in a very graphic way—you should look it up. In short, when we serve ourselves or anything other than the living God, we are fornicators, we are not preserving ourselves for God alone. I believe therefore the context of this passage is clearly dealing with spiritual fornication and not sexual immorality, which is why He uses the picture of Esau to communicate this message. When you look at the story of Esau it has nothing to do with sexuality.

What was Esau’s problem? He loved the temporal and immediate benefit that he could get from this life and he would trade anything to get satisfaction in the here and now, even his own birthright. If you remember the story, Esau was out

and about and when he came back home he was famished. Jacob was at home cooking up some nice stew and Esau wanted it; in fact, he wanted it so bad that he traded his birthright to Jacob just to get some temporary relief.

Which if you think of it, this is exactly what these believing Jews were getting ready to do. Not understanding the purposes of the Lord in their suffering, they were so over their persecution and oppression that they were on the edge of trading their faith for what this world had to offer them—temporary relief from suffering. All they had to do was reject the grace of God and return to their religious rituals, and they would have had peace with the Jews. That is all they had to do and their suffering would have been over.

So the thrust of this instruction is along the line of the instruction in **12:3** where the Spirit exhorted us to think of what Jesus endured so in our own suffering we will not grow weary and give up and choose to become a spiritual fornicator, or a profane person (which literally means one who is excluded from the temple) who has rejected the grace of God and goes back to some form of religion to deal with their lives.

Let's now tie in this idea of "failing" from the grace of God. The word "failing" is in the present active tense. We are to diligently look among ourselves so that no one of us makes a choice to retreat or pull back from the truth that: 1) Jesus has given us life through the free gift of His sacrifice, and 2) this life is not something we can earn but something He has freely given to us.

You see the grace of God is intended to cover everything we do. In essence, the grace of God declares that within us there is nothing good and nothing by which God can be pleased; so it is all about Him and what He has done for us and what

He will do in us. That is God's grace toward us. And as we know, only God is good. So the grace of God is about God's goodness towards us.

When we step away from this truth, when we fail to let God's grace be real to us; we start to think we can be good without the cross. We start to think we don't really need God, at least not for everything. In other words, we belittle the power of sin in our lives and minimize the destruction it has wrought, and we ascribe little to no benefit to the cross and once again think that we have what it takes to be good.

As a result, we start to take matters in to our own hands and live as if we are our own god. And in so doing we become spiritual fornicators, idolaters, profane people who trade the gift of grace for some morsel of food that we try and take from the world and from those in the world. Again, this is what these believing Jews were about to do. They were about to trade the peace that comes from God for the morsel of worldly peace just to end their suffering.

Paul talked about this same sort of thing when he addressed the ***Galatians*** who also were retreating from grace, returning to the law, because of the pressure and persecution they were receiving from the Jews. Speaking to believers Paul said,

Galatians 5:2-6

Listen! I, Paul, tell you this: If you are counting on circumcision to make you right with God, then Christ will be of no benefit to you. I'll say it again. If you are trying to find favor with God by being circumcised, you must obey every regulation in the whole law of Moses. For if you are trying to make yourselves right with God by keeping the law, you have been cut off from Christ! You have

fallen away from God's grace. But we who live by the Spirit eagerly wait to receive by faith the righteousness God has promised to us. For when we place our faith in Christ Jesus, there is no benefit in being circumcised or being uncircumcised. What is important is faith expressing itself in love.

I know, this language is a bit scary (cut off from Christ, fallen away from God's grace), as is the language from our text, "For you know that afterward, when he desired to inherit the blessing, he was rejected, for he found no chance to repent, though he sought it with tears" (*Hebrews 12:17*). However, the point the Spirit is making is the same one He made earlier in *Hebrews 2* and *3*. Please listen to me closely so you don't misunderstand and get all twisted up. It is really quite simple.

If you regret crossing over the Jordan and into the wars of the Promised Land and really badly want to go back and live in the desert, then you are free to go. In fact, if you want to run all the way back to Egypt, go ahead. If you choose to trade your reward (peace and rest) for temporal worldly satisfaction and pleasure, then go ahead. If you want to ease your suffering and find a way to self-medicate, then go ahead.

But know that when you cross that line, when you decide that you no longer want to give the cross of Christ its due value, when you no longer want to run this race and endure the suffering that you must endure as a necessary part of winning the war and enjoying the blessings of peace and rest, when you fail the grace of God believing you can go at it on your own, then there will be no restoration even if you seek the blessing with tears.

You see the blessing of the first born was Esau's. But he rejected it and it could not be restored for it had already been given to Jacob. You have to understand that *unbelief* is a root which bears a poisonous and deadly fruit and it has real practical consequences in your life. If you choose to go back to trying to please God by some way other than faith and faith alone, then believe me you will live to regret it.

So here is how this plays out and how we are to understand this passage. Once the empty promise of peace, which the world offers you, fades away once again into a life of personal chaos and emptiness, you will want the blessing of true peace and rest, and you will cry for it with tears and beg God for it. And you will repent for anything and everything to try and obtain the blessing. But that is the rub, the blessing is not something you can just get; it is tied to a relationship and is the spoils of war. It is not available in the desert or in Egypt; it is only available in the Promised Land.

The blessing of peace and rest comes with Christ; it comes with the occupation of your soul by the Holy Spirit. It is not some gift that is available to you if you beg hard enough, pray hard enough, and repent hard enough with tears and great sadness. No, peace and rest are part and parcel of Jesus' character and nature and are the spoils of war; they come with Him and there is no other way to get it. He is peace and He is our rest. Therefore, if there is no war there will be no peace and rest. There is no other way to the blessing than through the pathway of war.

Are you beginning to grasp how the poison of unbelief is so nasty and toxic to our lives? It corrupts so deeply that it literally steals away our reward, or our blessing; which is why it is the enemy's favorite tool of temptation for those who

have crossed into the Promised Land. Our unbelief tempts us to walk away from living in the grace of God; it tempts us to live from our flesh, or our *Old Sinful Nature*, which is profane (it is not even allowed in the Temple) and a fornicator—a spiritual adulterer (and a whole lot of other things which the Spirit could have listed).

The point of all of this is that we have a responsibility to fight for each other. We have a responsibility that requires great diligence and commitment. There is not a single one of us who can win this war on our own; we can't, and if you think otherwise the poison is already taking its toll in your life.

We have to really let this truth of “we and God” sink in because we cannot take lightly the impact of the sin of unbelief in our lives. Unbelief will kill us and it will slowly but ever so surely root its way into each of our lives and do some serious damage. We must be diligent to help each other know the truth about God and to make decisions to bet our lives on the truth about God. Again, go back to that list I generated about who Jesus really is and start asking others to pray with you over it and to help you through the areas with which you struggle believing.

Now, what this “responsibility for each other” looks like really depends on the situation, the person, the timing, etc. Just because we have this responsibility does not mean we can shove the “truth” or anything else down your throat. If you do not want to war, we cannot war for you (even though often we want to). I really believe this passage implies your willingness to be at war, no matter how small that willingness may be.

After all, we can work with small, we know that the Spirits' favorite tools in our life are rain and time and we can be patient as He softens the soil of your heart

and prepares it for our help (that is so often what His discipline is accomplishing). That is fine; but you still have to be willing. And the point of this passage is that if you are willing, we, as a body, must be committed to help and see you all the way through to your reward.

Please keep in mind however that war is not fun (for anybody); so don't expect it to be. It is violent, aggressive, painful, exhausting, annoying, intrusive and so on; but the result of it (according to **12:11**) is that it will yield a peaceful fruit of righteousness for those who are trained in its way. Now doesn't that sound lovely? War is worth the result: more of the Spirit occupying your soul, more of Jesus in and through each other, and a great experience of His love, peace, and rest.

Now the next part of this passage is intended to give us a perspective on our lives that is outside of time and is intended to encourage and build our faith knowing that this life is just passing away and our eternity is more than glorious.

Hebrews 12:18-24

For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire and darkness and gloom and a tempest and the sound of a trumpet and a voice whose words made the hearers beg that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, "If even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned." Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, "I tremble with fear."

But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the

assembly of the firstborn who are enrolled in heaven, and to God, the judge of all, and to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.

How is that for a wow? This is our reality; this is what really is going on behind the scenes. The message here is that the law engenders terror; for it is impossible to keep the law and it is impossible to be good without the cross. It is impossible to be acceptable to God without faith. It is terrifying to even try to face the holiness and perfection of God without the cross.

But the grace of God engenders joy, praise, worship, and an invitation to be with our God. The picture that is painted for us is so encouraging. Our mountain of faith speaks of the love of God for it proclaims to us the mercy of God.

We come to the living God as His perfectly prepared bride (which is the New Jerusalem). We come to a myriad of angels. We come to an assembly of brothers and sisters in Christ. Our names are written in heaven. We come to God himself who has judged us as righteous, and the spirits of those He has made perfect; including all our heroes of faith who are the witnesses over our race.

We come to Jesus who continually intercedes for us and whose blood covers our every transgression and cleanses us from every sin; His blood which proclaims our forgiveness. The blood which Abel offered as a sacrifice was simply not good enough. The blood of calves and goats cannot make atonement for sin; thus, the Old Covenant (which was just a shadow of things to come) and its mediator, Moses, are passed away (**8:13**). We are never to return to it nor even try!

This is why we war, this is why we can run our race with endurance and not give up or quit, this is why we can and must help each other. We have a reward that is not just temporal in terms of experiencing God's love, peace, and rest in our here and now, but we also have an eternal reward and glory that is beyond comprehension. This is our reality; let it become your truth. It is why you live.

Now this final part of the passage deals with the end of the Old Covenant. Technically, the Old Covenant ended with the cross, but for the believers of that day it was also about to come to a physical end; and that end would come with great destruction and punishment.

This letter was written to warn the saints that in the not so distant future Jerusalem and Judah were going to be destroyed by Rome and those who would fail the grace of God and go back to the law would be swooped up in its terrible wave of destruction. But those who would hold to their faith would be protected and preserved; in fact, as we know, not a single one of them suffered harm. We studied this in **8:13**. So this is the immediate context of this passage.

Hebrews 12:25-29

See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused him who warned them on earth, much less will we escape if we reject him who warns from heaven. At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, "Yet once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens." This phrase, "Yet once more," indicates the removal of things that are shaken—that is, things that have been made—in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for

receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire.

The Spirit implores these believers to listen to all that He has said and not refuse Him. He uses Moses as an example. Moses spoke to the Israelites about the judgment that would accompany sin and that came true, but now God Himself is bringing the warning about the real time practical judgment that would accompany the sin of unbelief; so don't doubt what He says.

There would be no escape when God destroys the political/religious institution of the Jews (the Old Covenant being destroyed by the shaking of the heavens and the physical system being destroyed by the shaking of the earth). In other words, all remnants of the Old Covenant will be removed so that which cannot be shaken may remain. This statement had and still has intense implications.

First, all who retreated in their faith were destroyed in the fires and destruction brought about by Rome, but all who held to their faith were protected. Tradition has it that an angel actually came and told the faithful believers when to flee the city, and those who obeyed the voice of the Lord were preserved.

Second, the fact that this shaking meant the removal of the things that were shaken, the earthly things that had been made (e.g., the temple, the instruments of worship, etc.) has massive implications for the end times. There is more than a majority of those in western Christianity who are waiting for the Jews to rebuild the temple and return to animal sacrifices, believing that will be part of the end time's scenario.

But it seems clear to me that the writer of Hebrews would completely disagree. That Old Covenant has been abolished and the earthly system has been removed in order that the things that cannot be shaken may remain. What has been “removed” is in the perfect passive tense meaning that God has done away with it and it is not coming back; it’s a done deal. In the same way, the church—the bride of Christ—cannot ever be shaken. She is protected by Him and will remain. We will remain! Not even the gates of hell will prevail against us. That totally rocks!

Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe, for our God is a consuming fire. We know that without faith it is impossible to please God (**11:6**), so acceptable worship flows from our faith. It flows from our willingness to believe all that God says about Himself—when with reverence and awe we let it become our living truth. That is true worship.

For our God is a consuming fire. Here the author quotes **Deuteronomy 4:24**, which captures all that we have studied in this passage.

Deuteronomy 4:22-24

...you shall cross and take possession of this good land. "So watch yourselves, that you do not forget the covenant of the Lord your God which He made with you, and make for yourselves a graven image in the form of anything against which the Lord your God has commanded you. "For the Lord your God is a consuming fire, a jealous God.

In other words, honor God, live in His grace, let Him be your God, and stop trying to control the things of your life as if you were god. He is a jealous God and a consuming fire. He wants you, He loves you, and you have been chosen, so He will do what it takes, no matter how intense that fire needs to be, to possess you by killing off all your enemies.

My storm has been nothing short of a consuming fire, like the one that destroyed Rome. It has destroyed my religion, my so called gods, and so much more in my life. It has done its work; and I praise Jesus for that. That very same fire has preserved who I am in God and has consumed me in the fire of His love, His grace, and His mercy.

This chapter in Hebrews is such a strong appeal to our obedience of faith; to our willingness to listen to His voice and follow only Him. The consequences of refusing are real and quite practical. So, like the Spirit, I exhort you to reject your religion, reject your so called gods (even your own throne), and surrender your will and your desire to only Him. After all, He loves you with a perfect love; like no other lover, for His love shouts to us from the heavens.

And let us not forget, it's always "we and God." So let others in and let us faithfully be a part of your journey. It is His desire and it is His will. And for those of you who are not engaged with others and yet need to be, remember, this exhortation is also for you. Join in the war; together we all win!

Let's Pray.