

“Written ...On Tablets of Flesh”

16

From Glory to Glory



Character development is said to be the most important work ever entrusted to human beings. During the next hour, we will explore both our privilege and our responsibility to become Christ-like in character. Join us now for this powerful time of personal renewal as Pastor Stephen Wallace takes us "From Glory to Glory."

Thank you for your presence as we continue tonight with our study. And we are on Lesson 16, aren't we? Entitled, "**Written On Tablets of Flesh.**" "**Written on Tablets of Flesh,**" {2 Cor 3:3} You'll find that on page 35 in your printout. We're going to be talking about letters tonight. Living epistles, the Bible calls us, which is the old English word for letters: epistles. Letters that must be written, signed, sealed, and eventually delivered. We need to take a look at how the Holy Spirit, which has been breathed on us by Christ who commissioned us, is involved in this whole process. Our purpose is to better understand how the Holy Spirit restores us from glory to glory into a character likeness of God.

Very important study, but again, **spiritual things are only, what? Spiritually discerned.** {1 Cor 2:14} And so my dear friends, before we proceed, we must pause as has been our practice, and personally invite God's Spirit into our hearts. Again I solicit your prayers in my behalf. Let's kneel for a few moments.

My Father in Heaven, first of all, I want to thank You for the privilege of calling You my Father. I am so grateful to be Your blood-bought son, to be adopted into Your family. Jesus, thank You for making that possible. And Father, I thank You for my Elder Brother especially, who represents me, and I come hiding in Him. He is beautiful; I'm not. But I thank You that You choose to see me as I am in Him, and You count me as beautiful, and that gives me confidence, a holy boldness, knowing that I'm accepted in the Beloved. I come before You to ask that You would bless me, and bless my blood-bought brothers and sisters here, with the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We want to study and better understand how it is that the Holy Spirit... that Your Son, our Savior breathes on us, transforms us from glory to glory into Your likeness. In better understanding what the Holy Spirit does, we can better understand how to cooperate. We want to be living epistles. We want to rightly represent Christ. We want to say true and beautiful things about what He's like. But we can't, unless You write His character on the fleshly tables of our hearts. Teach us how to cooperate with that process Father, please. And as I lead out in this study, I earnestly pray, Father, that You would guide and direct my thoughts and words. I want to speak truth and only truth, the truth as it is in Jesus. So by the Spirit of Truth, take full possession of me I pray. Guide and direct every thought and word, that I might say what You want me to say, nothing more, nothing less. And help me to say it in the way You want me to say it, that Jesus might be glorified and His people might be edified. This is my prayer in His name. Amen.

The Holy Spirit that Jesus breathes on us after He commissions us is the only sufficient power to enable us to do for Christ what He did for the Father. The twice repeated assurance of peace is the only sufficient motivation and foundation. With the blood and with the water we can do for Christ what He did for the Father. But I want to consider with you how it is that the Holy Spirit changes us from glory to glory. It is clearly established that He alone does that in our key text, **2 Corinthians 3:18: "But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord."** Clearly it is the Spirit of the Lord that changes us from glory to glory.

But I ask you tonight how does the Spirit of the Lord do that? What is the process? We have insights from inspiration that I want to share with you. They help us understand how the Holy Spirit restores in us the character likeness of Christ. **Signs of the Times, July 18, 1911:** Note this insight: **"As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God, and retain the image of Christ."** Very interesting language: **"As wax takes the impression of the seal..." "the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit, and retain the image of Christ."**

What Greek word does this remind us of? ...in a previous study? Khar-ak-tare, yes! That Greek word that's used one time in the New Testament in that remarkable poem that Paul penned in **Hebrews 1:3** that describes how perfectly, how beautifully Christ fulfilled His mission to reveal God's glory to man. What was the poem? **"Who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person..."** Remember, the Greek word that is translated **"express image,"** is what? **"Khar-ak-tare... khar-ak-tare."** It's from that Greek word that we get our English word **"character."** And many other languages get a very similar word. What was that Greek word? Remember that word study we did? {Lesson 8}

What was it's meaning, in it's most ancient usage? It was in reference to a what? An engraver or a coin minter. And then with the passage of time, it came to refer to the tools that an engraver uses: a dye, a stamp, a branding iron. But by New Testament times, it was in reference to the actual engraving, that had been made by the tools, by the engraver. The impression that had been made on whatever substance or surface was involved. That's what the word "khar-ak-tare" means.

Do you hear that concept in this expression, in this statement? **"As wax takes the impression of the seal, so the soul is to take the impression of the Spirit of God and retain the image of Christ."** In re-engraving the character likeness of God upon us, what is the tool that God uses? It is the Holy Spirit. That is the engraving tool, and we are to receive that impression that we might retain the, what? The image of Christ. Okay? Now, where is it that we receive this impression? It is written not upon tables of stone, as were the Ten Commandments, but upon the fleshly tables of our heart. **Exodus 32:16: "Now the tablets were the work of God, and the writing was the writing of God engraved on the tablets."** That's in reference to the tables of stone. And in the old covenant, God wrote His law upon the tables of stone. But **the new covenant promise is that He will write them where? In our hearts and in our minds... in our hearts and in our minds.** {Jer 31:33}

And we are to receive this writing that we might thereby be living epistles, and might reveal the lovely character of Jesus Christ in our lives. **2 Corinthians 3:3: "Clearly you are epistles of Christ, ministered by us, written not with ink, but by the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of flesh, that is, of the heart."** So again we have here clearly identified the engraving tool or the writing tool; it is the Holy Spirit. And what is the surface upon which the Holy Spirit writes? **The fleshly tables of our hearts.** But my dear friends, our hearts are not naturally inclined to receive this writing. We naturally have stony hearts. Therefore what must we do? Get a new heart! **Ezekiel 36:26 and 27: "I will give you a new heart and put in a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."** Now please note, this is not flesh as in the New Testament use of the term, which is synonymous with carnal. This is flesh as in fleshy, not fleshly. This is heart of flesh as in soft and impressionable, as able to receive and retain something that is written upon it. {teachable} That's the heart that God proposes to give us. **Verse 27: "I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them."** You see, this writing of the Holy Spirit upon our hearts, has a direct effect upon our behavior, doesn't it? When our hearts have **the law of love** written upon them our behavior will be in compliance with the **law of love.** {Rom 13:10} **And we will walk in His statutes and keep His judgments and do them.**

Note specifically what it is that the Holy Spirit writes on our hearts. **The Kress Collection, page 122**, gives us a special insight here. **“Let it never be forgotten that true Christianity comes through the engraving of Bible principles upon the heart and character. This must be an individual work, visibly expressed.”** Again please note, that what is written on our hearts needs to be what? Revealed in our lives, okay? It needs to be visibly expressed. But note particularly with me what it is that is engraved or written upon our hearts. It is what? Bible principles. Oh, my dear friends, work with me on this.

What are principles? What are principles? Please know that principles are different than rules and regulations... Dos and don'ts. Dos and don'ts, rules and regulations, are applications of principle at the level of behavior. But principles are something deeper and more fundamental than rules and regulations. Are you understanding what I'm trying to explain here? Let me illustrate to make sure you do. When it comes to character development, there are some dos and don'ts based upon a very important Bible principle.

One of the dos is spend significant quality time every day getting better acquainted with Jesus Christ as He's revealed in Scripture. Another one might be, a do, make time to get out in nature and behold the handiwork of God and the revelation of His glory, His love in nature. A don't in the area of character development: Don't waste any time beholding that which comes across the media screens of this world. I'm going to, with great self-control, keep from expounding on that. Because if you behold that kind of thing, you are beholding that which is carnal, that which is worldly, that which is sensual, that which is materialistic, that which is egotistic. Don't behold that kind of stuff. Now those are dos and don'ts, okay, specific dos and don'ts, rules and regulations. What is the principle behind all of those? The Bible principle: In beholding we are changed, changed into the likeness of what we behold. Do you see the difference between principle and rules and regulations? Rules and regulations are, again, specific behavioral applications of principles. The Bible principle here is much more fundamental. In beholding we are changed, changed into the likeness of what we behold.

Now my dear friends, I cannot overemphasize the importance of understanding Bible principles. It's imperative to understand Bible principles before we can intelligently comply with specific dos and don'ts. Because if we don't understand the underlying principle, then we cannot understand why we're supposed to do certain things and why we're not supposed to do other things. And by the way, this is very relevant when it comes to training children. Often times we tell our children they're not supposed to do something. And what response do we get? *“Why? Why?”* And what do we say typically? *“Because I said so!”* God forgive us. Now sometimes that might be necessary, because they may not be old enough to understand the underlying principle. But my dear friends, we have done our children no favor if we just give them a lot of dos and don'ts. We have got to sit down and explain to them the underlying principles. Then the rules and regulations can make sense to them. We don't just tell them, *“Don't watch that television program.”* We sit down and we explain to them that in beholding we are changed, changed into the likeness of what we behold. And the reason for that is because what we are is what goes on in our mind. And what goes on in our mind is directly determined and influenced by what we feed our brain through our senses. {Amen} And what you program your mind with makes you the kind of person you are. Therefore, we can't afford to program our minds with this kind of garbage, because we want to be like Jesus. And you see, now you have their intellect enlisted on the side of obedience. It makes sense to them... why they're supposed to do certain things and not do other things.

And my dear friends, that is what our Heavenly Father wants to do with His children. Are you hearing me? {Amen} He wants us to obey intelligently. He doesn't want us to just have a check list religion... of a whole lot of dos and don'ts. He wants, by His Spirit, to be able to write upon our hearts Bible principles. He wants us to understand the principles behind the rules and the regulations, so that

we can intelligently obey them. I can't overemphasize how valuable and important it is to let the Holy Spirit write upon, engrave upon your heart Bible principles.

Now heart, please understand, that means that we must not only understand them intellectually, but we must come to love them affectionately. You see, this isn't just written upon the mind, this is written upon the what? The heart. In other words, we come to love and appreciate these principles. And when you come to love and appreciate the principles, then you don't have this terrible struggle with compliance with the rules and regulations, which are applications of those principles. And that's how we mature in our Christian experience. That's how we grow up. Now when we first get started, as babes, yes, we might have to, you know, just obey a do or a don't because it's been required of us by One that we know knows what's best for us. We trust Him and we know He loves us so we'll go ahead and obey, even if we don't understand why. But God doesn't want to leave us there. He wants us to be intelligent regarding His law. That's why He says, **"Come let us,"** what? **"reason together."** {Is 1:18} He wants His principles to make sense to us. And that's what the Holy Spirit brings to our understanding. **"Let it never be forgotten that true Christianity comes through the engraving of Bible principles upon the heart and character."** {The Kress Collection, page 122}

Jeremiah 31:33: "But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord; I will put My Law in their minds and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people." Mind and heart: what do you hear there? Intellect and affections, thoughts and feelings. What are we talking about? Character... exactly, character. And it is this that is quoted of course in Hebrews 10:16, as the new covenant promise, Hebrews 10:16. Now, that's what the Holy Spirit is doing for us. And we must cooperate with Him and allow Him to do this, by studying the Bible and seeking to understand these principles, okay? You can't just expect the Holy Spirit to engrave Bible principles on your heart without your cooperating with Him in the process. You study the Bible and you ask God to reveal to you the principles of His Word. And then, how do you cooperate with Him, the Holy Spirit, in receiving the engraving of the character-likeness of Christ? You do so my dear friends, by choosing, for the love of Christ, to obey Bible principles and bring your thoughts and feelings into harmony with the Spirit of God's law.

By the way, I said something very important there! Please understand, there is a big difference, my friends, there is a big difference between bringing our behavior into compliance with the letter of the law, and bringing our thoughts and feelings into harmony with the... spirit of the law. {Amen} There is a big difference. And it is absolutely essential if we are going to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in having Christ's character restored in us from glory to glory, having the Name, which is the virtues of God, written upon our hearts, the fleshly tables of our hearts. It's imperative for us to learn to bring our thoughts and feelings into harmony with the spirit of the law... imperative.

This is brought out in several ways in Scripture. **Proverbs 7:1 and 3: "My son keep My words, and treasure My commands,"** where? **"within you. ...Write them on the tablet of your heart."** You see, the Holy Spirit writes them there, but we cooperate with the Holy Spirit by choosing to what? Obey them. By choosing to have our thoughts and feelings brought into compliance with them. That's how we cooperate in the writing of them on our hearts.

As David says in **Psalm 119:11: "Your word I have hidden in my heart, that I might not,"** what? **"Sin against You!"** **"...that I might not sin against You!"**

Sons and Daughters of God, page 318: I like this statement, listen: **"Exalted powers are within the reach of every one. Under God's supervision, a man may have an uncorrupted, sanctified, elevated, ennobled mind."** Does that thrill you?...that potential? That ought to thrill you. **"Through the grace of Christ, man's mind is qualified to love and glorify God, the Creator. The**

Lord Jesus came to our world to represent the Father. ... Christ was the express image of His Father's person; and He came to our world to restore in man God's moral image in order that man although fallen, might through obedience to God's commandments become enstamped with the divine image and character.” My dear friends, how do we become enstamped with the divine image and character? By obedience. By what? By obedience. You see, every time we choose to bring our thoughts and feelings into harmony, for the love of Christ and in the power of the Holy Spirit, into harmony with the spirit of the law, there is more deeply engraved upon us the character likeness of Jesus Christ. We are learning to govern our thoughts and feelings, and what is thoughts and feelings combined? Character. We are learning to govern our thoughts and feelings by the spirit of the law, which is love. And that's how we are transformed by the renewing of our minds. This is a spiritual process. This is changing the way we actually think and feel, up here in the privacy of the mind.

Now most of us in our Christian experience, we are just trying to change our behavior. Christianity through behavior modification. But genuine Christianity is Christianity by mind transformation. Amen? Getting our minds reprogrammed to think in a different way than we used to. We used to think governed by the law of selfishness. But as we receive the law written upon our hearts by the Holy Spirit, and for the love of Christ, and in the power of the Holy Spirit, learned to govern our thoughts and feelings by the spirit of the law, which is love, we are transformed by the renewing of our minds... our minds. So important to understand how this works. This is why David says in **Psalm 19:7 and 8: "The law of the LORD is" what? "perfect, converting the soul."** The Holy Spirit uses the law to convert our souls. **"The testimony of the LORD is sure, making wise the simple; The statutes of the LORD are right, rejoicing the heart; The commandment of the LORD is pure, enlightening the eyes."**

Roman 6:17: "But God be thanked that though you were slaves of sin, yet you obeyed from the," what? **"from the heart... the form of doctrine to which you were delivered. And having been set free from sin, you became slaves of righteousness."** Oh, I love that. I want to be a slave of righteousness. Amen? We have been slaves of sin, slaves of selfishness, long enough. And that's a tyrannical master. May God help us learn to be slaves of righteousness, slaves of love. That's a benign, benevolent Lord, the Lord of love. And my dear friends, there is great joy in being under the Lordship of the Prince of Love. There is, I assure you there is. It's wonderful to be a slave, a bond-servant of Jesus Christ. It is the greatest joy that this man has ever known, and I want to experience it much more fully in my life.

But here is our problem... right here is our problem. Because we get so good at managing to govern our behavior by the letter of the law, many of us think that we have a genuine Christian experience, when we don't have one at all. And my friends, forgive me if I sound like I keep coming back to this, but I must. Why? Because it is a very prevalent problem amongst us as a people. And I don't say that on my own authority again. I say that on the authority of **the True Witness. {Rev 3:14}** What does He say regarding Laodicea? **We are lukewarm; neither cold nor hot. {Rev 3:16}** And remember how we defined that? Do you remember that?

Cold, what's that? That's doing the wrong things for the wrong reasons.

Hot, what's that? Doing the right things for the right reasons.

Lukewarm, what's that? Doing the right things, for the wrong reasons.

You see with sufficient ego motivation, we can do a remarkable job of bringing our behavior into compliance with the letter of the law. That is precisely what **having a form of godliness {2 Tim 3:5}** is all about. Having a what? Only a form of godliness. But denying the what? The power thereof. You see, the power of the gospel is in its capacity **to transform us by the renewing of our minds... {Rom 12:2}**

to make us new creatures {2 Cor 5:17}. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} In what way do we become new creatures through the gospel ...by the recreative power of the gospel? Do we get a new body? No, that's not what makes us what we are. At least not yet - we're going to before it's all over. But... how is the creative power of the gospel manifested in our lives now? By recreating our minds into the likeness of Christ. You see, **as a man thinketh in his heart so is he. {Pr 23:7}** And by the power of the gospel, we learn to think in such a radically different way that we become a new creature. We become a new person. We used to think governed by the spirit and law of selfishness. But when we receive the law of love and learn, for the love of Christ, to govern our thoughts and feelings by it, we actually become a totally different person... a new creation.

And my dear friends, you know something? This experience that all of us as Christians, as genuine Christians, ought to have is really not all that common. It's not all that common. There's just a lot of hypocrisy amongst us as a people. And again I'm not judging you; I dare not judge you. But I am sharing with you the judgment of the True Witness. You see, what does He go on to say about Laodicea? We think that we're what? **Rich and increased in goods, and have need of nothing**. And we don't even know that we're what? **Wretched, poor, blind, miserable and naked. {Rev 3:17}** Why are we so self-deceived? Because we have a form of godliness. We've done a real good job of putting **whitewash on our sepulchers. {Mat 23:27}** And we're terribly impressed with how good they look. God help us. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} God help us.

Oh brother, sister, listen to this statement: **Signs of the Times, July 18, 1878 "Nominal profession of faith in Christ will not save a soul; neither will nominal observance of the law. The law of God must be obeyed from the heart; its principles must be carried out in the life; and faith in Jesus Christ as the world's Redeemer must be manifested in the life and character, or there is no true conversion."** Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} There's no true conversion. But the thing that frightens me is that so many of us have a nominal profession of faith and we have a nominal observance of the law. We only have an external, behavioral letter-of-the law compliance. And we haven't really experienced this writing of the law upon the fleshly tables of the heart... of the heart.

Oh friends, when we receive the writing of the law upon the heart, there is a totally different attitude towards the law that we will experience. You see, **the natural mind is, what? Enmity against God; it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed, what? Can be. {Rom 8:7}** And the natural man cannot possibly get excited about, or truly love, the law of God - because the carnal mind doesn't love God and **the law is simply a transcript of the character of God. {COL 305.3}** So the natural mind can't possibly love the law... it can't.

Now, the carnal mind might be able though, for the sake of, you know, maintaining a good reputation... to at least, you know, appreciate the fact that if we live in compliance with the letter of the law, we will be admired and respected... and keep it for that motivation. But that's not true obedience; that's a motivation of selfishness. That's what the scribes and Pharisees did, precisely, so that they would look good for their meticulous compliance with the letter of the law. But self was the motivation. But when we receive the law written upon our heart, what is the motivation? It is love. **2 Corinthians 5:14 and 15: "For the love of Christ constrains us, because we judge thus: that if One died for all, then all died; and He died for all, that those who live should no longer live for themselves, but for Him who died for them and rose again."** And when one is motivated by love, my dear friends, obedience, please hear me, obedience is not even thought of as a duty. It becomes a what? **A delight. {Ps 40:8}**

One of the best ways you can test yourself... as far as whether or not you have received the law written upon the fleshly tables of your heart by the Holy Spirit, is to ask yourself honestly, *"What is my attitude towards obedience to the law?"* Is it primarily duty, or is it truly delight?

Tomorrow... I am impressed to share this. Tomorrow, when you go to church, why do you do that? Is it because it's expected of you, it's your duty? And you've been doing it for so many years, and there's a lot of people who would notice if you didn't go, and wonder why you weren't there? Why will you go to church tomorrow? My dear friends, please understand that if Sabbath-keeping is a duty, you aren't keeping the Sabbath. Now Sabbath-keeping is a duty, but if it to you is a duty, you aren't really keeping the Sabbath. If you are truly keeping the Sabbath, you will delight in the Lord of the Sabbath so much that a whole 24 hours to set everything else aside just to spend with Him, is not even thought of as a duty. It's your greatest delight. It's the day that you look forward to all week long. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} You see, that's true Sabbath-keeping.

And you know what worries me so much about so many of my dear fellow Seventh-day Adventists? Hear me on this; I'm talking very plain to you. Most of us look forward more eagerly to sundown Saturday night than we do to sundown Friday night. Why? Because it's a duty... and we're kind of relieved when it's all over. And we can get back to what we really wanted to be doing for the last 24 hours, but deprived ourselves of because we couldn't go there and do that if we were going to keep the Sabbath; and so as soon as the sun goes down, out comes the popcorn, and on goes the television, or in goes the DVD. And it's Saturday night at the movies... because the carnal man has been deprived for 24 hours and he's really hungry. Is that unfair to say that kind of thing? I'm afraid it isn't, my dear friends. And please know, if that comes anywhere near your experience, you aren't keeping the Sabbath. You're not keeping the Sabbath. I don't care how technically well you comply with the letter of the law. The best letter-of-the-law Sabbath-keepers were the ones that were so anxious to get the body of the Lord of the Sabbath off the cross so they wouldn't break the Sabbath. And if you don't think that kind of hypocrisy is something we're capable of, please think again.

You see Isaiah 58 makes it very plain, very clear that if we delight ourselves in the Lord of the Sabbath... **"If you turn away your foot from the Sabbath, from doing your pleasure on my Holy day and call the Sabbath a delight, the Holy day of the Lord, honorable, and shall honor Him, not doing your own ways, nor finding your own pleasure, nor speaking your own words. Then you shall delight yourself in the Lord."** And what will He do? **"I will cause you to ride on the high hills of the earth and feed you with the heritage of Jacob your Father, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it."** {Is 58:13-14} Oh brother, sister, that's Sabbath-keeping. Do I hear an "amen"? {Amen} That's Sabbath keeping.

And by the way, please understand something crucial here. Do you know what the Sabbath is? It's a God-given 24 hour dress rehearsal. A 24 hour weekly dress rehearsal, to help His people get ready for **the millennial Sabbath**. {Rev 20:6} Did you hear what I just said there? How old is planet Earth? About 6,000 years. How long is the millennium? 1,000 years. **With God a day is a... 1000 years.** {2 Pet 3:8} Well, what does that mean the millennium is? It's the seventh thousand-year-day Sabbath. And we will all go to God's house to worship Him for... a 1,000 years. Do you see that? Now my dear friends, please remember, what did we say the other night? God won't take anyone to heaven who wouldn't be, what? happy there. You know one of the best ways to test whether or not you are really ready to go home with Jesus and worship God for a 1000-year Sabbath? It's to ask yourself regarding your attitude towards the 24-hour Sabbath. Do you hear what I'm telling you? Do you really think, follow now, think with me on this. Be really honest and candid and objective with yourself. Do you really think that if you can barely make yourself refrain from all the things you'd really rather be doing for 24 hours, and grit your teeth, and keep a 24-hour Sabbath out of a sense of duty, do you think you're going to be happy keeping a 1000-year Sabbath? Come on now, do you really? Please think again... please think again. God won't take anyone to heaven who wouldn't be happy there.

My dear friends, please understand that obedience has to be motivated by love if it's going to be a delight, amen? **"I delight to do Thy will, O my God, yea Thy law is,"** where? **...within my heart.** {Ps 40:8} When we receive the writing of the law of love upon the fleshly tables of our hearts, we actually delight in obedience. Why? Because we love God supremely and others unselfishly... and that is the fulfilling of the law. **Love is the fulfilling of the law.** {Rom 13:10} And by the way, if we are obeying for any other reason than for supreme love for God and unselfish love for others, we aren't even obeying... we aren't even obeying. I don't care how correct our behavior appears to be. We aren't obeying if our spirit isn't motivated by love. You've got to understand this, my dear friends.

And there's no joy in obedience if it's not motivated by love. And this is precisely why so many conscientious, law-keeping Seventh-day Adventists are miserably unhappy people. Because they're gritting their teeth and they're trying to force a carnal heart into a spiritual mold... and life is just a straight-jacket experience. Everything they naturally want to do, the law says, *"No, can't do that!"* And everything the law requires of them, they don't have any natural desire to do, but they are going to grit their teeth and make themselves do it, because they've got to behave well enough to get to heaven. Oh, my heart goes out to people in that kind of a lifestyle! And I feel so badly for them because I know what it's like from years of personal experience! And bless your hearts, this is why I get as passionate as I do about self-righteous, self-deception because this boy has been there... for years. Putting on a real good show... but as an unconverted man. ...and no joy whatsoever.

Those who have received the writing of the Holy Spirit on their hearts, who've truly received that new heart can honestly say with David and with Christ, **"I delight to do Your will, O my God and Your law is within my heart."** {Ps 40:8} And they will obey God's law for the love of Christ... and for the love of lost souls. **1 Peter 1:22, "Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, love one another fervently with a pure heart."** My dear friends that is obedience, amen? {Amen} That is obedience. The sealing concept here...

Please give me a few moments to touch on that with you. Scripture says in Ephesians 1:13, and we just noted that quickly in passing the other night, but I want to note it again with you, would you... turn with me there in your Bibles, since it isn't in your printout. **Ephesians 1:13 and 14: "In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise." You were what? "Sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise... who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory."**

Now there are three aspects to the sealing that I want to just briefly consider with you. First of all, we are sealed by the what? The Holy Spirit. We are sealed by the Holy Spirit. It is the tool that God uses to bring about this sealing. And as we cooperate with the Holy Spirit, we can receive and retain that lovely likeness that the Holy Spirit impresses upon our hearts and minds. And what is it that is written upon us? What does this sealing have to do with? I have a statement that I'd like to share with you. It's not printed out, but it's found in **Signs of the Times, November 1, 1899. "Those who receive 'the seal of the living God,' have the Father's name written in their foreheads."** I like that. **"Those who receive 'the seal of the living God,' have the Father's,"** what? **"name written in their foreheads."** Remember when Moses on Mount Sinai said **"I pray Thee, show me Thy glory."** {Ex 33:18} What did God say He would do? **I will proclaim My name.** And then what did He proceed to proclaim? The virtues that constitute His character. **The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abounding in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands forgiving iniquity, transgression and sin,** etc. {Ex 34:6-7} What is God's name? It is His character.

So what is this seal? It's the character of God. It's the character of God, my friends. And we have an active, cooperative role in being sealed, by learning to cooperate with the Holy Spirit and bring our

thoughts and feelings into harmony with the law of love. Thus the Father's character is written upon the fleshly tables of our hearts. And when we become, again in the words of inspiration, so **settled into the truth... {GW 84.3}**

I like this, this is found in **Maranatha, page 200. "Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads - "** and she puts an explanation in here: **"it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so that they cannot be moved..."** What does it mean to be sealed then? ...as far as our cooperative role is concerned? It means for the love of Christ to so habitually govern our hearts, our thoughts and our feelings by the Spirit of love, that we cannot be even tempted to sin against Him... in a way that we would yield to. We can be tempted; Let me correct that. We can be tempted, but we will never yield to that temptation. We will come to the place where **we would rather, what? die... than knowingly transgress God's law {COL 160.2}**, even at the level of our what? Our thoughts... even at the level of our thoughts. My dear friends, that's what it means, when it comes to our cooperative role in this sealing.

And when we have that experience, there is a third dimension of the sealing that we will receive... and that's what the angel does. **Revelation 7: 2 and 3: "And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea, Saying, 'Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the trees, till we have,' what? 'sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.'" Now, what's going on here? This is the final culmination of the sealing process that has been taking place throughout our Christian experience. When we come to the place where we are so settled into the truth that we would rather die than knowingly transgress God's law, God sends His angels to put a mark, a mark upon our foreheads.**

Listen to how inspiration describes this. This is found in **Maranatha, page 243. "What is the seal of the living God, which is placed in the foreheads of His people? It is a mark which angels, but not human eyes, can read; for the destroying angel must see this mark of redemption..."** The destroying angel what? Must see this mark. Oh, my dear friends... Do you remember once before when a **destroying angel passed over? {Ex 12:27}** And what mark was it that was seen that saved the life of the first born? It was the blood, yes. And my dear friends, we too must have a mark if the destroying angel is going to be able to pass over us in the final execution of retributive justice. Oh, please brother, sister, cooperate with the Holy Spirit in receiving this seal. It is a spiritual process, and at every step of the way for the love of Christ, we need to understand how to cooperate.

Tomorrow: we are going to focus particularly on our cooperative role. The title of tomorrow morning's study is: **"Keep Your Heart With All Diligence." {Pr 4:23}** I must focus with you on the necessity of governing the activity of the mind... by the Spirit of the law. This is where we make a transition in our seminar to a consideration of our cooperative role. So far we've been talking, pretty much, about the provisions whereby God's glory might be restored in us. And the last provision being that of the Holy Spirit, and how He works. But now we need to turn our attention upon our cooperative role with the Holy Spirit. Let's stand for closing prayer, shall we?

Father in Heaven, Spiritual things are only spiritually discerned. And for those of us who have not had a spiritual experience with You, these things may be very difficult to understand. But Father, please help us not to be discouraged. Help us rather to plead for spiritual discernment. And plead for a deeper experience in spiritual things. Help us to learn how to cooperate with the work of the Holy Spirit upon our spirit, that we might truly be changed from the inside out. Father, so many of us have been working for a long time to change ourselves from the outside in. Our Christianity has been basically a behavior modification program. But Lord I'm so thankful that You propose to change us from the inside out by heart transplanted, and by transformation by the renewing of our minds. O Lord, may we

experience this in our own personal lives. And teach us how to cooperate with You in this process as we continue in our studies. This is my prayer in Jesus' name, amen.