

All In All (Part 2)

The Process of Oneness

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On the first day of Unleavened Bread I defined what the phrase "all in all" means when Paul used it in I Corinthians 15:28. It is the end point of God's purpose and plan as revealed to our understanding. It is the time when all humans are in perfect agreement with God. They, like Jesus, are one with God. It is that time when Jesus' prayer in John 17, in which He asked the Father that *we* may be one with them as they are with each other, will be completely fulfilled.

Understanding these things gives sense to many of the "Why?" questions that arise in our minds as we live our lives through this calling. In short, our attitudes and conduct now reveal that we are not yet one with Him, and thus circumstances must be created that will educate us to this fact, and at the same time convict us to the level where we will use our free moral agency to deliberately choose to conduct our life as He says.

God is not creating robotic automatons. He is focusing on agreement in moral and spiritual areas of life without destroying our individual expressions of personality that make us somewhat different from each other. The Father and the Son are looking for loving loyalty to them, and to each of those others called to His purpose. They are looking for loving loyalty to that purpose. Agreement with this purpose requires us to make a covenant with Jesus Christ that is demonstrated at its beginning by baptism.

Hebrews 8:6-10 But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises. For if that first covenant had been faultless, then no place would have been sought for a second. Because finding fault with them, He says: "Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day when I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt; because they did not continue in My covenant, and I disregarded them, says the LORD. For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people.

The making of a covenant in turn imposes obligation that *we* must fulfill to the end, that we become one with God. Do you understand that right at the beginning? The purpose of the covenant is an arrangement that we are going to do this, God is going to do that, and the outcome is that we will be one with God.

Notice two things. The New Covenant contains better promises than the first [the Old Covenant], and that the major problem with the first covenant was with *them*. Without going into great detail, let us clarify this one thing. This involves the term "covenant" and the pronoun "them." Notice that the noun "covenant" is singular, while the pronoun "them" is plural. This then means that "them" is not modifying covenant in this sentence.

Paul makes this very clear statement here in Romans 8:3.

Romans 8:3 For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh.

The term "law" there is sometimes used by the Bible's authors to refer to the Old Covenant, and thus what Paul is saying here, when these two verses are put together—in Hebrews 8:6-10 along with Romans 8:3—is that the problem with the Old Covenant relationship was not the covenant per se; the problem was with the people.

The covenant proposed and made under the circumstances of God's purpose at that time, at Mount Sinai, was not unfair, as the people demonstrated by their conduct through time that they either could not or would not live up to the terms of the agreement. History validated what Paul wrote in Hebrews the 8th chapter. The problem with the first covenant was the people. It was not God. It was not the terms of the covenant. It was not God's purpose for that covenant. The problem was with the people. They could not, or would not, keep the terms of the covenant.

Now in what way is the New Covenant better, and its promises better? Again, without going into a great deal of detail, the features making the New Covenant better are as follows: The Old Covenant was merely a physical covenant. The New Covenant is spiritual to its core. It requires obedience to God's Word in spirit, not merely to the letter of the law. In other words, it is, in one sense, far more stringent and demanding than the first covenant was.

The Old Covenant was earthly. The New Covenant is heavenly, or spiritual. At the very foundation, making the covenant, the agreement possible, is the sacrifice of the God-Man, Jesus Christ; not merely an animal sacrifice to clear the way. This all by itself reveals the wide difference between the two, and much information in the book of Hebrews is about this very fact of the difference in the sacrifices.

The Tabernacle-Temple arrangement is again under the Old Covenant. The Tabernacle-Temple arrangement and the priestly services of the Old Covenant made very clear that despite the covenant, the Old Covenant worshipper had no access to God. He was not even allowed in the Tabernacle or in the Temple even though he had made the covenant with God. He was kept at arm's length.

When Israel was still in the wilderness and Israel set up camp, and the Tabernacle was erected, God made sure that the nearest dwelling to the Tabernacle was a Sabbath day's journey away. It was a pretty good hike just to get to the building. All of this was designed by God, thinking of the New Testament, the New Covenant, when we have what? Under the New Covenant, we have direct access to God. We are not kept out of the building. We are invited right into His home, into His very presence. It is not done on the basis of any righteousness in us. It is done on the basis of Jesus Christ's sacrifice, and His righteousness being imputed to us.

Another thing. God promises to write His laws on our heart and minds under the New Covenant. Under the Old Covenant, no Holy Spirit was promised. Under the New Covenant, the Father and Son dwell right in us. I do not know whether you are getting the picture, brethren, but God is backing you and me right into a corner. Under the Old Covenant, their promised land and death were at its end. Under the New Covenant the end is everlasting life in the Kingdom of God.

None of these differences is ever listed in any one place in either the Old Testament or the New Testament, but they are named nonetheless within the narrative that the apostles, and Jesus too, left for us to read and understand.

Adding this all up, brethren, is the undeniable fact that God has so sweetened the benefits for the very purpose of tilting things in our favor that He has taken away any excuse for us not to fulfill our part of this agreement. Whatever could not or would not have existed under the Old Covenant has been wiped away. Brethren, we have no excuse for failure. Let that sink in.

God has provided *everything* that is needed, so if we fail, we cannot ever come back to God and say, "You let me down." Not in the least. We can make it. That is the wonderful thing. It can be done. Any one of God's spiritual children can make it. That ought to be encouraging. He is so concerned that He takes up dwelling in us and allows us right into His presence should we need help at any time, at any place in our life, in our relationship with Him.

We should be able to see that by means of taking instruction and leadership from our Head, Jesus Christ, it is now the church's responsibility to glorify God the Father on earth as the Son did. Now how is this accomplished? How do we glorify God? Well, in the same way that Jesus did, primarily by completing the work which the Father has given us through the Son, and this is to become one with them through the power of the Holy Spirit given us. Christ glorified the Father by successfully completing the work the Father gave Him to do, and so do we. We complete the work God has given us to do. That is what Christ did, and that is what we need to do.

John 15:8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

Jesus thus qualified to be our Savior, our Redeemer, and our High Priest, and along the way of doing those things He preached the Gospel of the Kingdom of God. Now our responsibility to God is to yield to Him, to be obedient, grow and overcome, and produce the fruits of His spirit. By these He will be glorified as we yield to become one with Him.

Let us go back to where we began this sermon. Turn to I Corinthians 15:28, and we will read these verses as a reminder.

I Corinthians 15:28 Now when all things are made subject to Him [the Father], then the Son Himself will also be subject to Him who put all things under Him, that God may be all in all.

I am going to call upon one other scripture, and it is in Philippians 3:21. We used this in the previous sermon on the first Holy Day. You will recognize it immediately.

Philippians 3:21 Who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the working by which He is able even to subdue all things to Himself.

My concern in these two verses is the word "subdue" or "subject." The *King James Version* may use "subdue" rather than "subject." Some of the modern translations use "subject," but I want you to know that the reality is that "subdue," "subject," and "under" are all derived from exactly the same

Greek word *hupotasso*. Zodhiates says *hupotasso* means "to place in order; to place under in an orderly fashion." It is good to remember this, but this is what Jesus' job is. He is placing things *under* the Father in an orderly fashion.

The word-picture that can be formed from this word *hupotasso* is an object scattered about in confusion, being arranged neatly according to a pattern; however, in terms of the context of this sermon, and actually the context where the verses are found, the primary thought of the object is not merely things, but is people. They are living beings, and the people are in a confused disorder and scattered as a result of the deceitful attack of the demonic principalities and powers, as well as the peoples' own disobedience and sometimes even rebellious choices.

This is a result of the exercise of their free moral agency in mismanaging their lives, and so the picture is of everything being in disorder and confusion, and here is Jesus, moving things around, here, there, and everywhere, and as time goes by, a shape, an order, a system begins to be seen in which everything is put in an organized position.

These verses are describing the continuing work of Jesus as High Priest in a broad generality, and His job is to bring us into one, arranged in order, under the Father, and of course Himself as well.

I want you to recall something that Jesus said earlier. We will touch on this just very briefly. He said this in John 14:1-4. You will recognize it immediately.

John 14:1-2 "Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you.

There is a place for you under the Father and under the Son, and you, brethren, are being arranged to fill that place.

John 14:3-4 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know."

So there we are. Let us add to that the thought in Philippians 3:21, which is that the rearranging, the subduing, in order to bring into oneness goes so far as to include a change of bodies conformed to be like the One doing the subduing. He shall transform our vile bodies so that even the body—the very life—is one with His.

I want you to turn now to Philippians 4:1 as we begin to put the pieces into this picture we are seeing that brings us to one, so that God can be "all in all," and we are part of that "all in all."

Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

We are going to put what Paul says in Philippians 4:1 together with the verses, and almost the whole chapter 3 that preceded Philippians 4:1; but first let me tell you a little bit more about chapter 4, verse 1.

This word-picture of Philippians 4:1 that Paul uses here is as though we are standing at a crossroad, and we have the ability to look back at where we have come from, as well as where we are right now, and where we are going. So the one direction is looking back toward the starting point from which we began the journey toward oneness with God. The oneness with God is way in the future yet, we think. We can look in both directions, but we are looking back right now where the journey to oneness with God began, and of course the other is our new homeland—an eternity in the Kingdom of God.

Let us go back into Philippians 3:3, and we are going to kind of hop, skip, and jump through some of the principles that are there that lead up to chapter 4, and verse 1.

Philippians 3:3 For we are the circumcision, who worship God in the Spirit, rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh,

So we—fellow members of the church of God, the converted—are those who are *spiritually* circumcised, and the orientation of our life has changed from earthly to heavenly. We have made the turn once that spiritual circumcision of the heart takes place. Our journey then turns in a different direction from what it was before. In this picture we are the circumcision. We have made the turn, and we are heading now toward the Kingdom of God. We are now to seek those things which are above, so Paul makes a quick comparison for us so that we can quickly comprehend the relative value of the new orientation.

Drop down now to verses 7 and 8.

Philippians 3:7-8 But what things were gain to me, these I have counted loss for Christ. Yet indeed I also count all things loss for the excellence of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count them as rubbish, that I may gain Christ.

Here Paul is looking at himself. He is assuring all of us who have made this turn, who have been circumcised in the heart, who have begun to catch the vision. We may have done some of the same things the apostle Paul did, maybe not to the degree he did, but we have made some of the same choices, and though we may have had great earthly powers, position, and wealth, all of that is merely rubbish compared to what lies ahead.

Philippians 3:10-11 That I may know Him and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death, if, by any means, I may attain to the resurrection from the dead.

This is what lies ahead. Christ is already resurrected, but if we are going to be one with Him, we are going to have to be resurrected as well. So there are two things that are at work here, and the most obvious is the resurrection from the dead into the Kingdom of God. That is something very, very much worth exercising our free moral agency to attain.

The second one is also important because it has a more important present-tense application. Brethren, it is important to know that as things are being arranged under Jesus Christ and the Father, we cannot get the cart before the horse. Things have to be done in order. This is important, because we must live in the present, preparing for the future. Therefore, this resurrection of which Paul talks can also be

understood as rising from a watery grave of baptism in order that we might come to know Christ in a very intimate detailed way.

Remember, He is the pattern, and this shaping of the image of Jesus Christ in us has to be lived day by day. So when we come up out of the water of baptism, we then turn our attention to heavenly things and begin to yield to God so that we come into that shape.

You might remember the verse in John 17:3 where Jesus made this statement. He said, "This is eternal life, that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent." This is what we do with our life following our resurrection from the watery grave. It is important that we always keep in mind where the goal is.

Our goal, simply stated, is to come to know the Father and the Son, in truth, as they are. This knowledge of them is intimate experiential knowledge. It is not mere book-learning. It is something that comes as a result of the interaction of a relationship between the Father and the Son and us. It is something that has to be experienced. This is a major step to becoming formed to their image, and as one step followed another, our efforts therefore to glorify God and to produce fruit and be changed are all linked together in a continuing process. It is because of this that Paul makes the statements in Philippians 3:12-14. Notice this string of statements.

Philippians 3:12 Not that I have already attained, or am already perfected; but I press on, that I may lay hold of that for which Christ Jesus has also laid hold of me.

Boy! That is comforting that Christ has hold of us. It is as though He is guiding us by the hand. He is that close, as it were. And so we find there that Paul is acknowledging that he knew that he was not yet perfected, and neither are we.

Philippians 3:13-14 Brethren, I do not count myself to have apprehended; but one thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind and reaching forward to those things which are ahead [that reinforces what he said in verse 12], I press toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.

You can get a very clear picture from Paul that he was not satisfied with the way he was at the time he wrote this letter. I do not think he was ever satisfied at all, and so he kept pushing forward.

We are going to jump to verse 17 because he makes another significant statement there. He appeals to you and me. He appeals to the people to whom he originally wrote this letter.

Philippians 3:17 Brethren, join in following my example, and note those who so walk, as you have us for a pattern.

Paul urges people to have the same mind toward the attainment of the knowledge of Jesus Christ, and to keep adding to what we know, building on it and conforming to His image in our conduct.

It is then in verse 1 of chapter 4 that he urges us brethren to not let ourselves slip.

Philippians 4:1 Therefore, my beloved and longed-for brethren, my joy and crown, so stand fast in the Lord, beloved.

"Stand fast." That is where we are in the present. He is saying, "Do not slip backward. Turn yourself toward the Kingdom of God and keep on going."

Let us clarify something here, because there is a great question out there in the world that is beaten to death, and we may as well go on to a little bit of explanation to that, which is this. Not one ounce of the effort that Paul put forth, or not one ounce of the effort that *we* might put forth, will earn him or us salvation. Works have an entirely different purpose to them.

I do not know about us yet, but Paul certainly left a record that what he did he did with great zeal and energy, and he did it because he loved God and wanted to do everything possible that he *could* do to make God look good and to please Him. Paul knew, and he knew that he knew what he was, and he virtually said that he was the greatest of sinners, and this pressing on, brethren, was his way of showing his appreciation. He just burned himself out to do all he could to show his appreciation to God, and he would sacrifice it all if it would bring God glory.

Let us for just a minute or two here look forward down the road a bit further and see a little bit more completely what lies ahead. We are going to go to I John 3:1-2.

I John 3:1-2 Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be [we are still being arranged in order under God], but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

There is a little bit that we *do* know. We already saw that we are considered by Him to be part of the same organism as Christ, who is God. We are part of His body. We fill out His body. We are to have bodies conformed to His glorious body [Philippians 3:21 and these verses right here], and we are therefore going to be like Him.

Now if God is going to be "all in all," there is only one thing that we can possibly be. We, too, will be of the God kind if we are going to be one with Him. The angels are not one with Him in that way. We *will* be though. We are His children. We are His offspring. No woman yet has given birth to a dog, if you get my point. Humans give birth to humans. God is going to give birth to those who are in His image, and they too will be God.

We will not have the same authority. Remember, we are being arranged *under*, so we will not have the same authority; however, there remains yet one fly in the ointment, and that is, we are not there yet. Our job in the flesh is not done. The image of Jesus Christ is yet to be finished in us. But even that is not too bad, because we are not ready yet to inherit eternal life. It would be a burden for us to have everlasting life encompassed with what we are at the present. So there still remains much overcoming to be done. We might wonder, "How will this be done?" Well, in one way the answer is simple. We can look back on Israel, because God has given us a pattern there. God has this all figured out, and that is why the pattern exists.

Who raised up Moses and Aaron? Who brought the plagues on Egypt? Who got Israel out of Egypt? Who divided the Red Sea? Who supplied the manna and the water? Who divided the Jordan? Who brought down the walls of Jericho? But will He do the same kind of providing for us? You see, the

answer is obvious. It is God who is doing the creative part. We play a small part in this, but it is He who brings things to pass, not us. So regarding sanctification, let us understand a factor that is critical to our salvation by balancing a scripture or two important to our life during this period.

Let us go to Philippians 4. We are going to see a verse here that is very generalized, but is nonetheless a spiritual truth.

Philippians 4:19 And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.

Let us go now to Philippians 2:12—a very well-known scripture.

Philippians 2:12 Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling.

We must cooperate with God, but it is God who saves. God saved Israel from Egyptian slavery. Jesus Christ is our Savior. We cannot save ourselves from the penalty of death, nor can we overcome and produce fruit without Him. Recall that He said, "Without Me you can do nothing" [John 15:5]. Nevertheless, when we accept Jesus Christ as Savior and enter into this covenant, it obligates us to obey Him.

Do you know how God legally severed the covenant with Israel? It was very simple. They were not upholding their part of the covenant. That is why all that history is given so we can see that when He divorced Israel, when He broke away from the covenant, Israel had done that long, long before that, so He was completely, totally justified in what He did. He divorced Israel. He puts it into the framework of a marriage that had gone bad. That is what a marriage is. It is a covenant, an agreement to accomplish something.

When we made the covenant, it obligated us to obey Him, and if we do not fulfill our part in the covenant, then He can divorce Himself, as if were, from us. But we do not want that to occur at all. Not at all. Through Christ's death He purchased us as His slave. We may not recognize this, but in this case slavery is good. It does not matter what we feel about it, this is a fact. This same slavery is beneficial to us.

Another very simple illustration from Israel: When God broke the power of Egypt to enable Israel to be free, if Israel wanted to be free, it obligated them to do what? To walk out of Egypt. When God parted the Red Sea as Pharaoh was about to attack, what were Israel's choices? They could either stand there and let the Egyptians kill them or capture them and take them back to their slavery, or they could walk through the parted waters behind Moses.

When God said, "I'm going to bring you into the land and provide for you along the way," what were Israel's choices? If Israel wanted the things God offered, then it obligated them to do what? To submit to Him and walk all the way to the Promised Land.

"Walk" is a word indicating movement toward the reaching of a certain goal. It is one of the Bible's major metaphors for actively, practically and literally living the Christian way. It is being subject to

the authority of our Lord and Savior, following Him in order to reach the same goal He is leading us toward oneness with the Father and the Son. So remember that the goal is oneness with God in order that He will be "all and in all."

When Philippians 2:12 says to "work out your own salvation," it cannot possibly mean we are going to save ourselves, because there are so many other verses that firmly tell us that works cannot save us. Let us learn a lesson on this from the Israelite situation in Egypt and in the wilderness.

Israel suffered the first three plagues right along with the Egyptians, and beginning with Plague 4, Israel was spared. Now did they save or deliver themselves from those situations? It was God who spared them. At the Red Sea, did they save themselves? No. Once again, all they did was follow directions. God saved. Israel cooperated. By doing what? By doing what God obligated them to do.

In the wilderness, who saved their lives by providing manna and water? Israel cooperated as coworkers with Him by following directions, but it was God who delivered them from each and every occasion. This is beginning to become so clear.

Now brethren, this is important. Each time He delivered them, their salvation though became broader, deeper, and more significant as He drew them closer and closer to Him and the goal He had in mind, which was oneness with Him.

In Philippians 2:12 he is not saying we must work *for* salvation, but rather he is saying "Carry salvation already given out to its conclusion." The phrase "work out" in this verse is used in the same sense as when a student is told in school to work out a problem in arithmetic. What happens in a case like that? The teacher has already instructed. She has already given the direction, and if the student is going to work it out, all he has to do is follow the direction. Simple, isn't it? What are Jesus' followers called? Disciples. Disciple means a student.

Let us continue. When he says "work out your salvation," he is saying, "Do it to its conclusion." If a problem is not brought to its conclusion, it is not worked out, and the conclusion for us is to work out to Christ's likeness to oneness with the Father and the Son. Now to make it very plain, if we want to be one with Him, we had better get moving in the direction to which He is pointing.

Let us add something else. It is another little thing, but they all point in the same direction. Recall the definition of "Torah" that I gave to you in the first sermon [#929] on this. Its root is *yarah*, and *yarah* means "to point out." Torah is instruction. It is a guide given from above that points to a successful conclusion of a problem. It contains and is pointing to God's standard of behavior. So each person's walk is generally the same, but not specifically the same, because each person's experiences and makeup is somewhat different, but there is enough similarity to make the Bible always relevant.

One of the elements that is beautiful is that because God is on His throne, directing all of this, each person's walk is exactly right for him, because, remember, He is creating this person for a place He has in His Kingdom for that person. Each person's walk is exactly right for him, and lo and behold, Philippians 2:13 says that God provides each person with the will and the power and the energy to meet that. Verse 13 says, "For it is God who works in you both to will and to do, for His good pleasure." His good pleasure is that we be one with Him in the Kingdom of God, under Him, under His Son.

This leads to something. Once in a while the ministry hears that the ministry really has it easy. Do you understand that this is an accusation against God? It is an accusation because it is claiming God is unfair, that He treats people who are ministers favorably. No, He does not.

Jesus Himself said everybody is judged according to what he has been given, and if a minister has been given more, his judgment is much more difficult. No, the ministry does not have it easy. It is every bit as hard as yours, and yours is every bit as hard as the ministry's. It depends on the gift given, and it depends on what we are doing with the gift given. So do not allow Satan to twist your thinking into thinking somebody is getting favored treatment from God. God always judges absolutely fairly. He knows how to penalize, and He knows how to correct. He knows how to punish, and He will do it. He does not allow things like that to slip away from Him because it is too important.

There is another aspect of His providence, that we would never be one without Him. Jesus Christ Himself produces in us both the desire to live righteously, the will, and the effective energy to do so.

Now there is an interesting little thing that we would probably need to touch on. Not a lot of expounding, but in I Corinthians 10:13 it says, "No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it."

There it is. God judges everybody absolutely fairly. He is right on spot all the time.

Now, could Israel walk? Certainly. But they refused to walk in the way God led them. In the same manner we can do what He requires of us in our walk, but let us not follow their example. Even as their walk was difficult at times, and wearying, so is ours, but it can be done, and God promises He will supply. Philippians 4:19, along with Philippians 2:13, makes absolutely certain of that.

We are going to go to II Corinthians 6. Look how clear Paul makes it.

II Corinthians 6:1-2 We then, as workers together with Him also plead with you not to receive the grace of God in vain. For He says: "In an acceptable time I have heard you, and in the day of salvation I have helped you."

That is very clear. Now we are going to go from here to Ephesians 4 to add a little bit more to this.

Ephesians 4:1-3 I, therefore, the prisoner of the Lord, beseech you to walk worthy of the calling with which you were called, with all lowliness and gentleness, with longsuffering, bearing with one another in love, endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

Brethren, the world, the flesh, and the Devil are not pushovers by any means, but our calling is now our life's work, and it is a serious responsibility. This is why Paul said in Philippians 2:12 that it is to be approached "with fear and trembling." This means that it is a serious responsibility, and is to be approached with deep respect because the end result is so powerfully great and awesome, and it can be done.

We have another assurance, just another little verse that helps us to understand that God is serious when He says that He will never leave nor forsake us. Philippians 1:6 says the following:

Philippians 1:6 Being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.

It can be accomplished because God, through Jesus Christ, is working in us, and this is God's guarantee that He will always be there to do His part. So in Philippians 2:12 we see then that there is a cooperative effort between God and us within the framework of this covenant. In verse 13 we see God's promise of enablement, but we are going to add even more to this.

I said early in that first sermon on the last Holy Day that this was mostly a sermon on God's providence. That is one of the things we worry about. "Is God really with me?" Well, He says He is. So whom are we going to believe? Is our faith going to be bucked up because of the promises that He gives to us?

We are going to go back into the book of John again. I am trying to link these principles together so that we will be encouraged that it can be done, and that we will come out of sin, and that we will be one with Jesus Christ to a degree that is satisfying and acceptable to them.

John 14:4-6 And where I go you know, and the way you know." Thomas said to Him, "Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" Jesus said to him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 14:9-10 Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works.

Nobody comes to oneness with the Father except through Jesus Christ. He is the Head of the church. It is His responsibility as our High Priest and Mediator of the New Covenant. It has become His responsibility under the Father to *be* the craftsman, as it were, that finishes us so that we will be one with the Father and the Son.

Jesus' relationship with the Father was to some degree similar to ours. In the one sense, a physical one, is that Jesus was just a Man possessing many of humanity's weaknesses. Notice how Jesus indicated this. Jesus said the Father did the works that men saw in and through Him. He is saying that, simply as a human being, He had no special powers on His own. When those miracles were done, He was responding to the inspiration of the Father, and then He asked the Father to do what He did, and the Father then was the One who actually worked the miracle, not Jesus Christ humanly.

In like manner we are just human, but the Father is willing to work in and through us by means of Jesus Christ so that we can carry out the responsibility of becoming one with them. This working together with God is seen in a simple illustration that is drawn from physical areas of life. Now maybe this is overly simple, but it is a truth.

We may launch a sailboat upon the water, but it takes the wind God supplies to make it move. You put the boat in the water, and it is going nowhere unless something God supplies, apart from the boat, moves it. Whether it is a tide, or the wind, it is something God does that moves the boat, and that is what we are looking for.

We may plant seeds, but it is the growing power God supplies that brings forth the tree and the fruit. We may start our automobiles, but it is electrical power which was there before cars were invented that makes movement possible. In each case, though, we add something to what God has already provided. In our case it is ourselves, and our submission to Him, and then He does the work which we could not possibly do on our own. He does the work because He is in agreement with what we are attempting to do, and what we have asked Him to do through us. Were He not there, we would do nothing, just like the boat that has no wind for its sails.

In like manner, our salvation is something already given through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ. This is why, if you look at a variety of places in the New Testament, you will see salvation stated by Paul is in the past, in the present, and in the future, and Paul wrote it the way he felt fit the context. All three of them are correct, but the context demanded past, present, or future. They are all correct. They are all right and true. It is just what the context demands.

When Jesus Christ was sacrificed and resurrected, the salvation of those who believed in Him was already assured—if they would cooperate within the framework of the covenant. So you see, we are adding something to what God already has available for us, and then God does the work in and through it.

Here is something that needs to be thought of. We must do something practical toward God's end by applying ourselves to salvation's demand. But even in doing this, God enables this effort too. We are never going to know where the dividing line is between what God supplies and what we are responsible for supplying, because it is going to be different for each person involved according to God's purpose.

Understand that not very often are we going to know exactly where the dividing line is between what we do and what God does. If we come to understand this properly, it *must* be different, because each person is different, and God is preparing us for different responsibilities within His family Kingdom. One thing that *will* be consistent is that it will always be difficult enough that we must draw on our faith and serve in a way that is challenging and that builds.

But even here the analogy of Israel in the wilderness comes to our aid, because from whence did Israel get the energy to walk across the wilderness to the Promised Land? Well, it came from the manna and the water that God provided. In addition, He also provided them with the incentive of vision and motivation of a hope of inheriting the Promised Land, but Israel still had to walk.

Interestingly, where Paul said "Work out your own salvation," the verb in that tense indicates a continuous working. In other words, that responsibility is always there.

Even as Israel did not remove from Egypt and arrive in the Promised Land in one stroke, neither is our oneness with God accomplished with one stroke. It is a process of growth, and it is now our life's work.

What is the purpose of all of this work? Well, it most certainly is not to earn salvation. So let us go back in thought to the student working out that mathematical problem. What is the student gaining from that exercise? One thing he gains is a measure of reward. He receives a grade, and that is something of a reward for his labor, but the real purpose behind the working out of one's salvation, or doing school work, is that both are preparation for the future.

The school work is intended to prepare the student for citizenship in the American culture. Israel's journey through the wilderness was intended by God to prepare Israel for living in the Promised Land. Our labors under our teacher Jesus Christ are preparing us for the Kingdom of God. It is not salvation we are earning. It is exercise in doing the will of God that in turn rewards us by being prepared to be in the Kingdom of God. That work is preparation.

Our pilgrimage to the Kingdom of God is experiential in nature. A disciple is a student learning God's way of life by following His way of life. The disciple builds character by living that way in real time. He witnesses for God by his example, and has God's laws written on his heart and mind. He shows his loyalty to God all at one and the same time. No, brethren, works are required by God for preparation, not salvation. Christ's sacrifice provides the salvation aspect.

Let us look at another very wonderful, confirming, encouraging promise from God in Hebrews 13.

Hebrews 13:5-6 Let your conduct be without covetousness; be content with such things as you have. For He Himself has said, "I will never leave you nor forsake you." So we may boldly say: "The LORD is my helper; I will not fear. What can man do to me?"

Thinking about Israel spending forty years in the wilderness might be intimidating, but Evelyn and I have now been active in the church for almost 50 years. I want you to realize that fifty years has passed like the blink of an eye.

There is so much encouragement garnered through the story of Israel's journey as they prepared for the Promised Land. For example, at no time did the cloud or the pillar of fire ever leave Israel. It was always there. The manna was on the ground, and wherever else it was, every morning. God did that, first of all to supply them with food, but most of all for us as an example of His faithfulness in providing for us every day. He is there.

God is not a negligent parent. He knows what is going on with His children, and He knows how important the creation that He has going on in their lives is to Him, and He does not fail, although some can be so hard-headed that He has no recourse but to use His judgment [in saying] "I cannot help this person the way he is."

Let us expand on something here that is so awesome that it is beyond me, and I cannot describe it. I can see a little bit of it, and that has to do with what God is preparing us for.

Isaiah 57:15 For thus says the High and Lofty One Who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place with him who has a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

God inhabits eternity, and this brethren, is our destination. He is drawing us to where *we* will inhabit eternity *with* Him. Time will no longer have the same meaning to you and me then as it does now.

Time is important to us because we know that we are going to die. Time is important because we know that we only have so much time that is given to us to accomplish the things that we need or we feel we need to do in our life. God is not encumbered by that. He is completely, totally free of any kind of thought that time will ever, ever, ever run out.

God is drawing us to a life that is endless in terms of learning, of accomplishment, of doing good, of fulfilling all kinds of responsibilities—all of which will be done in an attitude and a thought of love behind it, adding to the family's glory and honor, and of course all of it pointing back up to God.

Now God does understand this because He lives within it, but we somehow or another have to work a little bit to get some of the weighty importance because of the awesome intended result of what God is drawing us toward.

Please understand this: God is not like a man at all. He does not grow weary and bored and then abandon the project, seeking to do something new. We are a major part in many ways of His most significant and meaningful creation, and the cooperative effort of preparing His children to live and work with Him for eternity is of vast importance, challenging, exciting, and fulfilling to Him. Our part should be that way to us as well, that we are working with this Creator.

Let us go from here to John 14 and maybe this will add some weight to what Jesus said in this last opportunity He had to speak to His disciples in this intimate way.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

The notion here is two-fold. The first step is for us to clarify our responsibility. Jesus is saying that if we love Him, we must give Him evidence by keeping His Word. The second part of what Jesus says is that the Father and the Son will dwell in us, making us their home. He is describing a very close relationship of partners in this common creation, and He is saying this will produce a unity, a budding oneness. The sense is very similar to the citizenship concept in Philippians 3:21, where we are all living in the same general area, governed and living the same way of life.

Jesus' statement here is a response to Judas' (not Iscariot) important question asked in John 14:22. Judas' question was, "How would Jesus manifest Himself to the disciples?" The answer to this is found scattered throughout the three chapters following this Passover observance in chapter 13, but the overall answer is given in John 14, verses 16, 17, 23, and 26. I will read them.

John 14:16-17 And I will pray the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may abide with you forever—the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him; but you know Him, for He dwells with you and will be in you.

John 14:23 Jesus answered and said to him, "If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.

John 14:26 But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.

So the overall answer to Judas' (not Iscariot) question is in the giving of God's Holy Spirit. "Spirit" is not a third person of a non-existent trinity, but is the essence of the mind of the Father and the Son. The Father and the Son are already one in heart and mind. They already share a oneness with each other, and so there is no conflict whatever between them. They already think the same way. They have the same attitudes, all driven by love. They have the same perspectives, the standards of conduct, the same goals and plans in which harmony, not competition with each other, is the driving force.

Jesus is saying, "By My spirit I will educate and guide you, convict you of sin, lead you to repentance, impart assurance of salvation, bestow gifts, admonish, and comfort." All this is done to intensify our unity with the Kingdom of God. It is by this means we become one with the Father.

Brethren, if you are beginning to understand, we are already on track. We are already one with them to a limited degree. It is because of this we can then fill out the body of which Jesus Christ is the Head. The human body does not have dog parts in it. We are already spiritually one with the Father and the Son. Does that interest you? If we were not one with them, we would not be part of His body. This is exciting! But there is a long way to go yet. We are a mere shadow of their oneness, but we are already on track.

I will give you a scripture that is good to study into. It is in Colossians 3:1-2. Maybe it will give you a sense of what Paul wrote there where he said because of what we are going through, it is our responsibility to look heavenward; you see, spiritually.

Colossians 3:1-2 If then you were raised with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ is, sitting at the right hand of God. Set your mind on things above, not on things on the earth.

And then in verses 5 through 17 he tells us things that we must do. We take off the old. We put on the new. As we take off the old, we are throwing off the effects of our sojourn in the world under Satan. As we put on the new, we are putting on a part of Jesus Christ and becoming more at one.

I am going to give some final instruction just to help us along the way so that we have some direction. We are going to finish with Colossians 3, verses 12 through 17. It is so beautifully and clearly said here. These are our marching orders.

Colossians 3:12-17 Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection. And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to which also you were called in one body; and be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

These are things which will bring us, as we prepare for the Kingdom of God, into oneness with Him and with each other. This done, or doing, will complete what the Days of Unleavened Bread portray to us.