

Household Meeting
North Richland Hills, TX, USA
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August 12, 2017

I want to start in James the third chapter, in terms of Scripture, if I can find him, it's a small book, let's begin in James 3:13. You might say, "A fella that's been doing this as long as he has oughta know where everything is," and the answer is: I did at some time or other in the past I knew where that passage was, it's just no longer a part of what I can remember. So anyway, James 3:13, "Who among you is wise and understanding? Let him show it by his good behavior, his deeds and the gentleness of his deeds and the gentleness of wisdom but," and here's the focal passage, "but if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart don't be arrogant and so lie against the truth. This wisdom is not that which comes down from above but is earthly and natural and demonic, for where jealousy and selfish ambition exist there is disorder and every evil thing." The Greek word that's translated "disorder" here interestingly enough is "chaos", wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition there is chaos and everything evil thing. Now another way of saying that is, wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition there is chaos and everything evil thing. So I'm gonna try to say it another way I'm gonna say it like this, "wherever there is jealousy and selfish ambition there is chaos and everything evil thing." For those of you who don't know me, who haven't seen that device before, when I know people are struggling to try to make this say something other than what it's saying, I'll repeat it.

We don't like the idea that us having our way generates chaos, we don't like that very much but in a whole lot of the instances in which we live our lives we want to have our way and in the moment the way that we want to have is not God's way and that generates chaos. To the ancient Greeks chaos was actually a god, a thing with a personality, an entity that had a personality called Chaos because the Greeks observed life and it just didn't make very much sense so they figured there was a god named Chaos that was in charge of life, day-to-day life some of them at least had that thought. Chaos though, is a result.

Now for a moment we'll back off that and not be too dogmatic about it and recognize that when things were gettin' cranked up, it says in Genesis 1:1, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth," and then the next verse goes on to and says, "and darkness reigned over the face of the deep," and everything was turbulent, the Hebrew term there is "tohu wa-bohu" meaning "darkness and chaos". But God didn't create darkness and chaos, darkness and chaos were the conditions that existed because God had not yet created light and order, darkness is simply the absence of light, it's not an entity unto itself, it's the absence of light; chaos is not an entity unto itself, it's the absence of order. OK? Chaos doesn't have an existence, per say, it is simply a term we use to express an observation that something is not "in" order. So where we have selfish ambition - among other things - we have disorder, things are disorderly where we have selfish ambition, selfish ambition is a particular way of translating it, some of you are looking at different translations it might not even say for some of them - I know it doesn't - selfish ambition. Judy, you're looking at the ESV right? It says selfish ambition there, some of them do, some of them don't, it's a questionable translation. The chaos part though is the same, nearly everybody talks about disorder at that point there is disorder, that's the one that's used here, I'm in the American Standard, confusion, those are all conditions that exist when there isn't order. They're not conditions unto themselves, they simply are because order isn't there. You see God didn't have to create disorder, the creation was waiting for Him to create order and when it didn't have order yet the default state was disorder; when He hadn't created light yet, the default state was darkness; when He hadn't announced sonship yet, the default state was orphanhood. It's not that He created those things, it's that in the absence of the thing He's creating those conditions existed.

Last night we got into some things that I'm really gonna kind of repeat today, not so much just for the benefit of those who weren't here last night but because those who heard it last night in some cases need to hear some more about it and part of the reason they need to hear some more about it in some cases is because they can't make themselves agree with it because they got 30 or 40 or 50 years of junk theology in their noggin' tryin' to receive truth and junk theology doesn't do very well with truth, it's always an argument. Now I don't want to be mean and cruel but we have a long, long history of very superficial interpretation of Scripture becoming influential in the Body of Christ and really in a way that's kind of reasonable. In any kind of human endeavor what you try to do is find a way that works for everybody and that will normally be the easiest, least challenging way. If you have a whole bunch of people who really don't believe in the Lord anyway and they're in charge of theology they're gonna find stuff that's real easy to handle, it doesn't require anything of anyone. It is therefore not going to bring order but it will bring some kind of peace of mind in the short run, until they bump into something and then all of a sudden it no longer brings order, it no longer brings peace because it can't handle the challenge that people run into.

Not too many years ago there was a book written, the title of which was "Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People", now there were many books of that genre, that just happens to be the title I like best for that type of book, "Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People". And men have for a long time - really forever, probably - been searching for the answer as to why bad things happen to them and to other people. Why do bad things happen? In the circles of believers, in the world actually people kinda are ok with the fact that bad things happen because they do em' themselves anyway, "Of course bad things happen, I do them," type of a thing. But in circles of believers in God, believers in the Lord himself, believers in the Christ the question remains because we can't understand why somebody who is a godly person, by in large a goodly person, whatever definitional requirements they might meet, why would anything bad ever happen to them because the proposition made for the most part in Christianity has been, "If you do the right thing God's gonna take care of ya'." And the implication is nothing bad will happen to ya' as long as you keep your nose clean. We know by observation that that isn't true though we continue to perpetuate it because it's too complicated to think about something beyond that fairly simple idea. I started to say it's a "simple truth" but it's not a truth.

So what I'm looking at, what I'm sharing with you now is an understanding that goes beyond what we have traditionally known and actually will uproot parts of what we have known traditionally about evil. In that process then we learn more about God himself and it goes something like this, for 1500 years the conclusion was reached about that long ago, theologians who have controlled thought in most of Christianity concluded that God because He omnipotent He simply controls every instance of everybody life. If He controls everything and a bad thing happens to somebody then God did it, we don't like for God to do bad things and so we make up really weird, convoluted theological reasons as to why it was good for us that God had somebody come along and cut our ear off. Good may come of it eventually but God didn't send somebody to cut your ear off, that's the problem we have because if He's omnipotent He must have sent them but the fact that He's omnipotent does not mean that He controls everything. There's the piece that's gonna be hard for us.

If He could control everything, why doesn't He control everything? I guess that's a fair question. If God can control everything why doesn't He simply control everything? If He did that and if He is good and if love is His main characteristic then nothing bad would ever happen to me or anybody I love and that's kinda the way we think. So He must be bad because occasionally bad things happen to me and to people I love, so God must be bad but I don't want Him to be bad so I make up a weird story about how it was good that a bad thing happened. Scripture says somewhere that "all things work together for good to those who love the Lord and are called according to His purposes" and we make that into a motivation for

God. It's not a motivation, when bad things happen to you and you're a son of God and you're called according to His purposes He can use the consequences of the bad thing to bless you, to mature you but He didn't make the bad thing happen. But our theology requires Him to make the bad thing happen, so He is both completely good and evil at the same time, the way most people think and He's not, He's not evil at all. His main personality characteristic is love, plain and simple, there is not anything in His personality that is more important than love. In fact Scripture even says, "God is love," John says that in I think the book of I John, "God is love." There are only two places where such a simple declaration about God is made: "God is love," John said and Jesus said, "God is Spirit". Everything else is more conditional and more complex.

God is love, that's His first primary characteristic; love doesn't make [an] evil thing happen. Now my daughters occasionally when they needed some sort of discipline and I administered it they thought that was evil, "Dad can't possibly love me because he's punishing me," or "I know my daddy loves me but he's evil because he's punishing me. So both good things and bad things come from my daddy's hand." If they admitted the truth it would be they didn't get punished as much as they probably needed to but they probably got more than a lot of people's kids do. We're probably somewhere in that range of too much versus too little by way of discipline.

But the proposition that I'm working with right now is that if God controls everything then He gives you no right to make a decision, you don't have a right to make a decision if God is gonna control everything. He has the power to control everything but He gives you the right to make decisions so you can exercise your will, we call it "free will", in fact some of our Christian traditions are really big on "free will", it's a big deal to em'. "I have free will," and what they seem to mean theologically is "so I can choose to be a Christian" that's the implication of my having free will. But the fact of the matter is I have the same free will to choose to not be a Christian, today I have the free will to choose to reject our Father and the work that He did in the Christ, everyday I have the free will to reject that truth. I can say it's not a truth, it doesn't change whether it's true or not but I can say that, I have the will, free will, I have the right, God placed in me the perpetual right to make a decision that is contrary to His will, He doesn't control everything I do. I'm confronted and you're confronted often with decision points and in some of those decision points you know what the will of God is but you know what you want too and the only issue for you is to pick which of those two doors you're gonna go through, am I gonna behave now in accordance with God's will or am I gonna get what I want out of this deal. And then if there is a mess as a result of what I wanted we say, "God, shame on You for not stopping me from doing that." Sometimes, "How dare You not keep me from not doing something that backfired and kicked me in the face? What an evil, wicked, bad God You are by not stopping me from having my own way." We do that sometimes when we realize we messed up or maybe I'm the only one, it could be that I'm the only one that's ever done that, all y'all are looking at me like, 'I never done that, God never gets the blame in my life.' Of course I'm being facetious when I say that.

Now I want to take that further and I want to look at what's going on in the realms we cannot see. I've related it to us in the way we live in a limited fashion right now because I want to talk about the realms that we can't see as being somehow related to the things that I've just said. Most of us come from, if not traditions, at least experiences and teachings and so we have theological leaning toward understanding that there are unseen realms. Now maybe the only understanding we have is there's a heaven and there's a hell and those are unseen, at least at the moment, we won't see them until we die and then boy, all the sudden we'll be at Saint Peter's gate and he'll be askin' us questions to determine whether we get in or not and other nonsensical, fairy tales like that. Or we have a really vivid picture of what hell is like because some evangelist had to tell us that to scare us out of it, a whole lotta evangelists effort is to scare you out of hell, let's get real, that's what they wanna do. It comes out of an originally

fairly pure motivation but it's handled in a very kind of weird way and may not have a lot to do with what the Lord's will actually is. But let's look at the unseen realm for a moment.

Before time was, God was, He already was, what we call the Trinity already existed; God the Father, God the Son, and [God] the Spirit already existed, They are not created things. If God is created, He's created by something that is so much greater than our possibility of understanding it that we can't even really appreciate the idea that God might be created. But it's a nonsensical idea as far as we're concerned, God is eternal, if He is eternal He has no beginning and no end, He is therefore not created, He simply "is". Now He already "is" before He created, it was He who decided to create, He didn't get a letter in the mail that said, "Why don't You go create a universe." He just did it, He decided to create, I believe there's a very specific reason that He decided to create, the reason God decided to create was because God the Father and God the Son co-existing in the phenomenon we call the Godhead loved one another and that love compelled them to extend it to others. It was of such power, the magnitude of the power was such that they could not, at least they chose not to keep it to themselves but they wanted to be able to share it with others. But God concluded that the others would have to come from somewhere because they didn't already exist and in the counsels of the Godhead They decided on a creation in which They would place a creation as the focal point of the creation who could love and be loved and that creature could respond to God the Father as God the Son had always responded to God the Father because the love of a father precedes the love of a son, it must. The love of a son is a reciprocation of the love of the father, it can't precede it however, the love of the son can never precede the love of a father, it always follows it and it is a reciprocation, a response to the love of a father.

So God the Father existing in a marvelous harmony with God the Son in a relationship, with the Son of the Father resulting in a complete matching, reciprocation from God the Son said, "Let's do this some more," and their conclusion was they would make another creature who could be offered the opportunity to respond to the love of God the Father as has been God the Son responding. And so They decided to create this creature because that's the only place that this creature was gonna come from was by Them creating the creature but the creature couldn't exist as They existed, at least not originally because one of the conditions seems to have been that the creature had to decide to respond, the creature couldn't be forced to respond because that really wouldn't be love, that would be maybe obedience but it's really slavery if you forced the creature to respond to the love of God with love in kind.

And so in putting together the creation plan it was necessary that the creature have free will to choose to accept or reject the offer of love, the acceptance being a form of mirroring the love of the Father by means of the mechanism we call the love of the son, or filial love, I call it that, most people don't, that's a good term for it though. Now this filial love, God knew, wasn't guaranteed, if you give me an opportunity - maybe not you guys - but if you give me an opportunity to decide whether or not to do a thing at the beginning of that it's a 50/50, I either will or I won't and then upon reflection I'll make a decision and it may or may not be the right decision based on some criterion that determines what a right decision is. Now there is only one right decision in the scenario I'm talking about and that is to receive and reciprocate the love of God the Father, that is the only right decision, it was always the only right decision, it will always be the only right decision, nonetheless He still has set things up so that you have to make the decision, it has to be made, it won't be made for you. This is one of the problems with infant baptism, "Mom and dad decided I'm a Christian." Well then the church realizing that came around to "confirmation", "Well ya they're saved but let's let them say something." (laughter) through a process, take em' to catechism and there's a confirmation and it's all good, they agreed with mom and dad, all that kind of stuff. And I'm not even particularly bothered by that because it still permits the free will of the individual.

I wanna make that very, very clear - God requires of Himself that He permit me and you to freely choose to be sons of God, He doesn't require it of us, He permits it to us. There's a big difference between those two. In the old agricultural economy of the southern states when a black person got up in the morning and took a hoe out to the cotton field it was because they had to, not because they chose to, are you with me? I don't want that to be offensive to anybody that hears this, I want something that's very graphically to you that the going out to the field under those conditions wasn't what a person would want to do, it was forced on them. If God forced you to be His son it would be equivalent to that because you didn't have a choice but He simply decided that it would be real if you chose it and it would be slavery if you didn't choose it, this right to love Him as a son loves a father.

Now the part that we're missing in that scenario and I haven't said a lot here that should be terribly surprising, I just wanted to get it real crystal, is that there are other beings that were created that are not in the earth and those other beings were created with a purpose. Somewhere in Scripture it said, "All angels are ministering servants," that's the purpose that God had for creating angels was that they would be ministering servants, the original commission, the original set of orders, the original instructions of each of the angelic, heavenly creatures that God created was service of some kind to minister to. To what were they ministering? Well we may propose that they ministered to God, and certainly we see in Revelation chapters 4 and 5 we see large hosts of angels praising God and saying a variety of things and that is a kind of ministry, it is consistent with what the heavens are about, it is consistent with the locus of God, as though God had a locus. I did some of that last night, I will recover some of that ground here in a few moments. But they were made deliberately by God to minister, that's not the same thing as being a son, the heavenly beings were created to minister. If all of them are ministering servants then it must be true that all of them were created to be ministering servants, it's a logical non-sequitur to go anywhere else with that, you just can't, it's just too clear. Every single one of them was created with a specific commission for that particular angelic or heavenly being, every single one of them, there's not a whole bunch of spare angels in the closet somewhere waiting against the day they might be needed to go clean up a baseball field somewhere or something like that. That's not what He did. Everyone of them has a specific identity and the identity is in the service, if you will, the administration that they were intended to perform, every single what we call heavenly creature, angelic, whatever. The word "angel" doesn't really mean something good, it's a neutral term, it just actually, for us, refers to heavenly creature that cannot or be normally encountered in the flesh in the earth but is sentient, is a thinking, reasoning being.

The proposition I made last night I want to follow up on now is that while we have free will it is also true that the heavenly beings - the heavenly creatures, the angelics, they're even sometimes called the "heavenlies"- also have free will, they were created with free will also. Now they can't reject sonship, if they can't reject sonship then they cannot reject the love of God, if they chose to reject it's not the love of God they're rejecting, that's a human thing. The angelics if they choose to reject God they are rejecting their individual commission placed on them in their creation. You hearing what I'm saying? If they choose to exercise their free will to be at variance with the will of God it has to do with their job, in essence because they're created as ministering servants.

God asks us to minister but He asks us to minister from the position of being sons of God; the angelics, the heavenlies are simply created to be ministers of something, they are then caretakers of things is one way of looking at their individual ministries. But He created them with free will and I'm gonna demonstrate that for you again today, I did it last night, I wanna do it again. If you look at Jude, which isn't very far away from James, it's right before Revelation, it's such a short book it doesn't even have chapters, it only has verses. We're gonna start in verse 8 simply because there's a paragraph there that's really an editorial decision, it doesn't appear in the actual originals but it's a reasonable place to start. Jude 8 says, "Yet in the same

way these men also by dreaming defile the flesh and authority and revile angelic majesties but Michael the archangel when he disputed with devil and argued about the body of Moses didn't even dare to pronounce against him a railing judgment but said, 'The Lord rebuke you.'

Now these angelics have a lot of power, so much so that Michael the archangel wouldn't revile or raise his voice against Satan, he recognized in Satan an authority that caused him to refrain from reviling Satan, so he said, "The Lord rebuke you." Now he knew Satan was wrong but he didn't rail against him, he didn't presume that he had equal authority to the Satan but if he was in a mode to desire potentially to revile Satan then it must be true that whatever Satan was doing was disagreeable to Michael. If it was disagreeable and both of them were fulfilling the missions that God had placed them in the creation to fulfill then they really were wicked, in that case that would make God wicked for setting these things up to be in competition with one another. That's not what He did, that's not what God does. So let's back up a little bit and go back to verse 6 and look at another side of this same problem, this is what we focused on last night, "And angels who did not keep their own domain but abandoned their proper abode He has kept in eternal bonds under darkness for the judgement of the great day." Angels "who did not keep their own domain but abandoned their proper abode" were not being obedient. If your proper abode is abandoned by you and it was truly your proper abode then you were disobedient, you can't reach a different conclusion, rationally. If you, as an angel, can fail to keep your own domain which is a place you rule, a thing you rule but abandon your proper abode then you have exercised your will over against the will of God, you have done that, that's what you have done. I don't know how else to make that any clearer. So heavenly beings who have in some cases enormous measures of power and authority are placed in the creation to minister and administer in certain different things, each according to whatever purpose God gave that particular heavenly being. Some of them, according to Jude simply decided not to do it, that's periphrastically what's going on in those verses.

Now I'm gonna take that a little further and switch back to man for a moment. It is unfortunately true that some human beings in some instances decide not to do what God wants them to do, some of them make a habit out of not doing what God wants them to do, some are less methodical about it and only sometimes don't do what God wanted them to do and very few actually get it right all the time. These angelic beings, these heavenliness, these heavenly creatures, some of them chose their own path, that's kind of what Jude is saying here, they chose a different way. Having been detected in them, God has arrested some of them and they're in confinement until He's ready to do whatever He's going to do about them. Others however are still active in the creation, Satan being one of those, one of the most powerful of all of God's angels is still very active in the creation, he hasn't quit, he hasn't "laid down on the job" so to speak but he has defined his own job because originally his job was to do something specific that did not harm you and what he does now is mostly directed at your harm. When he tells you he wants to do a good thing for you that's another instance of him having told a lie, he may tell you that he's going to do something pleasant for you but it is harmful once it's been accomplished.

So now I've got us a bit of problem: God created you with a free will and you are free to exercise your free will and the moment He takes your free will away from you you've become a slave because only a slave doesn't have a free will. If you're a slave you don't have a free will by definition and you can't get away with very much at all and you have to sneak around to do that but if you have free will that generally applies in your life then you're not a slave, those are mutually exclusive ideas. So if that is true for me or you is that also true for the angels? And the answer is yes, it's true for the angels as well. Now this is going to create a number of problems for us that we can actually sort through some of anyway, we can't sort through all of these but consequences are different when an angel exercises his free will in opposition to God than when you exercise your free will in opposition to God. And the reason is this: you were created in the image and likeness of God, understanding fully what the image and the likeness of God

is is difficult for us but there are certain aspects of understanding that that are really not that hard to understand. One of those is if, and I've already covered this, I've been settin' ya up the whole time, I've already covered this, if God's primary characteristic is love then a creature created in His image and likeness must exhibit love, must be at least capable of exhibiting love or it doesn't have the image and characteristics of God, the image and likeness of God. When He created man He created the only thing that actually has the capacity to really love. Now Judy and I kind of think Lizzie loves but Lizzie doesn't love she simply responds to kindness and she likes to keep her pack kind of under control so that she benefits from her pack being under control, that's the real truth. It looks like love to us because that's what we want to believe, that's not love, it's an attachment based on her own personal interests, that's just real. It may feel and look like love but that ain't what it is, there's a lot of affection in it but it's not love because my proposition to you is the only creature that is actually able to love in all of creation, the only kind of creature that God created capable of love is man and that's it, "man" the generic, I don't want to get into sexual politics, "men and women" for those who have to do it that way.

The angelic beings, the heavenliness, were not created in the image and likeness of God and the proposition I'm making to you is they do not love therefore, that's not what they do, no matter how obedient they are it isn't love, it's obedience, obedience looks like love frequently but in the case of the heavenliness, they're not loving, they're choosing whether to be obedient or not to the mission that God has given them. One of the problems we've already been having discussions and last night I was trying to make sure that there would be discussions, one of the issues was, "if angels can hate then they must be able to love," well no, hate and love are not two ends of the same things, they're two different things altogether, they involve strong emotions but they're not really just two faces of the same thing, they're different things, you can "not love" without hating, you don't have to hate something just because you don't love it, furthermore you don't have to love something just because you don't hate it, there's a whole lot of "neither of the above" that goes on in our lives. So if man is created in the image and likeness of God, my proposition to you is the primary thing that matters to us in this discussion is that man is created capable of love and if angels, heavenly beings, are not created in the image and likeness of God then they don't have the capacity to love, their capacity is a capacity of obedience only. Are you ok with that?

Now obviously when I chose as a child to defy my natural father, which I did on occasion, I was not expressing love to him when I did that, that wasn't love, that was me wanting to have my own way and being in disagreement with him and being disagreeable to him. The good thing is there were frequently consequences that I could understand and so I'd get over it pretty quickly or spend a lot of time in my room recovering from my wounds, one or the other or all of the above. It wasn't that I hated him, I was just being disobedient. Now when he meted out to me what he felt was the appropriate discipline in the instance it wasn't that he hated me, he was just dealing with my misbehaving. So God's relationship with angels doesn't have anything to do with love, in the model I'm presenting to you but His relationship with us has everything to do with love. But, backing up, He still made them capable of free will just like He made us capable of free will, our free will, the primary expression of free will for me and you is whether we will love God back when we don't like something He's doing or requiring of us. The angels exercise of free will was whether or not to do the job God assigned them to do. Those are two real different sets of phenomenon. It must be true that some of the angels decided not to do what God had assigned them to do. It appears, at least at this point in the analysis I'm making that for them that was irrevocable, there's not a redemption plan for angels, it's an irrevocable decision that they made fairly early on and it's done and they know it now. "Oops!" But there's no way back, for you and I there's redemption and for the most part we always have way back when we mess up, for the most part until God gets tired of that and says, "Nah, you aint coming' back." That can occur.

But there's another condition I want to talk about and that's this: if the angels, if heavenly beings, if heavenly creatures - whatever term you want to apply to them - are creatures then they're not eternal, they're created just like man was created but they don't live in the realm that man lives in per-say, they were created for a different realm. Originally they were created, we call em' heavenly creatures probably because they were created to be in the heavenlies, "Dun-a-dun- dun-dun." (Singing) You know? Duh. And we are earthly creature, my wife is the only heavenly creature I know in the flesh (laughter) and on occasion she slips and acts more earthly. You understand what I'm saying? We're earthly creatures as long as we remain in the flesh. Now we're more than that because the life in us is spirit, when God rolled up that dirt to create man He breathed His own life into the dirt. So we're ultimately spirit and because of that when our life of flesh is done we become fully spiritual beings. The angels were always spiritual beings, they've never been fleshly beings although it appears in Scripture that from time to time they can take the appearance as though they were beings of the flesh, under certain conditions some angels have appeared that way. For example, one day Abraham was sitting by his tent and three dudes showed up and only one of them was the Lord and the other two were angels, Abraham saw them, gave them some baby goat meat and sent em' on their way. Alright? That story is in the book, I didn't make it up.

So they may be able to appear to us as to be as we are but that's not their natural state, their natural state is they're created in a manner that the substance of their being is compatible with the substance of being in the heavenlies, not in the earth, whatever in the world "in the heavens not in the earth" whatever that may mean to us. So they're created native to heaven and we're created and clothed native to earth. However, when Jesus was asked by His disciples to teach them how to pray He said, "Pray like this," 'You want a prayer, I'll give you a prayer' giving Him Jewish character, "Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name, Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done on the earth as it is in heaven," and then some other things. If He was teaching them to pray that God's will would be done here as it is done in heaven then it must be true that it's qualitatively more apparent that God's will is done in heaven than it is in the earth. Well why is God's will not done in the earth? It's not the kangaroos fault that God's will is not done in the earth, who's fault do you reckon it is that God's will is not done in the earth? You're all trying to blame me, or your husband, or your wife, or somebody like that that God's will isn't done here. The fact of the matter is it's us. We're the reason God's will isn't done here and Jesus was saying, "Pray this way: let Your will be done here like it is in heaven," but we're the reason it's not done here but we should pray that it would be done here as it is done in heaven. In fact the proposition before you is that in heaven - whatever that may mean to us - there is a condition in which God's will is perfectly adhered to and if God's will was done in the earth as it is done in heaven then God's will would be perfectly adhered to in the earth and it should be, that was God's original intention, that He would create a creature who would respond to His love with perfectly mirroring love and there would be no strife in the relationship and it would look like absolute obedience as though the creature actually had no choice but what's actually happening is the creature chooses to be exactly what God designed them to be. Now I'm gettin' warmed up. Is that all making' sense?

So if God's will isn't done as well here as it is in heaven - whatever that means and we'll go over that in a moment, go over it again in moment - then it must be true that the fault lies in man but it is man who is asking that it be corrected. So that which has created the creation in a sense in one aspect the corruption of the creation is asking the Creator, "Let's undo this, let's fix it back like it was supposed to be." That's what the prayers about. The point is this, that this is a prayer of power, when we petition God, when we say to Him (and we mean it), "Father, I want Your will to be done here as it is done in heaven," we're also saying simultaneously, "I want to obey You as God the Son obeys You because that is the way I reflect my love to You, by obeying You as God the Son has obeyed You in eternity." Now Jesus obeying God really actually means He is the reflection of, when Jesus responds to the love of the Father in the way in which He responds to it you can't tell the deference between the two loves, you can't tell the

difference between the Father's love and the Son's love in that relationship and that's a standard by which we're permitted to live but the redemptive work of Christ is to return us to the state in which we can live in that manner.

So when we say to Him, "Let Your will be done here where I am as it is in heaven," then there's a response required, a father's response is required in that prayer but if it's in anyway manipulative the Father's response is not required and He knows the distinction between when we're manipulating and when our hearts are on the line. I want to make this clear and you already know it, God the Son has never failed at all in that His behavior was consistent with the perfect will of God. And in a sense that's our hope. And so He can say to us, "Say this: 'Let Your will be done here where I am just in the same way that it's done there where You are.'" I've gone to preaching, I don't much like preaching but that's where we are. That all being true, we still haven't dispensed with how this condition comes to be and why this condition continues to be what it is. Now what really actually happens for most of the people who have named the name of Christ for the last 2000 years is what we really mean when we say, "Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven," "My will be done in heaven as my will is in the earth." is what we actually mean so much of the time, except Mel, he's the only person I know that never tries to do that to God. Are you hearing me? This is serious stuff because this is ultimate power transfer, this is the most power transfer that can occur is for power to come into the earth such that the will of God looks here just like it does in heaven.

But now I've gotta explain a little bit about heaven. I did it last night so I'm gonna rush through a lot of it here. When God created the "heavens" plural and the earth He was creating more than one heaven, biblical evidence suggests that there are three and [we] went over this last night. One of the heavens is what you see when you look at the sky, you don't really see much, at night time you get to see some stars and strange things of that sort and so on and that is a use of the word "heaven" and that's what I call in one way, I call that "proximate" heaven because it's natural, physical, tangible and if we could get out there we could touch stars and moons and other planets and so forth and so on except if it's too hot or too cold or whatever but if we could, they have tangibility to them and science looks at them and considers them and makes proclamations about them and so forth. And that is a "heaven" but it's one of three, that one is mostly sterile, it really actually exists, from what it appears to be anyway to me and I may be wrong about this but I believe what I'm seeing is that heaven exists merely so that the earth can exist and continue to function. The whole, physical creation sets up an extremely fine tuned spot in which the earth can be what it is and all the rest of it really simply serves to have the right tensions and forces and levels of gravity and all of the other things that are necessary to sustain the kind of life that God decided to create in the place He decided to create it which is the earth and later on if you find out that's wrong then I'm sorry but that's what I see when I study this.

So this whole heaven is really the tangible universe that we think about, the cosmos, when we think about that kind of thing but there are other heavens and that's really where I want us to focus our attention now. I don't think Satan is waging war from Mars or from Venus, that's not where he's waging war from, it's from another location. So real quickly by way of refreshing. Last night we see that Jesus said to His disciples after they had visited places and they had thrown demons out of people and they were telling Him about how a wonderful experience, He said, "I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning." And Revelation 12 there's a Great War described, near the end of chapter 12 it says, "Woe to the earth and the seas for Satan has been cast down to her," and he's really ticked off, he's really mad, he's been mad before but now he's really, really mad because he don't wanna be there. Now one of the reasons he don't wanna be there is because he knows what's coming and when he gets here it's really near the end and it is an unpleasant end for him and he knows he can't escape it because the One with whom he is dealing, against whom he is in rebellion, is the Creator, the omnipotent Creator who is eternal and He created the Satan and the Satan is not eternal, he's a created being and he

cannot rise to the power of God Almighty, he can't. He wishes he could, there might have been a time when he thought he could but he knows better, he cannot and he knows that when he is cast down into the earth the time is very, very short and he don't wanna get here and so when he does he is gonna be ticked off, mightily and it won't be little red eyed babies in carriages either. Some of you have no idea what that was about (laughter) but some of us are old enough to remember Rosemary's Baby, the movie back in the sixties. What a ridiculous movie, at the end of it there's a baby carriage and the Satan worshippers are all gathered around the baby saying, "Oh look, he has his daddy's eyes." And the camera pans around and the baby's got red eyes, (laughter) bright red, not just red, not like their blood shot, "He has his daddy's eyes, ooh." (laughter) What a violation of Scripture. (laughter)

But anyway Satan fell from somewhere to somewhere and he didn't fall to here, so he fell from somewhere to somewhere else, ok? Somewhere else one and somewhere else two. Are you ok with that? He fell as lightning from heaven Jesus said, so if he fell from heaven then he fell from heaven to somewhere else that isn't here, wherever that otherwhere else is isn't the earth or the heaven that's proximate to the earth, it's something else. So it must be actually another heaven, so Satan fell from "a" heaven to another heaven. Well how do we distinguish between those two heavens? Let's call one of them Bill and the other one Joe, he fell from heaven Bill to heaven Joe or maybe to be more appropriate and not to be too trivial about it maybe he fell from third heaven which Paul visited and which John visited to another heaven that isn't this heaven so let's call it "second heaven" and let this one be first. That implies there's distance of space involved in all of that and we don't really wanna go there but our minds have to handle this somehow. So he fell from something to something like lightning, instantly, he was "there" and then he was "there" and "there" and "there" ain't the same place; there's "there" and then there's "there" prime if you're looking at it mathematically and they're not the same.

If that's true that Satan fell from one heaven to another heaven then we now have a way cosmologically of considering the properties and characteristics of three different heavens; there's one that contains planets and suns and moons and stars, and gas clouds, and all kinds of wonderful cute stuff that astronomers are always giving us pictures of and I love that stuff by the way, I just love to look at that kind of stuff and say, "How in the world did they get this from that?" But it's still beautiful, there's aspect of it that are beautiful, beautiful things and that's what I'm calling "first heaven". Paul visited a place that I believe - at least we think it was Paul, if it wasn't him he knew somebody that did - that he called the "third heaven", that's what Paul called it. Now either he's a liar, or he's wrong or that's what it was. I propose that let's accept that that's what he was talking about was a heaven called "third heaven". So first heaven is planets, and moon, and stars, and suns, and gas clouds and all that wonderful stuff, it's so cool to speculate about meaninglessly and third heaven refers to the place where the throne of God is, where the will of God is absolute. So when Jesus says, "Let Your will be done in the earth as it is in heaven," He's specifically referring to the place where the throne of God is because the throne is the place where the majesty of the One who has majesty is concentrated in a sense. It's the full symbol of the sovereignty of the Sovereign, it's the throne. You can visit other nations and sometimes under some conditions you can visit "throne rooms" and in the throne room is a special chair in which it is illicit for anybody else to sit unless the sovereign says so and anybody else who sits in that chair doesn't sit there as the sovereign, they only sit there as a honored visitor or something or these days those things are so poor somebody could pay the price of admission and gets to have their picture taken in the throne.

But that throne that's described in Revelation 4 and 5 ain't that way, there is only one occupant and He is an eternal accompany, He doesn't have a successor, He has a successor in the sense that God the Son is the prince of all things, the King of kings and Lord of lords but He never expects to sit on the throne "as" the Father, "with" the Father yes but never "as" the Father. No one proceeded God in sitting on that throne, no one will succeed God in sitting on that throne, no one can evict God from that throne, it is His throne and from that place in a way

that our minds can comprehend the sovereign will of God is absolute and it is never violated in that place, there will never be an assault on the throne of God, it cannot be. It's not that it will fail, it simply cannot be, it's not possible because all power and all authority is His and He will not grant the authority for an assault on the throne. He does grant authority for an assault on His person, in a sense, He permitted for example, that the Satan would say to the woman, "No, you won't die, God told you that because He doesn't want you to eat that because He knows you'll be as smart as Him if you eat it." And that was an assault on the person of God, on the character of God but not on the throne. The only place in Scripture where we see Satan at the throne of God, he's there as a supplicant, he says, "If You would let me get a hold of that guy Job I'll show You he doesn't love You." And that's it. Those are the times we see him as a supplicant but he was created as one of the most powerful beings in all the creation so there must have been a time when he was very close to the throne of God. Does that make sense to you?

It doesn't seem reasonable that it was always true from the moment of his creation that he was far separated from the throne of God, if that were true he couldn't be the kind of powerful being that he is because the power is also concentrated - insofar as creation is concerned - the power is also concentrated at the throne of God because you cannot have the requirement, if you will, that the will of God be absolutely, perfectly adhered to at the throne of God and not have the requisite power for that to occur and God will not distribute power in such a way that the power to approach His throne in rebellion can ever exist in any creature. In the New Testament it talks about "approaching the throne of God boldly" but not for our purposes! Are we ok with that? It is not for my purpose that I can approach the throne of God boldly because my purpose is my will be exercised in contradistinction to His will and He will not permit that at the throne, He can't! Because if He does then all manner of evil and wickedness has come to the throne of God! We just saw it in James. He ain't gonna do that and we can't overrule Him in the matter, we can't form a coalition and put all of our power together and go up there and accomplish that, it simply cannot be done! It's not that it's forbidden, it just can't be done, there are things that can't happen. You cannot stand up in my living room, put this foot up in the air and put the other one up there with it, you're gonna have an unpleasant experience if you do that. It cannot be done unless God suddenly makes you capable of walking on air, no other power can accomplish that and He would be breaking His own laws to do so. And He might do it, I'm not saying He won't, I believe there are instances He probably has, I've heard of some things that mmm, probably credible but the were extraordinary, not common. If I do that then the other one falls you're gonna see me fall, you already know that. Some of you are thinking, "Well why don't he go ahead and try it?" (laughter) Well he isn't going to, it's not a reasonable thing to do. Why in the world would I do that? Not only do I know better, it would accomplish absolutely nothing in the kingdom of God for me to do so and my broken bones would be testimony to that fact and they're getting' old enough to break now. Actually I broke em' all when I was young, I kind of gave it up, it was a bad hobby.

[audio break]

After I broke my leg, hobbling down to the camp and they all thought it was funny I was still out hunting that late in the morning. (laughter) When I finally got there they just laughed at me. (laughter) I believe that was the same day Michael dropped a cinnamon bun in the fire and picked it up and ate it, (laughter) ashes all over it. (laughter)

Anyway, Satan obviously was operating against the will of God when he accused God of being a liar. What we've done in our Christianity is we've said, "Well God had a purpose is sending the Satan to fool the women by lying to her about God." It's non-sensical, Satan chose to lie to the woman about God, he chose to because he could choose to. He had the power of choice and he said to the woman, "God knows if you eat that you're gonna be as smart as He is," she chose to believe that. He exercised his free will, she exercised her free will and the creation began to fall apart because the creation was created to be a place that was focused on the life

experience of the sons of God, in the corporate sense the Son of God, in the flesh and that's the sole purpose ultimately of the creation for that and when that creature then said, "Well I'm not going to do it Your way." It affected the creation, the creation now had a sickness in it and it was a complicity between the word of the heavenly creature who decided to exercise his free will as over against the will of God and the human who decided to do what they wanted to do instead of what God had said to do and they were both equally, in a way, equally culpable in that each of them was exercising the free will that God gave them to rebel against Him and the confluence of those two things in the earth resulted in what I call the "breaking of the creation" and it is increasingly broken, ever since then it's gotten worse, and worse, and worse. One example is what I call, I actually have name for it - the genetics of human beings have deteriorated to the point that we're often born with diseases for example. My father had and his father before him had very, very poor digestive systems, when I was very young I began to have a very poor digestive system, that's genetically the case in my family. Adam didn't have a poor genetic system, it has deteriorated through this genetic drift down to what it is today and the earth has more desertification; the seas are saltier, the mountains are harsher. All of those things are more true over time than they were originally, in fact the seas probably weren't salty originally because if you understand how seas get salty it hadn't happened yet, it hadn't even happened yet, so why would they get salty?

So God created this creation that in the moment of the finishing of it or in the moment of the making of it, when He finished it and put man in it, it basically functioned perfectly. Then the Satan creature, exercising his free will and the woman on behalf of her husband exercising her free will in conjunction with one another brought an infection into the creation, which infection will only be cured when men and women together stand in the presence of God Almighty and say, "Let Your will be done in the earth as it is done in heaven." And He fully grants that because we, in some collective way, have arrived at a stage of maturity that it's possible for Him to give us that back again which we messed up when we first had it.

So when He created Satan and all the other angelic beings, He apparently created very large numbers of them, very large numbers, unnumbered hosts surround the throne in John's visions, unnumbered hosts of angels surround the throne of God and those are the ones not in rebellion and angels that are in rebellion don't get to show up and be in the choir in Revelation 4 and 5, they're not there, the ones that are there are the ones who have chosen not to be in rebellion, I really believe they don't get but one shot at it because there's not a redemption plan for angels. So those decisions have long since been made unless some others decide, "Hey, I don't like this much, I choose the annihilation alternative instead." Doesn't seem rational now that they've watched a little bit of history and they're not fooled, there's no fooling of them any longer, whatever ones of them were fooled were already fooled and it's done. We're no longer fooled we just wish we were, now we're just complicit, not fooled, complicit. Oh yeah there's a little deception sometimes and Satan's a master of deception but we kind of know when we're getting into wickedness, certainly those of us who've had revelation by the Spirit to know that.

So there are many, many, many, many of these who decided out of their own, individual free wills that they would not stand by the assignments that God had made to them, I read it to you, it's in Jude and I read it to you awhile ago. Some of those are already in a form of captivity waiting their judgment and others are still doing what they do and what they do is in contradistinction to the will of the One who created them to do it. So there is one for example in Scripture called the Prince of Persia as spirit given the responsibility for exercising some sort of the presence of God into the minds if you will of the ruling human authorities in the place called Persia and has chosen to pervert that all throughout history. Still the Prince of Persia, still in the place to which he was assigned but not doing what he's assigned to do.

Do you see what I'm saying? They still are in the earth doing their thing but they don't live here, they're doing it kinda from a distance from that place, I already said I wanna call "second heaven". The reason they're in second heaven is because they can't be in third heaven anymore, they simply can't. Once they chose to exercise their will in contradistinction to the will of God third heaven was no longer a place in which they could remain, they weren't expelled they simply couldn't be there and they fell and they fell to another place and that other place then is the one I'm calling second heaven and it's largely characterized by the heavenly hosts that have decided to do their own thing and they in turn operate in such a way in the earth that they enable us to do our own thing right along with them. And so pretty much when we see evils and misfortunes and tragedies in the earth, we're looking at a thing that is mirrored in a way in second heaven where these rebellious angelic hosts have residence in a temporary way; they were originally residents of third heaven and they're gonna be ultimately obliterated, they are ultimately going to come into a state of non-existence, I believe, I think that's what I see in Scripture. What we have been will in a sense have never been, the redemption plan will have come full cycle and we will be the sons of God that we were created to be to begin with. Is that not cool?

But in the mean time there is a place - I'm using the word "place" loosely here because it's a spiritual context - there's a context in which there are these who are powerful, who currently reside and they stir up things in the earth because that's what God's interested in, He's not interested in redeeming second heaven. That's of no interest to God, He's not gonna redeem it, He's simply gonna end it. He's interested however in the redemption of man because He wants the Son of God in the corporate sense to fully represent Him in whatever remains of creation so that first heaven and third heaven essentially look alike and the coming down of that New Jerusalem into the earth is the same thing as the earth rising to the place where the throne of God is. There's then no distinction between the two in that time, in that status, in that state of the future.

Question from audience: "Why did Jesus say, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning in the context of that gospel?'"

Because the disciples were saying, "Even the demons obey us in Your name." And so He said, "Yeah, I even saw the chief of the demons fall from heaven like lightning. Of course they would obey you, they don't have a choice." When you properly exercise your spiritual authority, our problem is we don't know how to do that anymore, the disciples just went and did it, they didn't know they couldn't and nobody told them they couldn't do it so they just went and did it. They didn't have a problem with how this stuff works, they didn't have an issue with God causing evil, they just knew evil was and they addressed it at the level in which they encountered it. That's evil. "God doesn't get the blame for that, He gives me the power to counteract it." That was their response. Did that mean they had a painless life? No, some of them got beat up, thrown in prison and all kinds of terrible things happened to them but they continued the battle, they continued to say, "Whenever I encounter evil I will simply not permit the evil. I will not permit it, I don't have to permit it." That was their perspective and we're out wondering what we can get away with, "if we approach that demon will he bite me?" (laughter) Now that's kind of our attitude much of the time, most of the time.

We haven't been willing for a long time to take on these heavenly beings who from what they perceive maybe, I don't know if they even perceive it to be a safe place - the place they have in second heaven attempting to create and maintain chaos in the earth so that they can stretch out the time of their existence because as long as they can keep chaos going here they are not yet at their final judgement, only after they no longer can do chaos that they get their final judgment and they don't want it, they'd rather that didn't happen. So they then are constantly appealing to my free will and your free will to cooperate with them in violating the will of God

and spiritual warfare is about saying "No" and prohibiting them from causing the will of God to be violated.

The time is I don't think now, but when we go far enough in these things that we know them we will take the battle to them in some way that is right now mysterious to me and I can't really formulate a way of explaining it. We're going to be involved in taking these battles into the second heaven at the same time that the Christ is taking these battles into the second heaven and they're simply gonna be in a pincer between two forces they can no longer resist and that will be the thing that annihilates their influence in the earth. It will no longer be a matter then for us of having a defensive posture in which we encounter something we don't like and call it evil and do what we call spiritual warfare, it will be something in which we actually know what we're doing. We actually understand that when we're counteracting this evil in the earth we're simultaneously overcoming that evil in second heaven which is reducing the power of those forces in second heaven. And it is the destiny of the church in the collective sense to be the earthly instruments of eliminating the power of those spiritual darkneses in second heaven. Our experience in spiritual warfare has been that I wasn't sure often whether I was just simply doing a thing because I had heard it could be done or whether I was doing it because that's the outcome that I wanted or whether I was actually doing it consistently with the will of God.

We have lost much of the revelation and therefore we've lost much of the power number one. Number two, this is a corporate thing and ultimately we have in our lifetime and those of us that are old in here we have viewed things like spiritual warfare as being, "I'm an individual warrior, I got a sword, I'm gonna go cut of some demon heads," and we got clobbered but it is I believe the power that we will see in it. When this revelation has really kind of developed and this is early, I mean we're just beginning to scratch the surface. We will approach this thing in a corporate manner the way an army would because they are arrayed against us as armies. When Joshua encountered the man when he first crossed the Jordan, shortly after that he encountered a man and Joshua said, "Are you for, are you for us or are you for them?" And the man said to him, "Neither, I'm the leader of the armies of God." I mean it doesn't even go on to tell us the rest of what happened as far as any kind of conversation between the two of them. The point of being, I think, that Joshua understood that his choice was to do this on his own as the leader of the Israelites or to join forces with God because this one that he encountered representing the leader of the armies of God surely would have victory in the earth and we're still kinda nibblin' around at the edge of "how can I make a name for myself with this ministry?" And other kinds of things like that and for a season it's been pretty much actually taken from us until we get new realization, new revelation that will enable us corporately to rise up and fight those battles that we're supposed to fight and we're not designed to fight battles that we're not designed to fight. These angels that lost their places it says they departed from their own domains, we also as individuals anyway have limited spheres of influence, it's the corporate sphere of influence that we're talking about here in terms of this war and if you don't believe we're in a war...what can I say to somebody that doesn't understand that we're at war? If one side is at war with the other side then the other side's at war whether they like it or not, you can't just go out there and say, "Well, we're not at war with you," because when the bullet hits you you're still dead, stupid. (laughter) You know? There's a prevailing thing out here now, you see it in the media a good bit, "Well violence isn't the answer," the bullet will still kill you! Just because you take the position of violence isn't the answer don't mean that violence won't take you out of it, it will if the other side decides to be bad. Both sides don't have to decide to be bad for bad to happen, only one [side] has to decide that.

But the war that we're in, I'm really trying' to stress, the war that we're in is one in which free willed human beings and free willed spiritual beings both of whom have decided that they're smarter than God have joined forces even if the humans don't know it in an effort to make God's life miserable as though they could conquer Him in some manner. And He is permitting it because He chooses to permit us to have free will because only in our free will can we be sons

of God and to Him for us to become sons of God fully realized, manifestly as sons of God, it's worth any price and it must be so because it was worth any price to Him to redeem us to begin with because He paid the highest price that was possible to redeem us that we might become sons of God and so any price, even letting us have our own way is worth it to Him for us to come to Him and say, "I'm tired of having it my way, let's do it Your way."