

Ephesians 5, Part 2 (Conrad Bowman) (March 12, 2006)

Ephesians, chapter 5. We cut off right in the middle of it last week. And I want to finish this today. We're starting out by looking at natural responsibilities, and marriage as a pattern or type of Christ's relationship to the Church. So, we're going to walk through this quickly this morning.

When we got to chapter 5 last week – the Pirtles, where are they, they're not here.

Lady. They're traveling to see his sister.

Conrad Bowman: Okay. Okay. Charlie ambushed me on the way to the car after class – he offered to carry my box to the car. [Laughter]. I should have known, I should have known; and Norma wasn't here so I didn't have anybody to help out. Yes, he said that he wanted to help out, like as snake in the grass. [Laughter]. Charlie – Charlie objected to the use of the word, in verse 1 of chapter 5, it says,

“Therefore, be *imitators* of God,”

and I had made a pretty strong point of that. The object being that in this verse, what Paul is calling attention to, as he has in previous verses in Ephesians, and he does also in Titus, and 1st and 2nd Timothy, and Corinthians, he keeps calling attention to the fact that our primary focus in our walk as Christians should be on God the Father. When it's on God the Father, your prayers are directed to *their source*, just exactly as the prayers of the Son. Your expectation of blessing is directed toward the source of those blessings, just as the Son in His walk. Don't focus on the word “imitator” and the way we use it. We use imitation as something that is a cheap copy of an original. That's not the way that word is used here. Now, there have been studies done on the word “imitate” and “icon” and iconoclastic and what an icon is, and what an imitation is, and the expressed image of God, and all the rest of those things. And that's not even in view, regarding the way this sentence is structured. And I understand that when he says Christ is the ‘express image of,’ it talks about the character of the Father as it is displayed in the character of the Son fully. And as God says, no man can know God, but the Son has clearly revealed Him in all of His aspects. We understand that. There is no imitation or cheap image seen in any of that. So when Paul says “be imitators of God,” he has in other places said, “you follow after me,” which has been his instruction to some of his disciples, or to some of the younger men he leads. In this one, he said, “be imitators of God as beloved children,” because that's our [position](#). If we lose our focus on the Father, we'll

lose our understanding of our relationship to God through union as children of His. And that's so important. One of the missing links today in evangelical Christianity is that we don't understand union with God, in general. You understand, union is unique to the Church, we are not to try to take the place of Israel, because Israel was *never offered union*. That wasn't anything that was ever offered to Israel. Abraham did not have union, and he's the father of all those of faith. David never had union, and he's the King of Israel forever. Union is something that is the peculiar property of a member of the Body of Christ, from Pentecost to the Rapture. It's your unique gift from God. The only way you can understand it, and continue to grasp it, and enjoy your relationship through the means of union, is to have your eyes **firmly fixed on the Father**. That's what Christ did, and that's going to be real important, because the end of chapter 5 is going to rest on Paul's call to keep your eyes on the Father; and, be imitators – or set your course – according to the Son, after the image that He presents you, of the Father. Now, how do you do that? You understand the sovereignty of God, so how would you describe the sovereignty of God? Take a shot at it.

Lady. All powerful.

Conrad Bowman. That would be His omnipotence. That's one aspect. What about the sovereignty?

Lady. He knows everything we are going to do.

Conrad Bowman. Okay. So He's over all, and He rules over all. Nothing unknown.

Gentlemen. He knows everything, period.

Conrad Bowman. I would describe that as His omniscience. Just to make a distinction.

[More class comments back and forth. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. His omnipresence. His omniscience. He's all powerful. He's all in all. Sovereignty is real easy. A Sovereign has to ask no one anything before He.....

Lady. He does not need permission.

Conrad Bowman. So there is no higher authority to whom he can appeal. That's sovereignty. He is absolutely free to do whatever in the heck He wants to do. Okay? When it says He sovereignly chose us, He didn't have to ask anybody; "who was good enough, or bad enough" to be chosen. He chose us based on His own free will and authority. There's no higher authority. That's sovereignty. That's sovereignty.

How are we patterned after His sovereignty? How do we act as His sovereign partners/children in union with Him? What in your life can you compare to God's sovereignty? This is not just a childish exercise now; this really begins to bind you down sometimes, because in your life you're expected to be an imitator of God. Now, how in the world can you imitate God?

Lady. [Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Yes ma'am. And that requires a choice on our part.

Lady. We have freedom of choice.

Conrad Bowman. We have freedom of choice. And so we do. So we have freedom to choose.

[Class comments back and forth. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Consider the Reformed Church (*ekklesia*) of Judaism – over here at the temple Beth Israel; there are several of them in town. They say that they can practice their Judaism in that church and in those synagogues according to the Law that they have changed, and made up-to date today. No sacrifices today, and the authority for doing it is the 'genius of Israel.' By the genius of Israel they can alter that Law given through Moses on Sinai. Now, think about this as minute. The majority of evangelical Christianity wants to latch onto the Law of the Old Testament, especially the Ten Commandments, pull them forward into our practice on this side of the Cross, and we don't do some of the same things that the reformed Israelite doesn't do. And, on what basis do we claim that privilege? Well, we hear that God expects us to make the Law relevant to life today. So, we don't need to make the sacrifices because Christ died for us. So what they do is take the truth of the crucifixion and mix it with the obligation of the Law and what you extract from that is an up-to-date soup that you can feed on. You see, we accept the uniqueness of man as the free will genius He's given to Adam passed down to us to rule over all creation. We are free to

exercise our will to the extent of our presence. And in God's case, it's omnipresent So He can extend His will and His sovereignty to choose what He wants to do about anything. You can do anything you want to do about anything you can reach. But there's some things beyond your reach. So it depends on your sphere of influence, doesn't it? But He holds you accountable for that. Now understand, your creativity is patterned after His sovereignty. He's free to do whatever He wants to do. You're free to do whatever you're able to do. But since He's able to do everything, it's unlimited. But within the scope of your ability, you're free to do anything that you want to do. That's why Paul says, all things are lawful unto me. That's his expression for that freedom to be in his life patterned after the attributes of God. So your free will, or choice, is patterned after His sovereignty. Your love *agape* is supposed to be patterned after His love--unlimited love. That's the closest we're going to ever get to being like God. It is in the quality and attribute of love. Because we're to love as Christ loved the Church and gave Himself for it. That's one attribute that we will share with God as close as any. Okay. We are located in one place, so we're not omnipresent. We know what we know, so we're not omniscient.

We should be truthful, as He is absolute veracity and absolute truth. God is truth. We should be truthful. As my dad use to say, "no" is as strong as it gets. "Hell no" does not add one thing to it. Not one thing. Okay? No is still no; it doesn't need any modifiers. Our word should be truth, because God is truth. A man's word should be sure, as God is unchangeable. As God is unchangeable in His very character, so should our word be dependable and should stand. Do you see how much of a man's character God expects to be conformed to His attributes to the extent that He gives us life?

Lady. What about things that we have never experienced before?

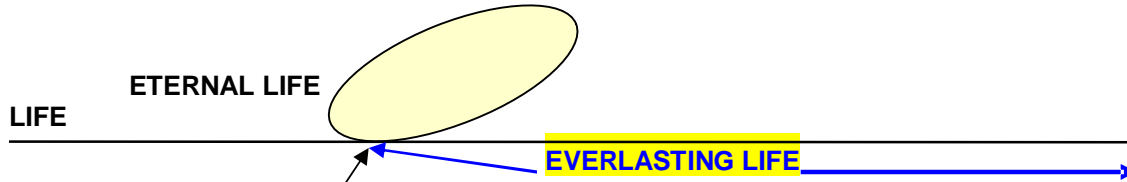
Conrad Bowman. Now, that underlies another principle. If you pick up any set of notes I've ever written two or three times in every study, you'll come across a line in there that says, **WITH KNOWLEDGE COMES RESPONSIBILITY**. He'll never hold us accountable for what we don't know. He holds us accountable sharply for what we do know. He is in the business of unfolding truth through us and we apparently are in the business of rejecting. He holds us accountable for that. In Romans 1, Paul demonstrates that. In Romans 1, Paul said, "the invisible things of Him are from are from the creation of the world clearly seen being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that every man is without excuse." So He unfolds Himself, even in nature. And, he holds man accountable for that which he sees in nature, and

accepts or rejects. That's the basis on which He judges the savage, who has only seen nature and the Gospel displayed in nature, and the difference in the way He judges us. But that leads us to make another statement; you do not do a man a favor, if he does not know God, by introducing him to the Gospel in clear terms. You take a man who is wallowing in ignorance, and judged in ignorance, move him to the position of understanding the Gospel and rejecting it, and he's now condemned on the basis of what he's heard and rejects. Okay? So you see that displayed over and over.

Therefore leaving the elementary teaching about the Christ, let us press on to maturity, not laying again a foundation of repentance from dead works and of faith toward God, of instruction about washings and laying on of hands, and the resurrection of the dead and eternal judgment. And this we will do, if God permits. For in the case of those who have once been enlightened and have tasted of the heavenly gift and have been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, and have tasted the good word of God and the powers of the age to come, and then have fallen away, it is impossible to renew them again to repentance, since they again crucify to themselves the Son of God and put Him to open shame. Hebrews 6:1-6

That brings us to an understanding of Hebrews 6 and 7. Look at Hebrews 6 and 7. Having "once been enlightened" by the Spirit of God, he (the unbelieving Jew) stood with "the gift (powers) of the age to come (the Spirit)," he turns away and he renews the things he was doing yesterday, the practice of the Law, and he learns that now those things that brought him to repentance in the past will not bring him to repentance any longer [because now he's being judged on the basis of what he knows today](#). You see, all this is tied together. Think of how much time we have spent going through these detailed studies of Paul's Epistles, one at a time, one at a time, and now we see today, based on this lesson, that these little nuggets were salted away in those studies as we moved by them. It takes time. It takes time to understand God's intention and purpose for us. It takes time to grow and mature. No wonder, no wonder, it's a "study to show yourself approved unto God, a workman who needs not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth" (2 Timothy 2:15). And that word "study" ought to be repeated five or six times in that text. Study, and study, and study, and study, and study, because it's a never-ending process; it's a never-ending process.

So here we see the attributes of God; His sovereignty, His justice. Because we have relative justice, we often let somebody off because they're not as bad as the rest of the people we know, so we treat them kindly in that regard. I hope. But, it's justice and righteousness and love and eternal life.



Now, did you ever stop and think about this? Eternal life! God has eternal life, which means there's no beginning and no end—it's like a big eternal life circle. We've seen that displayed a lot. And we're coming along in our life and we intersect that eternal life circle at some point, and our everlasting-life starts here. And then it goes along, and then when we die and we see the Gospel here. And if we accept that Gospel right here, as it's presented to us, we have ever lasting life. It starts in eternal life and it borrows from that quality right there [Pointing to the Board]. And it starts right there at a point in time and it never ends. That's what God has given us. And that eternal life that he's given us is patterned – *that everlasting life is patterned after His eternal life*. Everything He gives us is of Himself. So Paul says, in chapter 5,

Therefore be imitators of God as beloved children, and walk in love [*agape*], just as Christ also loved you and gave Himself up for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God as a fragrant aroma.

Any questions on that? That was last week. Alright, let's jump forward then, to verse 15. We'll start with verse 15.

Therefore [on the basis of that standing with God] carefully walk, not as unwise men but as wise.

To go back to wisdom *sophia*; there it is; you walk as wise. And what is wisdom? Well, wisdom defined is the application of what you know, your doctrine, to your experience—that's wisdom. From that, you gain understanding. So, the next time you put your foot down on that pathway, you have a little more wisdom on which to put that foot down, and a little more knowledge of what God expects. Okay?

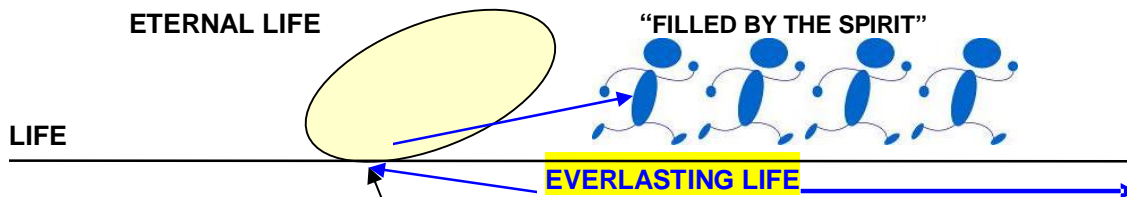
(5:17) "Do not be foolish" – stop being foolish, is what the text says. "Stop being foolish;" in contrast to that,

"Understand what the will of the Lord is." Ephesians 5:17

Now a foolish mind is an empty mind, and the same word there is a word that's translated in other places as "vanity." Stop being vain, it says, and assume you know everything, and fill your head up with the will of the Lord. There's that searching after God's will to bring yourself in line. That's exactly what that verse says.

And stop being conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect. Romans 12:2

And, do not get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but [in contrast] be filled with the Spirit.

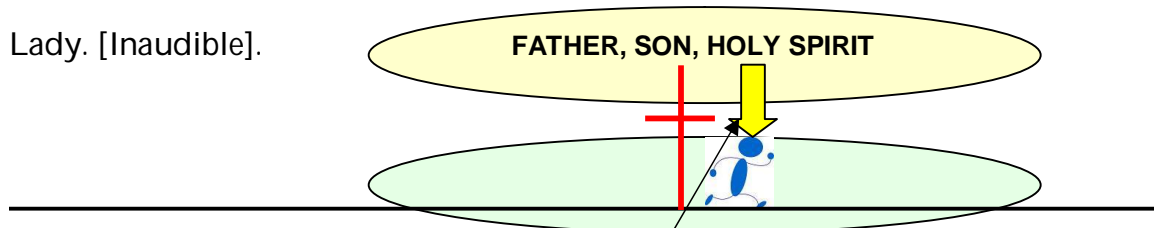


Present imperative. You be filled with the Spirit. A present imperative says, be filled today with the result that you stay filled, forever. As long as you are in the present, you're filled with the Spirit. It's not talking about being filled with the Spirit as an experience of the moment. It's talking about being filled with the Spirit – as a settled condition. And then as the present tense moves along, you move along with the present tense, and the filling that occurred here moves with you like this. So, be filled with the Spirit is a present imperative. The word is *pleras*, the efflorescent infusion of light that comes from God where the Spirit is. That's the word that's used. It's a word that speaks of the filling of the Spirit as the essence of enlightenment seared into your life. When you're filled with the Spirit, what has happened is that the omniscience of God has moved in with the spirit and set up residence as a resource in your life.

For this reason also, since the day we heard of it, we have not ceased to pray for you and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, Colossians 1:9

In a practical way, we would say, everything you ever need to know, you will know; it resides within you, because that's where God has set up His residence. His Spirit has moved into your life and lives there as a settled condition.

Lady. [Inaudible].



Conrad Bowman. Absolutely. Absolutely. The fruit of the Spirit is a – see depiction on the Board. Here's the way it works. Here's your life, right here, and you're going to live it right here on this line. Here's God's perfect life on a spiritual plane. Up here we have Father, we have Son, and we have Holy Spirit. And they exist in complete union. The moment you accept Christ as your personal Savior, the Spirit is dispatched from God's presence into your life. That's the earnest, the down payment on your eternal inheritance.

The baptism of the Spirit is this little link right here that joins the two – eternity to your temporal life. That's the baptism of the Spirit. It's this short little link right here. It happens one time. Okay? THE HOLY SPIRIT



This is where you have been wooed in your entirety from the world at large into the Body of Christ. Your location (position) has changed. When the Spirit comes in, your old sin nature which is right here in **residence** and is just wreaking havoc in your life – comes under the control of the Holy Spirit. [See inset]. That's the indwelling of the Spirit. The Holy Spirit takes that Old Sin Nature, takes self – Soul and Flesh – takes those human instincts that we have, and puts them all under control. The old sin nature stays

there, but, it is now under the control of the Holy Spirit. You are in union with the Spirit, through your human spirit, which has been reborn – that is what has been regenerated – the human spirit. Now your human spirit gives you instructions from the Holy Spirit. That feeds your mind, and you start to grow. God holds you accountable for each one of those things in your human spirit as it begins to swell and grow with the knowledge of God that the Holy Spirit can

impart. Every once in a while, because we are what we are, when we get tired of this exercise, oh, we don't intend to, but we do. Learning is hard work, so we get tired of that. We get tired of the Holy Spirit of God, whispering in our ear:

You know, don't do that. No, hold the course on this. I know it hurts, but you hold the course. Stay right here. I know the grass looks greener over there, you stay right here. Ok. You keep doing what you're doing here. I know that guy is a pain in the preverbal #@?%, but you know some stuff that he needs to know. Do not stop witnessing to that guy.

Me: I don't like him.

Holy Spirit: I didn't ask you to like him, I asked you to love him. Okay.

Me: He burns time. He just burns up time I could use on better things.

Holy Spirit: I'll decide what's better.

Me: He's got some strange ideas. I hate to have to get in there and listen to all that stuff.

Holy Spirit: You don't know what I have to listen to.

You see what I'm saying? So when you throw that ball over the fence, and we decide, well, I'm going to do something else for a while. So the new believer goes off course and again feeds on those things that made us feel good. Last year, a year ago; ten years ago. They're not going to be as much fun as they used to be, but we think there're going to be. So, we go out there and we exercise – see this old sin nature has two really ugly areas. One area is just pure lascivious behavior, where the Old Sin Nature can act on an unbridled or totally free basis. The best place to see that aspect of the old nature is Mardi Gras in New Orleans. We brought it close to home in Houston—you can go to Galveston to see it. Where you walk down the street and you don't need a guide dressed in gold paint to find it, just something for protection and a pair of shoes, so you don't cut your feet on the broken glass. You can see the unfettered side of the sin nature when men decide to exhibit it fully; or you can see it in any of the men's clubs around town on any given night. You don't have to go to New Orleans to see it,

or Mardi Gras. We're capable of it just about anytime. That's this area of lasciviousness.

The other area is asceticism. And he loves to crank that area of asceticism out, and that's when he bargains with God and he says, I'm going to be really good. I'm going to be the best I know. You know. So, here's what I'm going to do. An extreme act of asceticism is when you go into a monastery. You decide you're going to live on bread and water for the rest of your life and pile up prayers. Okay? That's extreme asceticism. Islam teaches their young men to strap on C-4 and walk into a crowd and blow themselves to kingdom come. That's extreme asceticism. But you know, in the less extreme versions – ignoring your responsibilities in life because you have a ministry, is extreme asceticism. Men who ignore their wives for ministry, is another example of extreme asceticism. That's why some marriages break up. It has affected some men in pulpits around here; because guys are so involved in their ministry that they ignore their life with the family—that is extreme asceticism. You ignore it because you look at them as adjuncts to your ministry, instead of the other half of you as a person before God. And you don't even need to be a pastor for that to affect you. We talk about influence and being 'used of God.' I am terrified that people will be attracted to what I teach and begin to think that I'm the source of it, and make a fan club out of it. I've had it happen in my life before, and I've had God put me on the shelf for eighteen years, to separate me from any sense that I was necessary to His work. It is simply not so. That's not so. As much as I love doing this, that's the problem, I love doing this. Absolutely love it. And, He's a jealous God. You belong to Him, not to me. It's the truth of it. And if you're going to be an imitator of God, you can't have anybody between you and Him. You just can't do it. See what I'm saying? It can happen in your life. Your gift of service can be the biggest hurdle you have to jump over to stay where God wants you to be. And, do it the way He wants you to do it. Excuse me, sir?

Gentleman. [Comment. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. Sure. The personality that makes you good at what you do is also the enemy that's going to bite you right in the backside. Sure. We talk about the Bema Seat of Christ where He judges believers for your rewards. And, my own person belief is that every work we've ever done goes up in smoke. Every one of them. And we're standing there naked as jay-birds, you know, before the throne. And, He rewards us with His righteousness, gives us His crowns for the work He has done in our life of which we were totally unaware. Because the minute I become aware of something He's done [Conrad pats himself on the back

to illustrate our attitude], right, and that's what we're talking about. It's where you and I jump in and we take credit for it. He's done it, and we want to take credit for it. Now remember, this old sin nature has four areas. One is lasciviousness, just unbridled fun. One is asceticism, where we give up to get. The other one is an area of strength, and then we have an area of weakness. And our area of strength is absolutely a personality thing. I don't steal. I might lie a little bit, but I don't steal. Okay. [Laughter]. So, I am hard on thieves, because that's my area of strength. The other is an area of weakness, because I would rather tell a good story than the truth. Or, I pad my resume in order to look good. An area of weakness is an area in which you fall, repeatedly. So, you have those four areas, but all of them come from the old sin nature. You see, from that area of strength, comes moral goodness, human goodness. We're philanthropists. We do help our neighbors and other believers. But in the area of strength, it always stops with you and what you're capable of. It's always personality driven in that area of strength. We have all four of those areas operating out of the old sin nature. It's difficult to fend off. What hope do we have to live with that sucker? You don't have any hope at all. If that Holy Spirit is not allowed inside through the filling of the Spirit to control your life – that's the indwelling presence of the Spirit that drives you every day – if you don't allow that to happen. And stop quenching the Spirit, because that's what it says. Quench not the Spirit. Stop doing it. You can quench the Spirit by intentionally choosing to operate out of one of these four areas. And that just dampens the Spirit down, and He waits until you come to your senses and repents, and then He will restore you. He will give you the power of the Father back in your life. It will happen, Ok? Any comments you want to make or questions on this? Then I'll race to the finish.

Don't get drunk with wine, for that is dissipation, but be filled with the Spirit [now we know what that is], we speak to one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody with your heart to the Lord; always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father;

What does 1 Corinthians say? It says, "if an unbeliever bids you to a feast and you are disposed to go, go. But before you eat, taking no thought for your own conscience...." So, they didn't have a hang-up about anything. Not idols, or food offered to idols, or anything.

Always giving thanks for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God, even the Father; and be subject to one another in the fear of Christ.

Be subject to one another in the fear of Christ. In Galatians, that comes up pointedly. Let every man look for the other's good. Okay.

Wives, be subject to your own husband, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body.

Now that establishes that clearly. As Christ is the head of the Church, man is the head of the wife. There is a pattern to that. Remember, when we were talking about patterns, all around, and as imitators of God. We were talking about how your life is patterned after the attributes of God. Now we come down to the relationship, the primary relationship, which is your relationship to your wife.

The wife has to be subject to your own husband, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife, as Christ also is the head of the church, He Himself being the Savior of the body. But as the Church is subject to Christ, so also the wives to their husbands in everything. Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the Church and gave Himself up for her.

Did He give up His ministry? He did. He gave up everything. He gave up everything. He laid it all aside. His death completed everything. If a man is to give up himself as Christ gave up Himself, he has to die to self. That means pouring everything he has into her. Okay. How often do we sit down at the table and say, Honey, the company just made me an offer. All we've got to do is move to New Orleans. All we have to do is move to Marietta. All we have to do is move to Berkley. You know that I'm saying that to impress her. She would have been perfectly happy in the first house we ever bought and would stay there for forty years. We would probably have been better off too. These are not entirely theoretical--you understand what I am saying? And I'm saying to her, it might not be so bad; you know, let's try it for as year. If we don't like it, we can always come back. She knew that wasn't true the minute the words came out of my mouth. We can be so self-deceiving. I'm a salesman at heart, and everything that implies. And that's the first quality; if you're a good salesman, believe what you say, regardless. We've had this conversation several times in our marriage. The burden of adjusting to something that was out there. And I'm the reason we

moved to another office, you know, things just changed and progressed. She had to do what she does in a different place, all over yet again. And she did not complain, ever. [Laughter]. It's been quite a trip. You see, we never escape this thing, this Old Adamic Nature within us. You can't escape this thing in life. But, there is one escape coming, and we'll all get there one day. We leave it here when we go to the Lord at the Rapture.

Lady. We leave it right here?

[Class comments back and forth. Inaudible].

Conrad Bowman. You know, I love this verse down toward the end of this thing, and we'll come back to it next week. This ministry is great. Oh, how great it is. But I'm speaking with reference to Christ and the Church. And that's what we're talking about. That is what we're talking about. We're right there, and I want to come back to that. Thank you.

[This recording was transcribed on a tape recorder, and transmitted to a digital format. The earlier recordings, of which this is one, were made on a tape recorder. Some are more audible than others. This particular recording was extremely unclear, and therefore is not including in the audio section of this site].