

Don't Fall Short Of Firstfruits Standards (Go To Meeting)

Durrell Brown—July 28, 2023

Very pleasant good Sabbath to all of you. It's not quite sunset here on the West Coast, but it will be shortly.

It is a privilege and for me a matchless privilege to be able to talk to you this evening and bring to you this message.

The great God of heaven has blessed me tremendously. I'm in my 86th year of life. God has been good to me over the eras of time that I've lived. I've been in the Church over 60 years.

So what a blessing it is to be called and chosen at this time to not only set an example, but proclaim the Word of God to God's people.

Now, God the Father and Jesus Christ, Who became the Son of God through the incarnation, through this miracle of incarnation, He became one of us, for the purpose in God's overall plan of saving us.

What a tremendous Plan that God has set in motion and the alternatives that He has. He created the heavens and the earth and the angelic forces and one third of the angelic forces failed in their purpose, and had to be rejected and kicked out.

God in His mercy continued His Plan, which was to create beings in His image. What an amazing thing! Create beings in His image and place them on a refurbished earth that had been turned into ruin and brought to ruin because God had set one third of the angels on the created earth to prepare it for the habitation of mankind who were to grow into beings like His Son Jesus Christ.

Apparently, one third of the angels did not like that plan and attempted to thwart it. We don't know how long after their rebellion the earth lay in waste until God refurbished it and set in motion His other alternative to restructure the earth, create beings, different kinds of beings as living forces on His earth and two beings made in His actual image to grow into the fullness of the measure of His Son to come.

What an amazing Plan God the Father and Jesus Christ, the second person of the Godness set in motion. We are the recipients of those plans.

God has called us after a very long period of time. We see He has known what He was going to have to do because He understands the foibles and the weaknesses in His creation, in His plan to grow His Family.

So we find Him creating mankind, male and female, in His image for this phase of His creational process, building and growing His Family. We are privileged of all peoples at this time to be called the firstfruits of His creatures and to qualify for that firstfruit creation. I want to talk about that and help us to see:

- who we are
- why we are
- what God is doing in this earthly realm
- why at some point in the planning He had to send His Son, the second consciousness in the Godness

He had to send His Son through the miracle of an incarnation, to become a human being in the flesh just as we are and prove that the plan would work, that a human being could be grown into the fullness and the measure of Jesus Christ, His stature, and qualify :

- to live eternally as a being in the image of God
- to finish at this phase of His creation that will go on for all eternity

Beings who would carry on that work and extend it to the ends of the universe!

So, I want to emphasize as strongly as I can in the message how important it is for those of us who have been called at this time, as the firstfruits of His creatures, to fulfill the goal and do our part of the responsibility of growing to the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ.

That's the goal that we have come to understand God has set for us. To see how this worked and what this is all about:

Galatians 3.27: "For as many *of you* as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ."

God in this phase of the Plan has called as firstfruits those who were willing to come after He opened their minds. His goal is to grow us into beings like His Son, ***to put on Christ!***

"For as many *of you* as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ." ***He has a Plan of Salvation for us!***

We have the amazing responsibility to submit ourselves to this Plan of Salvation and allow through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that we will receive:

- the empowerment from Him after answering His call
- following the instructions to repent of sin

Yet, baptized symbolic of bearing the old man and receiving the Spirit of God that will empower us to understand fully how to become like His Son, Jesus Christ.

Ephesians 4:7: “But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

Christ, the second consciousness in the Godness, was willing through the incarnation to become one of us. He was perfect to start with. He became a human being and started out filled with the Holy Spirit of God, which has set us an example, if we are filled with the Holy Spirit we can grow to be just like Him, because He will put His Spirit in us.

Verse 7: “But grace was given to each one of us according to the measure of the gift of Christ.”

Christ was filled as a human being, the first of His kind, through the incarnation.

Verse 8: “For this *very* reason, He says *that* after ascending on high, He led captivity captive, and gave gifts to men.... after His crucifixion and resurrection] ...Now He Who ascended” (vs 8-9).

Having experienced living as a perfect human being, dying as a perfect human being, receiving atonement and the power for the atonement of all our sins.

He has ascended to heaven that His sacrifice for all humankind—past, present and future—would be accomplished.

Verse 10: “He Who descended is the same One Who also ascended above all the heavens so that He might fulfill all things.”

This major step in God’s overall Plan of Salvation is a marvelous thing for us to comprehend at this time and be a part of. As the firstfruits in this creative process, what a powerful and major calling we receive to be the firstfruits of these creatures.

Verse 12: “For the perfecting of the saints, for *the* work of *the* ministry, for *the* edifying of the Body of Christ.”

This is what Christ has done and has commissioned us who have been called and chosen to do.

Verse 13: “Until we all come into the unity of the faith...”

That’s our goal, that’s our struggle, that’s what we’ve been created to become.

“...and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto *the* measure of *the* stature of the fullness of Christ” (v 13).

We’re going to see what our part is in the process and what God’s part is in the process. Christ as a perfect human being, came through the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and lived a perfect life of obedience to God. He set us a perfect example that it is possible to please God in such a way that He will save us.

What a fantastic plan this is. We are to put on Christ.

James said we are a kind of firstfruits of these creatures. Let’s see James, brother of Christ, how he explains this.

James 1:18: “According to His own will, He begat us by *the* Word of Truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all His created beings.”

This is the first time God has in essence and for all practical purposes, fulfilled this creation. Jesus Christ came as a human being, God in the flesh, lived a perfect, sinless life, died a death on a cross, and being of more value than all human beings who have died and will come, obtained eternal salvation and forgiveness for the sins of all mankind, past and present. **What is our job?**

Verse 22: “Then be doers of *the* Word, and not only hearers, deceiving your own selves.”

Verse 26 tells us some of the things that we have to do and not do. There’s more we’ll see concerning this.

Ephesians 4:13: “Until we all come into the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man...”

The goal is Godly perfection, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. This accomplishment will place us as

Verse 14: “So that we no longer be children, tossed and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the sleight of men...”

Verse 15: “But holding the Truth in love, may in all things grow up into Him Who is the Head, *even* Christ from Whom all the Body, fitly framed and compacted together by *that which* every joint supplies, according to *its* inner working in *the* measure of each individual part, is making the increase of the body unto *the* edifying of itself in love” (vs 15-16).

This continual process, once we are called, chosen, we repented of our sins and empowered with the Holy Spirit. the goal is to grow into a perfect man.

Verse 17: "So then, I declare and testify this in *the* Lord that you are no longer to walk even as the rest *of the* Gentiles are walking, in *the* vanity of their minds."

We are to let the mind of Christ guide us in all of our thinking, in all of our action.

Verse 20: "But you have not so learned Christ."

Once we learn Christ, the whole New Testament is a teaching about what Christ is like, what He did, and what He's going to do through us, and what our part in the salvation process is.

Verse 20: "But you have not so learned Christ; if indeed you have heard Him and have been taught in Him, according to *the Truth* in Jesus" (vs 20-21).

Verse 22: "...put off the old man..."

Verse 23: "And that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man..." (vs 23-24).

Verse 25 are the things that we are to put away

Verse 26: "...do not sin..."

Verse 27: "Neither give place to the devil."

We will see this great and tremendous calling that we receive as first fruits of His creatures, placed us still in the position to be influenced by the devil.

We see that our calling is a higher calling. We are qualifying for higher positions than the rest of the human beings to come that will be qualifying for.

God in his mercy has looked down on these generations to be a kind of firstfruits of His creatures. What a marvelous privilege, brethren, that we have received. Let's not take this lightly.

As the firstfruits of His creatures, we have a harder job than those who will come after us. We are going to be warring against the world, the flesh, and the devil. That's a tremendously hard task. Our first parents failed it, failed it badly.

I think we can see, and I may get to those verses, that there's coming a resurrection where all who have ever lived or had the potential fertilized egg in the womb of a human being that was aborted will have an opportunity.

We have Scriptures that indicate all of these people will be brought up in a resurrection and given an opportunity to enter the Kingdom of God and

become beings whom God can use in His overall plan as it is extended to the entire universe.

But what a matchless privilege, brethren, it is to those of us who have been called at this time to be among the firstfruits of His creatures.

It's a harder task, but those of you who have been called and chosen, make no mistake about it,

- our God is with us
- He's hoping
- He's available.
- He loves us
- He wants to see us make it

So we must put on Christ! We must let his mind be in us! We are to become a perfect man!

Philippians 3:8: "But then truly, I count all things to be loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for Whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and count *them* as dung; that I may gain Christ."

We've got to cast off all of this carnality and worldly things and focus on measuring up to the fullness of the stature of the measure of Christ.

Verse 9: "And may be found in Him, not having my own righteousness, which *is derived* from Law..."

Just Law-keeping for Law-keeping sake, because the law requires you to do that, is insufficient.

"...but that *righteousness*, which *is by the* faith of Christ..." (v 9).

We must come to have not only the mind of Christ, but the faith of Christ in God's Plan and what He's going to do throughout all eternity.

"...the righteousness of God *that is* based on faith; that I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death" (vs 9-10).

I've talked in an earlier message about the power of the first resurrection. Those of us who are called now will be in the first resurrection, which is a better resurrection. It's based on better promises, because we've had to overcome ***the world, the flesh, and the devil***, so we're qualifying for a higher calling, higher positions in the Kingdom of God for all eternity.

What a fantastic blessing that God would have that kind of mercy on us at this juncture in His Plan.

Verse 10: “That I may know Him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death.”

So we have to go through, perhaps many of us, the same things that Christ went through, the suffering, the rejection of being, the suffering and the power of the flesh to suffer, and we have to endure.

Verse 11: “If by any means I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead.”

Do we have that attitude? I’m willing to give up anything, everything, even this physical life that I may attain unto the resurrection of the dead.

Verse 12: “Not as though I have already received, or have already been perfected; but I am striving, so that I may also lay hold on that for which I also was laid hold of by Christ Jesus. Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained; but *this* one thing *I do*—**forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are ahead**” (vs 12-13).

We’ve got to keep our focus on the things that are ahead. My time is short, I realize that, in my 86th year. So we’re only promised three score and ten, so I’ve gotten my promised time and somebody else’s. I’ve been healed, well it’s been into remission, cancer two times. I’ve survived a truck accident that could have killed me: broken ribs and bones, six months recovery.

So, God has been good to me, I have no problems with God being good to me. I trust you feel that way, too.

Many of you in this audience that I’m speaking to have received your three score and ten and more. Our time is short. Have we measured up, yet, ***to the fullest of the measure of the stature of Christ?*** That’s the standard! That’s the firstfruit standard! **How close are you to it?**

I’ve been baptized since what 1960. That’s a long time to have been trying to qualify as a firstfruit. I personally don’t feel that I’m there, and my time is short and all of our time is short.

So where are we in our striving to be ready for that firstfruit resurrection? *That’s what we have been called to!*

Jesus is the First of the firstfruits. In His mercy He has called.... Not many are called, of the many who are called, ***only a few are chosen!*** What a matchless privilege! ***We have been chosen!***

- Are we measuring up?
- Have we already measured up to the fullest of the measure of the stature of Christ?

Verse 13: “Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained...”

Paul was able to say this after all he had been through: he spent three years in personal training in Arabia; three years being personally trained by Jesus Christ, and he still had problems. But he had a lot of faith. Paul has written these words of encouragement and these instructions for us to see how he made it.

He knew he was going to be in that first resurrection. **Are we sure?**

Verse 14: “I press toward *the* goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. So then... [since we’re doing that]: ...**let as many as be perfect be of this mind.** And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you” (vs 14-15).

His Holy Spirit will convict us. It will call to our attention that what else we need to do and empower us to that kind of perfection.

Verse 17: *Paul says:* “Brethren, be imitators together of me, and bear in mind those who walk in this way, as you have us *for* an example.”

Verse 21 *is the goal, and that’s where we want to be:* “Who will transform our vile bodies, that they may be conformed to His glorious body, according to the inner working of His own power, *whereby He is able* to subdue all things to Himself.”

This amazing Plan of Salvation that God has given us, Rom. 13:14, Paul says that what we are doing is putting on Christ.

Galatians 3:27: “For as many *of you* as were baptized into Christ did put on Christ.”

Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus! How do we accomplish this?

Ephesians 6:10: “Finally, my brethren, be strong in *the* Lord, and in the might of His strength. Put on the whole armor of God” (vs 10-11).

That’s the work that we have to do in our minds.

Verse 11: **Put on the whole armor of God** so that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil” ***We’re wrestling against the world of flesh and the devil!***

Verse 13—*he describes it:* “Therefore, take up the whole armor of God so that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having worked out all things, to stand.” *So there’s work to be done!*

There’s wisdom that we receive through the empowering of the Holy Spirit to have discernment

and avoid things, situations that will get us into trouble. God's Spirit will lead us into all Truth and it will empower us to resist the devil and his evil.

Verse 14: "Stand, therefore, having your loins girded about with Truth His Word is Truth..."—*all of it from Gen, to Rev.*

We see instructions on how to be Godly, how to avoid troubles, problems and all of that, and how to get forgiveness for our sins and our weaknesses and this kind of thing.

Verse 14: "Stand, therefore, having your loins girded about with Truth, and wearing the breastplate of righteousness"

When we're keeping God's Law at the spiritual level, **then** we are righteous. That righteousness should be protecting us, protecting our heart and mind and being.

Verse 15: "And having your feet shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace."

- living it
- preaching it
- teaching it

through our example in our relationships in this world!

Verse 16: "Besides all *these*, take up the shield of the faith..."

God will give us more faith as we step out on the faith, the level of faith where we are. If we are acting on that faith, God will give us additional faith.

"...with which you will have the power to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked one; and **put on the helmet of salvation**..." (vs 16-17).

We've been talking about the salvation that is coming! Keep that in the forefront of your mind that God has called us as the firstfruits of this Plan of His creation. What a marvelous call.

Verse 17: "And put on the helmet of salvation..."

That He has already saved us if we can hold on to it!

Verse 18: "Praying at all times with all prayer and supplication in *the* Spirit, and in this very thing being watchful with all perseverance and supplication for all the saints." *The Holy Spirit is our witness:*

- it will convict us
- it will empower us
- it will testify to us we are the sons of God

We've seen that verse and that promise. So we are called to be the firstfruits of His creatures. ***The firstfruit standard is the highest standard. We qualify for the highest offices!***

At the end of things, when the Millennial Harvest and the White Throne Harvest, when those brethren are brought into the Kingdom and they are rejoicing and praising God. Angelic beings are falling down on their faces when this work that God has called us to is finished. Christ turns the work over to the Father and submits Himself.

We're standing there in the presence of God. Twenty-four elders falling down, worshiping. *What a marvelous reward for our faithfulness!*

I attempt to fantasize on what it's going to be like when Adam and Eve and all those millions, maybe even billions who come up in the second resurrection—that we will be celebrating soon through the Feast of Tabernacles—what it's going to be like.

No doubt Adam and Eve will be there. All those who failed to qualify, who were not called, who failed to see the Truth during that long period of time. We don't know how long from Christ to the Flood, how much time was there. We can't put the genealogies together sufficiently. Perhaps we will do that before too long. We have some clues. We know how many generations it was and this kind of thing.

But God was very patient for a long time, but he shut that operation down. All those people are going to come up in a resurrection. Their eyes will be open. No doubt Adam and Eve will be there.

What position they will hold, will they be able to continue their role in helping bring as all those in the second resurrection will have responsibilities, no doubt; to all of their progeny who will be there and understand:

- what a marvelous God
- what a merciful God He has been
- to give them a chance at salvation

John 14:8: "Philip said to Him, 'Lord, show us the Father, and that will be sufficient for us.' Jesus said to him, 'Have I been with you so long a time, and you have not known Me, Philip? The one who has seen Me has seen the Father; why then do you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and the Father is in Me? The words that I speak to you, I do not speak from My own self; but the Father Himself, Who dwells in Me, does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; but if not, believe Me because of the works themselves. Truly, truly I say to you, the one who believes in Me shall also do the

works that I do; and greater works than these shall he do because I am going to the Father. And whatever you shall ask in My name, this will I do that the Father may be glorified in the Son.” (vs 8-13).

Verse 14: If you ask anything in My name, I will do *it*. If you love Me, keep the commandments—namely, My commandments. And I will ask the Father, and He shall give you another Comforter, that it may be with you throughout the age: *Even* the Spirit of the Truth, which the world cannot receive because it perceives it not, nor knows it, but you know it because it dwells with you, and shall be within you” (vs 14-17).

If we are filled with God’s Spirit and we continue to let it move us and guide us and grow us, and keep His commandments.

Verse 22: “Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, ‘Lord, what has happened that You are about to manifest Yourself to us, and not to the world?’”

Verse 23: “Jesus answered and said to him, ‘If anyone loves Me, he will keep My Word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him.’”

The Tabernacle of God^[transcriber’s correction] is going to be set up. Those of us who are firstfruits of his creatures will be in that tabernacle with the Father.

Verse 25: “I have spoken these things to you while I am yet present with you. But *when* the Comforter *comes*, *even* the Holy Spirit, which the Father will send in My name, that One shall teach you all things...” (vs 25-26).

Brethren, we have received God’s Holy Spirit. it is evident He has called and chosen us and we are the firstfruits of His creatures. We’re qualifying for the highest offices in the Kingdom of God to hold them throughout eternity.

Adam and Eve and all these other people will come up in a resurrection. We will be the ones who will bring them into the Kingdom of God.

Our God is an awesome God and He loves. None of His Plan is a failure. It all has had purpose in His great awesomeness. What a tremendous calling we have received.

- let us not neglect it
- let us not fall short

as one who has not fully measured up to the fullness of the measure of the stature of Christ!

We want to be sufficiently informed and Christ-like. However many cities, whatever charge and responsibility we are placed in for eternity, that

we will rejoice in it and be so happy and so excited ***that this will carry us throughout all eternity!***

I trust that we have come to see who we are and the charge and responsibility that has been placed upon our shoulders as the firstfruits. Let us hold fast and gather ourselves as close to God as we can and hold on. If we are there, we have it made.

Obviously we can see prophecy as being fulfilled. We are closer than we have ever been to the close of this dispensation, this Plan of God.

I trust that this will help us to see who we are. Most of us, I think, in this audience are aged. Christ could come very soon for us. **Have you qualified under a firstfruits standard?**

I trust and hope this message of how loving and caring God is has helped us to see that it’s doable and we can get there.

Scriptural References:

- 1) Galatians 3:27
- 2) Ephesians 4:7-10, 12-13
- 3) James 1:18, 22
- 4) Ephesians 4:13-17, 20-24, 26-27
- 5) Philippians 3:8-15, 17, 21
- 6) Galatians 3:27
- 7) Ephesians 6:10-11, 13-18
- 8) John 14:8-17, 22-23, 25-26

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- James 1:26
- Ephesians 6:25
- Romans 13; 14

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