

Iniquity Shall Abound

(Sermon Notes) By Warren Zehrung – 1/25/2014

“The ways of this world” are making headway—and gaining a foothold in the Church of God. We need to take a good look at what God says. It is time to confront the danger head on.

When brethren are being unduly influenced—causing them to reject the long held faith we once received, it is time to refute and denounce as loudly and clearly as possible those things impacting our Church narrative and belief basis.

Matthew 6:

33 Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and **all these things** shall be added unto you.

The “**all these things**” just mentioned are clothes, home, food, necessities. God is saying to us that when we put Him first in our lives, seek the ways of His Kingdom – its laws, its principles, its rules, its practices – the way it is in God’s Kingdom **FIRST** in our lives—then everything else will fall into place.

It is easy to say that God’s way is of the highest priority in our lives - **but is it?** When I’m working with those folks in Africa, they often ask for money and materials for buildings, churches and orphanages. I remind them of this verse – Seek God – look to God and the ways of His kingdom.

It is a difficult paradigm for them to break – because two centuries of missionaries have had them **look** elsewhere. They do not look primarily to God but to rich America.

Are we making the same mistake within God’s Church – not looking directly to God and His ways? Many of our brethren have learned **not** to look to God to “Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness,” but to look to the **government** to supply all their needs.

Many of our brethren have learned **not** to look **to God** to, “Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness,” but to look to church organizations and certain men for their needs, comfort and security. It is an easy trap to fall into.

We have fallen to the point in America where **half the population** looks to the **government** for food, money, housing, cell phones, - you name it... Once a person falls into that trap of relying on government – they cannot truly look primarily to God.

They will do what it takes to please the government – but not God—He’s pushed aside. God is **not** in that picture. God is clear on that principle:

Luke 16:

13 No servant can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. [government programs of wealth distribution]

I need to put this disclaimer in this sermon: I am not speaking of the disabled, the elderly, the veterans and the orphans – but of **able bodied** people who live off the government.

Jude

- 3** Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly **contend for the faith which was once delivered** unto the saints.

The Church of God once knew these principles – but in these last days many have forgotten how to, “Seek first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness.” Some brethren have begun to rely on—and to defending the corrupt policies that are destroying the blessings God meant the United States of America and the United Kingdom to have.

This is exactly what Jesus spoke of when He said:

Matthew 24:

- 12** Because **lawlessness shall abound**, the love of many shall wax cold.

One reason that **Iniquity shall Abound** is that Lawlessness is not recognized for what it is—going **against** God, and the Kingdom of God. How many remember when America was a place where optimistic individualism thrived under the protection of the law? Now, official government agencies war against that spirit of freedom and prosperity which made the United States of America the greatest nation that has ever existed.

Most American citizens have not yet recognized the deep **animosity** our government has toward God, the things of God, freedom of religion, individual initiative, and free enterprise. Most people take the great American dream for granted, and do not yet realize that there is a power fundamentally changing America into a nightmare.

Scripture shows that the great majority of our population will not repent or awaken until it is too late. We brethren, in the Church of God, should not be asleep but **awake** and **watching**.

Matthew 25:

- 5** While the Bridegroom tarried, they all **slumbered and slept**.

1 Peter 4:

- 7** The end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore sober, and **watch** unto prayer.

How has everything turned upside down in America right before our eyes? Our nation has abandoned the fundamental principles that once made our economy great, and now we are paying a tremendous price for that blunder. There is a cancer that is eating away at the moral fabric of America.

Our government, like their atheistic, socialistic counterparts in Europe, would rather pay **workers not to work** than to allow an economic environment of expanding growth that would cause jobs to be created for the vast unemployed American workforce. Unfortunately, some of our Church brethren are accepting, even embracing, this baseless mindset of welfare economics, in their own personal lives—joining the band of thieves who cheat and exploit others.

The proponents of massive welfare programs—socialism—say that the only problem with socialism is, “Funding it.” The government appropriates money from those who **work hard** – and give it to those who **will not work**.

That is not how the Kingdom of God works. We cannot all be takers—someone has to be productive—it is simple math. In today's sermon we will examine what God says about **work** and its connection to our **spiritual** development.

Our Christian faith tells us to constantly apply every principle and virtue of Jesus Christ to every facet of our lives. And when we do—**who and what we are begins to change**. We begin to become **moral** beings with integrity and Godly character.

I just want to warn our brethren not to be a part of that evil economic system. God would not say this to His Church if it were not applicable to us:

Revelation 18:

- 4** I heard another voice from heaven, saying, **Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins**, and that ye receive not of her plagues.

The end-time **culture** and **society** will **appear inviting** to most of the brethren in God's Church. The government give-aways will look so good and appealing. God warns us not to fall for it. There is a most stern warning in Thessalonians.

2 Thessalonians 2:

- 10** And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the **love of the truth**, that they might be saved.

God's Word tells us how we must live.

2 Thessalonians 2:

- 11** And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie:
12 That they all might be damned who **believed not the truth**, but had pleasure in unrighteousness.

Our advancement comes only from God on the North side of heaven—not man's organizations on this earth.

Psalms 75:

- 6** For **promotion** cometh neither from the East, nor from the West, nor from the South. [But]

Isaiah 14:

- 13** from...heaven...God... in the sides of the North:

I am simply amazed how few brethren in the Church of God see the dangers of socialism. It is as if they were saying, "If someone is willing to do all the work while I sit back and live off them—more power to me!"

Brethren, don't you realize that the Beast and the False Prophet operate by **flatteries** – luscious social welfare programs to occupy the minds of the idle.

Daniel 11:

- 32** And such as do wickedly against the covenant shall he corrupt by **flatteries**: but the people that do know their God shall be strong, and do exploits.

And almost no one in God's Church has their guard up against these ungodly works. Socialists believe in equality for all – so it teaches that those who work hard, save, invest wisely—should share all they have accumulated with those who live wasteful and profligate lifestyles.

Socialism will never admit it, because it is all about control in the name of fairness, equality, compassion and generosity—but the result is always the same—the **dumbing down** of the **work ethic** of a nation to the point of ultimate failure. It is human nature at its worse—people do not rise to the occasion when there is no motivation to do their utmost best.

God is warning His Church brethren not to become a part and parcel to the things that are acceptable to the world—but not to God. When a person accepts—and joins in—the ways of this world—they are in fact rejecting God's way in their lives.

What is our country coming to? How much longer will true Christians be tolerated? How much longer will true Christians **conservative values and truth** be tolerated? Our country is going down the drain—fast! We must be wary of the tell tale signs of our failing American economy and culture.

Last week, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo proclaimed that those with our “**extreme**” **Christian convictions**—like right to life—that men should marry women—have “**no place** in the state of New York.”

Who are these extremists that Andrew Cuomo is talking about? **It's us.**

Most people believe that **there is a God**... A loving Creator God. The fact is that the majority of Americans believe that **abortion is wrong**.

How could someone's mind—like Governor Cuomo's—become so twisted and perverted as his has become? Well, of course the Bible has the answers.

Psalm 111:

10 The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom: **a good understanding** have all they that **do [keep] His commandments**: His praise endures forever.

Governor Cuomo does **not** keep the Ten Commandments – so there is no possible way he could understand **what we believe**. Paul put it this way:

Romans 1:

18 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and **unrighteousness of men**, who hold-back the truth in unrighteousness...

That is what Governor Cuomo is doing...

Romans 1:

20 ... so that they are without excuse:

21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

God says that people like Governor Cuomo have their hearts darkened – and they become fools.

Romans 1:

22 Professing themselves to be wise, **they** became fools.

Governor Cuomo thinks **we** are the extreme fools—we, people that believe that God created men and women and told them to procreate and fill the earth. How can a person keep from becoming twisted like — Governor Cuomo?

Genesis 1:

27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and **subdue it**:

God intends for man **to work**, to be busy, to make a **productive living** and be self-sufficient. God has given us the seven day week – the entire earth observes the week!

Exodus 20:

9 Six days shalt thou **labor**, and do all thy work:

With God's help—a man is able to set goals for himself and his family and meet them. God made man to **enjoy work** – it is what he does all of his life.

Genesis 2:

15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to **dress it** and to keep it.

“Dress it,” is work—I love mowing the grass and trimming the shrubbery. I especially love building things—houses—buildings—boats—barns.

Genesis 2:

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

24 Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his **wife**: and they shall be **one flesh**.

If you live in New York State, that view of a **Godly marriage** is an “**extreme**” view according to the Governor. The Governor unequivocally stated that if you believe that **yet unborn** babies have a “right-to-life, you are and unwelcome “**extremist**” in his state. Our Lord could not imagine that mankind could be so cruel and heartless as to kill their own beautiful children.

President Barack Obama and our Supreme Court are in favor of aborting babies of which God has said that such an abomination *never entered His mind* (Jeremiah 19:5). President Obama is on the Congressional record as being in favor of murdering **surviving** babies of failed abortion attempts.

As we just saw in Romans 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, **they** became fools. God values life—President Obama does **not** share those same values. The blood of millions upon millions of innocents cry unto God for restitution, and judgment (Genesis 4:10). God's own justice demands satisfaction.

New York Governor Andrew Cuomo believes in killing and **death** – and he thinks that it is stylish and smart.

We in God's Church believe in our Loving Savior who gives **life**—and Governor Andrew Cuomo believes that we are the foolish extremists.

Brethren, do not be ashamed to speak loudly and decisively about our national sins and transgressions – it is our duty. Look at What God says:

1 Corinthians 6:

9 Know ye not that the **unrighteous** shall not inherit the kingdom of God?

There is a list there of those who God declares to be unrighteous—who will not make it into the Kingdom of God. If we get caught up in these politically correct trends—just because the **government** is all in **favor** of them—we will not inherit the kingdom of God.

It is **un-Godly** to live off someone else's labor and money. It is a Ponzi scheme—A Ponzi scheme is a fraudulent investment operation that pays returns to its investors with someone else's money—they send people to jail for doing that—it is illegal—as Bernie Madoff found out. It is the classic old **pyramid scheme** that cannot possibly pay off—it is mathematically impossible. You quickly come to the point where you have more non-workers receiving the money that others earned – and the system collapses.

It is happening big time in Europe already. People were promised big pensions – only to find out that there is no more money to be had. Margaret Thatcher said it best — “The problem with socialism is that you eventually run out of other people's money.”

How is it then, that New York Governor Andrew Cuomo cannot see the **end result** of his pursuit to rid his State of those who work hard and pay lots of taxes? Over three million residents have already left the high tax, low tolerance State of New York.

Where does he think the new money is going to come from to pay all the free-loaders? Does he not realize that his policies are the same as those of Detroit, Michigan? And Stockton, California, to name a few—there are many others. Recently, Detroit became the largest municipal bankruptcy in U.S. history.

Ignoring Godly economic principles, government officials failed—or refused—to make the tough economic and political decisions that might have saved their cities from financial ruin.

Those God-less government types want the taxes of gainfully employed people—but **not** their ethics, principles, virtues, values and morals.

They were simply spending money that they did not have. They promised increasing perks, pensions and benefits in a shrinking economy.

And they call us extremists – for working and living within our means???

New York is like an airplane in a nose dive—without room enough to pull up. That's the Titanic seeing the **iceberg** when it is too late to turn. There is nothing left but the impending “Crunch!”

There are always dire repercussions: As Nebuchadnezzar's grandson Belshazzar would say, I see the **handwriting on the wall**.

Amid a huge—loss of jobs—exodus of residents—closing of businesses—plummeting tax revenues and skyrocketing home abandonment, Detroit's leaders engaged in a billion-dollar borrowing binge—that there was no possible hope of repayment—created new taxes and failed to cut expenses when they needed to.

Simultaneously, they gifted workers and retirees with generous bonuses. And under pressure from the unions they failed to cut health care benefits— saddling the city with staggering costs that **today** threaten the safety and quality of life of people who live here. It is a disaster scene.

This is the path that New York Governor Andrew Cuomo has chosen to embark upon. Does he not understand Cause and Effect—you reap what you sow?

Galatians 6:

- 7** Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap.
- 8** For he that sows to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that sows to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.
- 9** And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

If Governor Andrew Cuomo had any wisdom at all—he would be begging the hard working entrepreneurs and wage earners to remain in his State. He would give them incentives to stay and build New York—not be telling them to get out of town.

It only takes a little insight to see how much our **President** emulates Governor Andrew Cuomo's policies and approach. If he has his way—the entire United States of America will be much worse off than bankrupt Detroit. The US credit rating has plummeted—one day soon there will be no creditor to borrow from.

Brethren, here is what we need to concern ourselves with—we've seen it happen again and again. God's people **go along** with what is wrong for **far too long**—they get in too deep—over their heads—and then they are captivated—and they fall. God warns us not to trust in our own evaluations.

Proverbs 16:

- 25** There is a way that seems right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death.

To some of the brethren it **seems right** to go along with, even take part in, the current administration's and their policies of **welfare for the able bodied**, extended unemployment benefits to the able bodied, and all kinds of government programs to cause the general public to become dependent on government money.

Who is warning the brethren? Who is teaching the brethren? Who is looking out for the brethren in God's Church?

Who is shaping the thinking of the people within God's Church?

It must be the **Word of God**—that shapes our views—and not public media and corrupt government. Are we coming to the point where we close our eyes to the sins of America? How do we in the Church of God overcome the curse? How can men's minds be so different?

Our conscience needs to be trained and informed by the word of God. The Protestants say that God loves you **“just as you are.”** We do not grow in knowledge and grace by remaining “Just as we are,” when called.

1 Peter 1:

- 13** Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind [we must **train** our mind, and instruct our conscience], be sober [have self-control], and hope to the end [the goal – the finish line of our calling] for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

It is an extremely difficult thing to do—to see where we were going wrong. It requires God's intervention to accomplish. Brethren, we must work and pray that God will give us the **courage to change** wrong characteristics, wrong habits—into obedient members of God's Church.

1 Peter 1:

- 14** As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts in your ignorance [when we did not know better]:

We must change our ways or be doomed for life in a set of wrong values that lead to poverty and destruction.

1 Peter 1:

- 15** But as He who has called you is holy, so be ye holy [set apart from this world and its wrong ways of doing things] in all manner of conversation [conduct];
- 16** Because it is written, Be ye holy; for I am holy.
- 17** And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judges according to every man's work, pass the time of your life's sojourning here in the fear of God [respecting these words of God.]

We are to overcome this evil world.

Our personal lives are a direct reflection of our belief system. If we do **not truly believe** what God is showing us in His Word—it will not become a part and parcel of who we are and what we do. It will only be sentiments – like the world calls on the name of God and then – does **not do** His will.

Brethren, this is not the first time that Church brethren got caught up in this philosophy of living the easy life—and letting someone do all the **work** for you. The story is told here in 2 Thessalonians 3:4 for us so that we do not make the same mistake that they did. Paul had a responsibility before God to warn the brethren about those who had a habit of **not working**—because he was ...watching out for their lives, as one that must give account to God... (Hebrews 13:17).

2 Thessalonians 3:

- 4** And we have confidence **in the Lord** touching you, that ye both do and **will do the things** which we command you.

Paul told them that God fully expected them to repent of their sinful **inactivity** and turn their **thinking around** – and then turn their lives around and become fully gainfully employed.

2 Thessalonians 3:

- 5** And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.
- 6** Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye **withdraw** yourselves from every brother that **walks disorderly**, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

“**Walks disorderly**” is a phrase that is easy to misconstrue. It means that some were free-loaders—living off other people’s money. So Paul says, “One further order we must give you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ is not to associate with the brother whose life **lacks a proper work ethic**. Paul said, “You never saw me giving you that example.”

2 Thessalonians 3:

7 For yourselves know how ye ought to follow us: for we behaved not ourselves **disorderly** among you;

Disorderly—Paul says you never saw me **loafing**—not even once!

2 Thessalonians 3:

8 Neither did we eat any man's bread for nought; but **worked hard in labor** and travail night and day, that we might **not be chargeable to any of you**:

“**Not be chargeable to any of you**” means that Paul never lived at someone else’s expense. That is breaking the Commandment Not to Steal. We did not eat anyone’s food without paying for it. In fact we toiled and **labored** night and day to avoid being the slightest expense to any of you.

That is what is so bad about what our Government is doing. They are trying to teach the entire nation to **live at someone else’s expense**. They desire a nanny state of **moochers** – so they can stay in power. It is a trap that will cost those who fall for it their salvation.

2 Thessalonians 3:

9 Not because we have not power, but to make ourselves an example unto you to follow us.

Paul always set a right example to them of working **hard and diligently**. And notice that Paul had already addressed this problem of some not holding a job as they should.

2 Thessalonians 3:

10 For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any would **not work, neither should he eat**.

11 For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, **working not at all** [purposely unemployed - never doing a stroke of work they can weasel their way out of], but are busybodies [just fiddling around pretending to be busy.]

Now it has come to a crisis – so Paul tells the **lazy** Thessalonians that it is **God** who commands them to get to work.

2 Thessalonians 3:

12 Now them that are such we command and exhort by our Lord **Jesus Christ**, that with quietness **they work, and eat their own bread**.

Our order to such men Paul says, indeed our appeal by the Lord Jesus Christ, is to settle down to work and eat the food they have earned themselves. Hold down a job – advance in that job – and do it from now on!

2 Thessalonians 3:

13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

And if they insist on being a **leach on society** – tell them that the Church is no place for them!

2 Thessalonians 3:

- 14 And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.
15 Yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.

Paul tells Timothy:

1 Timothy 5:

- 8 But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an **infidel**. [Unbeliever.]

If you are not **working hard** on earth – how **hard** are you working on your **spiritual** development? There will not be any freeloaders in the Kingdom.

Even before man sinned it was his lot to work: God made man for work, and He intends that man works.

God is the Creator—and He put that proclivity within every one of us to create, build and make things. It is sometimes difficult to remember to not fall into the traps and temptations of this world but to do everything to glorify God. Our backgrounds, our up raising, our expectations—all make us react differently... Until we come to the point where we ask ourselves, “What does God say?”

We change—because we are seeking that unity of the Spirit with God. That is when our lives change for the better.

Jesus says:

John 5:

- 17 In his defense Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at **His work** to this very day, and I too, am working."

Colossians 3:

- 23 **work heartily**, as for the Lord and not for men.

1 Timothy 5:

- 18 “The **laborer** deserves his wages.” (Not someone who is not working.)

God’s will is that His people have a “**work culture**,” not a get out of work culture. But what does God say to those who would rather sleep-in, and take afternoon naps at his family’s expense.

Proverbs 6:

- 4 Give not sleep to thine eyes, nor slumber to thine eyelids.

God knows we need 8 hours of sleep—that’s not what He is saying here.

God is saying that if you have the proclivity to want to **sleep in**, take it **easy** all the time—and **take naps** instead of working.

Proverbs 6:

- 5 Deliver thyself as a roe from the hand of the hunter, and as a bird from the hand of the fowler.

This mean to escape as fast as you can from that **terrible trait** of doing nothing but lazing around.

Proverbs 6:

- 6 Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise:
- 7 Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler,
- 8 Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.
- 9 How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep?
- 10 Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep:

This warns us of the danger of poverty and deviousness.

Proverbs 6:

- 11 So shall thy poverty come as one that travels [hikes] [That is, with slow, but surely approaching steps he will come to poverty.], and thy want as an armed man [your needs will overwhelm you and you will not be prepared to oppose it.]

We, the Church of God brethren are the MOST blessed of all God's creation because we have received His Holy Spirit – making us the privileged Children of God.

Proverbs 14:

- 23 All hard work brings a profit, but mere talk leads only to poverty.

Proverbs 12:

- 11 Those who **work** their land will have abundant food, but those who chase fantasies have no wisdom.

There is a spiritual connection between **hard** work and serving God's people.

Acts 20:

- 35 In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of **hard work** we must **help the weak**, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

If you are not gainfully employed it is difficult to learn this **spiritual principle**.

Proverbs 11:

- 24 There is **that scatters**, and yet **increases**; and there is that withholds more than is meet, but it tends to poverty.

Those who scatter their wealth among the poor, and help with the work of God—are greatly blessed—they increase. Those who are selfish, don't work, and do not tithe—end up in poverty.

To help the weak – to do the work of God – it is necessary to be productive. There are brethren in God's Church who are severely handicapped who understand this principle and tithe—and are greatly blessed for doing so. You cannot out give God—He won't allow it! That is God's formula for wealth, prosperity and security. I'm not talking about the Taj Mahal—but a roof over your head, food in your pantry and shoes on your children's feet.

Deuteronomy 28:

- 2 All these blessings shall come on thee, and overtake thee, if thou shalt hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God.

End: Iniquity Shall Abound