

Sabbath Thought:

This week's ***Sabbath Thought*** reflects something that I've been thinking about a lot this week based upon some things and rumors that we've recently faced. It's no strange event to experience such things after a change has taken place. Although, change can and should be a wonderful thing to experience, especially when it's of God and being led by God, we have to be careful not to fall victim to our adversary who's waiting to spoil the vision of what we're to be experiencing.

We must be fully aware that Satan will always take advantage of times of change by injecting false whispers into the air in hopes to capture the ears of anyone who will listen. We must be on guard against what he is up to, because if we allow those whispers to grab our attention, he will influence us. He will then insert unnecessary doubts into our minds for the sole purpose of unsettling the flock of God. If we are not careful, we can also become a destructive tool in his hand.

How is this possible? Gossip and the spreading of the whispers ourselves - (*Psalm 55:21, Proverbs 16:28, 17:9, 18:6-8, 20:19, 2 Corinthians 11:3*).

We can't underestimate the tactics of Satan. He's a master manipulator and strategic influencer. Satan has a way of presenting his whispers smoothly and accepted as truthful, while he steadily injects false perceptions into the mind. Because we then give those whispers credit, we actually allow him into our fellowship. With little effort he can put into motion his plan of destruction, sit back, and let us be the ones who give it the momentum and longevity.

If we don't see him as he is and flee from what he is offering, we can become enveloped into his web of lies. We then can allow ourselves to be an object of separation instead one of reconciliation. That's exactly the end goal of what Satan's intends to see among the body of Christ, division and discord.

Recently those whispers have stirred the notion of a possible Split brewing within UCG. **To be clear there is NO split coming or even being considered within the ministry.** It's a whisper that has been placed into the ears of the people by Satan and we are the ones giving it momentum. We must close our ears to such talk and not pass this evil gossip around.

This word split is a word filled with the nature and characteristics of Satan that only leads to suffering. Just thinking about that word "**SPLIT**", this came to my mind. It's **S** = Sinister in nature, no pure intentions at all; It's **P** = Proudful – At the heart of it all, lies a self-centered mindset; It's **L** = Lawlessness – Acting upon our own desires, our own truths, our own rules, not of God's Law; It's **I** = Irreverent – God is not being glorified, in fact it shows Him great disrespect; It's **T** = Treachery – not only toward God, but the body, our fellow brethren.

Remember, we are a people of reconciliation, Satan hates this fact. He is attacking what we have and if we are not careful, we open ourselves up to his attacks. I read this on Facebook this week, "You don't have to attend every augment you're invited to." It's time to refuse these types of invitations and embrace what we have been called to with our God and Christ.

To conclude I wanted to share an excerpt from an article from **Dan Dowd**: It is worth noting that mankind's great accomplishments and unfortunately even sins, were managed through unity of purpose. Wars that are won, businesses that dominate the economy, territory that is subdued, are all possible only because of unity of purpose. Marriages are successful when a husband and a wife are unified as they move forward in life. A church congregation is healthy only to the extent that the members are unified.

Do we see the unity of God – that God is One through and through? One verse that helps to see Their unity is *Deuteronomy 6:4*, "*Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one!*"

What does it mean that God is "*one*"? The Hebrew word is "*echad*" which has a primary meaning of "united." There is unity of mind, of purpose, of love and of the desire to have mankind in their family.

There is no contention or struggle for superiority in the Godhead – none. I don't think we appreciate this reality as we should. None of God's plan of salvation would work – or even be possible – if there was

any disagreement between the Father and the Son. On the night before Christ's crucifixion, He prayed a very moving prayer to the Father.

The primary thing on Christ's mind was maintaining the unity He had with the Father – and that those the Father would call would experience that same unity between themselves and with the Godhead (*John 17:5-26*). Unity between any of us must begin with unity with God (*John 14:15*). We must be one with the Father as Christ was (*John 14:19-21*).

How do we achieve Godly unity? We show the love of God in us by acting on God's instruction (*1 John 3:16-19*). We show unity as well by loving one another (*1 John 4:7-11*) and submitting to one another in humility (*1 Peter 5:5*). We show unity by serving one another (*Galatians 5:13*) and being there for each other in time of need or trials (*Galatians 6:2*). We create dis-unity when we gossip about others, when we hold onto hurts for years or decades, and when we murmur and complain without trying to be part of the solution.

The time has come for us to love one another as the Father and Christ love us. The time has come for us to be unified in deed and truth. Will we be one, as God is One?

Have a wonderful and spiritual fulfilling Sabbath,
Ryan Hall

For the Youth - Bible Trivia:

1. What is the biblical definition of sin?

*Hint: 1 John 3:4

2. Who went to Pilate to request Jesus's body after his crucifixion for burial?

*Hint: Luke 23:50-52, John 19:38

3. What Empire did the head of Gold of the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream represent?

* Hint: Daniel 2:26-28, 31-33, 36-43

North Canton Announcements:

1. **Sabbath Service Time (January 28th): 2:00 PM**

2. **Next Sabbath – (February 4th): 2:00 PM**

3. **Zoom Bible Study:** The next scheduled Bible study will take place February 23, 2023 at 7:30 PM

4. **Sabbath School:** Next Sabbath school will be on February 11, 2023.

5. **COE Meetings:** The next Council of Elders Meeting will take place February 13th – 16th. Your prayers for God's guidance are greatly appreciated.

6. **Need input for Spring Holy Days:** We are considering a combined service with Youngstown and Cleveland for the Last Day of Unleavened Bread with a catered meal. Location: Shady Hollow Country Club, 4865 Wales Av NW, Massillon, Oh 44646. The cost will be 25.00 per person. (If you need help financially – please let us know).

We would need to know asap those who would be interested. Please contact Freeman & Debbie Kuhns asap with your decision.

7. **Spring/Summer Picnic:** Mark your calendars, Our annual Spring/Summer Picnic is scheduled for after Sabbath Services on June 10, 2023 at Price Park.

8. **Richard & Janice Walters:** Richard & Janice were released from the hospital last night and are now home resting. Although they are improving, they are very tired and still have a bit to go until they are fully recovered. Please keep the entire family as they all are still dealing with the after effects from the Covid virus. 3325 Hemphill Rd Barberton, OH 44203-5033

- 9. Young Adult Winter/Ski Retreat:** We are excited to announce a Young Adult winter/ski retreat, President's Day Weekend February 17th-20th, 2023! We are hoping to forge new and deeper relationships with people of like mind. We will be eating and staying together for the whole weekend. We welcome all young adults ages 18–29, single or married. We will be staying in cabins at Pipestem State Park in Pipestem, West Virginia. Activities will include skiing/snowboarding, sledding, hiking, swimming, bonfire, sports, and lots and lots of hanging out. More information about the activities can be found on the website. We will also have several interactive discussions and Bible studies. The theme of this weekend will be focused on "how can young adults contribute to the future of the Church of God?" Registration is open, so go ahead and register on the registration tab at ucgyawinterretreat.org, and we will see you there!
- 10. Seasons of a Women's Life:** The women of the Indianapolis and Fort Wayne congregations invite you to a Women's Enrichment Weekend April 21-23, 2023. We will discuss and learn about the "Seasons of a Woman's Life". Rooms have been reserved at a local hotel and we will host a welcome reception there on Friday evening. On Saturday and Sunday, ladies will meet at the Indianapolis church building for a fun weekend of learning, fellowship, and music. Prices and registration information will be coming out in January. You may contact Lizzy Creech at liz.creech06@yahoo.com with any questions. See attached Flyer for more info.

If I've overlooked anything, Please let me know ASAP.