

The Refiners Fire Lesson 12 4Q 2007

Dying Like a Seed

Read memory text- thoughts about this? Dying like a seed – how does a seed die? Does a seed die in the sense of becoming lifeless? Or does it die in the sense of becoming something else?

When we as Christians are called to die, does that mean we are to become lifeless or to become something else? Do we die as individuals or do we die to the way, methods, principles, attitudes of our former selves and live new lives, with our own individuality, but with new character, methods and principles?

What does it feel like to go from one life to the other? Dying???

Could this be what the 23rd Psalm is really talking about, the valley of the “shadow” of death, not the valley of death – that God is restoring our souls, leading us in the paths of righteousness, anointing our heads with oil and when we are in that valley of the shadow of death, that valley when we feel like it would be better to give up and die – we are not to fear because that is the transition point between the old and the new?

Into the experience of all there come times of keen disappointment and utter discouragement--days when sorrow is the portion, and it is hard to believe that God is still the kind benefactor of His earthborn children; days when troubles harass the soul, till death seems preferable to life. It is then that many lose their hold on God. . . . Could we at such times discern with spiritual insight the meaning of God's providences we should see angels seeking to save us from ourselves, striving to plant our feet upon a foundation more firm than the everlasting hills, and new faith, new life, would spring into being.... {CC 213.3}

Thoughts? When we find ourselves in such a situation how do we overcome? By faith, which is what? Reliance on the evidence previously given and understood and choosing to go forward despite how bad it feels, example: A person undergoing physical therapy may feel bad, it may really hurt, but what causes them to push on? Faith – an intelligent understanding of what PT is about, confidence or faith in the therapist, which enables one to choose to push forward despite the momentary pain and discomfort.

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Did Christ lose His rights? Or did Christ exert His right to sacrifice Himself and give Himself voluntarily to redeem us? Was Christ crucified against His will or in harmony with it? Because of what Christ has done do we have the right to give ourselves to God for His glory and give our means and self for the benefit of others?

What enabled Jesus to sacrifice Himself? Love – if we experience God’s love does it become easier to give ourselves for others?

In the middle of the lesson it asks, “If rights and equality are good and should be protected, how would you explain the logic of sometimes needing to give them up?” – thoughts?

Can you actually give up your rights or is it your right to do so and thereby whatever you freely give is actually exercising your right?

What about a deacon who dominates and controls his wife citing Bible passages of wife’s need to submit to her husband. The husband threatens her with criticism, withholds love and affirmation, threatens rejection and verbalizes accusations of spiritual condemnation. He dictates her behavior, tells her who she can associate with and commands she submit to his will to serve him. What would Godly love do in such a situation? Humbly surrender? Is love interested in self or the

other? What happens to the character of the husband if he goes on treating his wife like this? If the wife loves her husband what is her responsibility? To give in or stand up in love? In fact, if she gives in out of fear of rejection, fear of abuse is her giving in an act of love or act of fear? And fear is part of the infection of sin, so love doesn't necessarily submit. Love seeks to redeem, protect and build up.

But love will sacrifice self to help others if the situation calls for it – remember the Amish school shooting when two sisters stood up offering themselves to be shot in order to save the others?

MONDAY

Bottom paragraph – read thoughts? What enables someone to surrender their self to God? What things are necessary? In the section above the lesson suggests, based on Romans 12:1,2: a true understanding of God's mercy. – thoughts?

What is a true understanding of God's mercy? The paragraph we just read spoke of Christ's experience on the cross, how do you understand that experience?

In the December NAD Review on page 40 Angel Rodriguez discusses the atonement and he rightly points out that the Moral Influence Theory MIT only explains part of the plan of salvation and what Christ accomplished. But what do you think about what he says is the central aspect of the atonement that the MIT leaves out:

“It [MIT] denies a central aspect of the atonement: One of the fundamental problems of the moral influence view is that it rejects the substitutionary nature of Christ's death. The idea that God had to kill the innocent instead of the guilty in order to save us is considered a violation of justice.”

Thoughts? Did God kill Christ? Could this idea that God killed Christ, the innocent in order to be just, be the final distortion about God to be removed from Christian thought to complete the Reformation? Is this the final misunderstanding to be corrected to enable us to take the final message of mercy to the world, the truth about God's character of love?

What evidence is there that God killed Christ? The evidence of the gospel writers is that evil men beat, abused and crucified Christ. Christ's own testimony is that His Father let Him go and stopped protecting Him. EGW states that evil men confederated with evil angels to murder Christ.

Satan had caused the Jews to rebel against God by refusing to receive His Son, and by staining their hands with His most precious blood. No matter how powerful the evidence now produced that Jesus was the Son of God, the Redeemer of the world, **they had murdered Him**, and would not receive any evidence in His favor. EW 208

Satanic agencies confederated with evil men in leading the people to believe Christ the chief of sinners, and to make Him the object of detestation. Those who mocked Christ as He hung upon the cross were imbued with the spirit of the first great rebel. He filled them with vile and loathsome speeches. He inspired their taunts. But by all this he gained nothing. {DA 760.4}

Satan saw that his disguise was torn away. His administration was laid open before the unfallen angels and before the heavenly universe. He had **revealed himself as a murderer. By shedding the blood of the Son of God, he had uprooted himself from the sympathies of the heavenly beings.** Henceforth his work was restricted. Whatever attitude he might assume, he could no longer await the angels as they came from the heavenly courts, and before them accuse Christ's brethren of being clothed with the garments of blackness

and the defilement of sin. The last link of sympathy between Satan and the heavenly world was broken. {DA 761.2}

Why is this important? What enables us to submit to God? What enables us to give our lives to Him?

There are two types of submission – submission based on fear and submission based on love and truth, having been won over and convinced in one's own mind.

What kind of submission does God want and why? Examine the two types, what happens when someone submits based on fear? One of two things, either rebellion or destruction of individuality, does God want either of these for us?

What kind of submission comes from believing God killed His Son? If God killed His innocent Son, what will God do to those who refuse to accept Him? So what kind of submission does this lead to? Fear based submission resulting either in rebels or those who surrender their individuality and lose the ability to think for themselves, those whose minds become darkened. These are demonstrated by the religious leaders in Christ's day – look at how they had lost the ability to appreciate truth or were such rebels they didn't care what the truth was.

But the Bible states God wants everyone to be fully persuaded in their own minds. The truth of God's word is that He did not kill His Son, that He surrendered His Son and Christ surrendered Himself.

What kind of submission comes when you are convinced someone is not only right, but they love you so much they would give their life for you?

We have the privilege of taking this incredible truth about God to the world, the truth which will set people free so they no longer will submit to God from fear but because they are won

to Him in love and truth and thus will become real friends of God.

In TQ page 141 we read, “A young single man once said, “I’m a little afraid to ask God to help me find the right woman to marry. I’m afraid that God will pick someone I won’t like. Knowing what God values, He will expect me to live the rest of my life with a religious, but probably unattractive, wife!”

“Many are concerned about submitting to God. It is difficult, especially for self-actualized, goal-oriented people, to believe that submission to God’s will is safe. It seems better to make our own choices...”

This was me – I was raised with a god who killed his own son and if you didn’t accept him and do right he would kill you in the end. I was told by my teachers in academy that I should ask God to guide in my selection of a wife, but I thought exactly like this. Why? Because I didn’t trust God. I had been presented with a god who was arbitrary and who cared more about himself than his creatures. I couldn’t trust a god like that to really choose what is best for me.

But, fortunately, I found the truth about God. I came to know He wants better things for me than I can even imagine. I came to see that He is not the source of pain, suffering and death, that He is not the executioner of His Son and thus won’t be my executioner either. I came to realize that sin destroys and pays its own wage, and unimpeded sin will kill and God is the great healer, great physician working to heal and restore. And thus, once I learned the truth about God I made a better choice - I trusted God in leading me to find the right woman to be my life partner and wow, did He do incredibly more that I could have ever asked or imagine!!!

But I was only able to submit to Him when I was convinced I could trust Him.

TUESDAY

How do you know when the voice of God is speaking to you? Can you tell by the way it feels? Are you supposed to evaluate what the voice says to see if it is in harmony with previous revelation from God in Scripture? Are you allowed to think and ask questions or are we simply to acknowledge and obey?

If someone comes to you and tells you that God has given them a message or told them to take a certain action and you are asked to support them, what would you do?

What evidence would you have that God had indeed spoken to them? How do we know when God is speaking?

Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ; we are to draw constantly from Him, partaking of Him, the living Bread that came down from heaven, drawing from a fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasures. If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him. {COL 129.3}

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? If you accept this statement as true will you be more likely or less likely to think for yourself in the future? Will you want to reason and weigh the evidence or would you prefer some command from God, a

Bible verse, a thus saith the Lord, a rule from God you can apply without thinking?

Was the heart of the problem the belief that she was wise enough to decide for herself? Did God want her to decide for herself? If He didn't want Adam and Eve to decide for themselves then why did He give them the choice in the first place? Could their characters grow and mature into beings settled into God's side of the issue if they never reasoned out the issues and made the choice for themselves?

What is the real heart of the matter?

Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors... RH Jan 5, 1886.

The problem wasn't that Eve thought things through, the problems was that she didn't think them through enough, didn't take enough evidence into her thinking, didn't go to God herself and say, "I've just heard some troubling ideas, that you are keeping goodness from us, that you are selfish and can't be trusted, but I have never seen anything like this from you so I wanted to talk to you about it."

God is desperate for us to think. He begs us to reason with Him and in so doing our characters will be changed. He longs for us to grow up from children or slaves who do only what they are told to mature Christians who actually understand their master's business.

All the evidence is on God's side, if we would examine it, think about it in light of God's word with the HS enlightening our minds we would be won back to God and healed in character.

THURSDAY

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts? What is the supernatural help from God? How does this supernatural help teach us a better way?

I have patients who pray every day for supernatural deliverance from their emotional pain. If God were to miraculously activate brain regions which would cause them to feel less pain would that solve the problem or teach them how to handle things better the next time?

The lesson suggests three substitutes we may use instead of God:

1. Using human logic or past experience when we need fresh divine revelation. – thoughts? What does it mean “human logic”? Would that mean a mind governed by the principles of the world, fear and selfishness, whereas a mind which has been reborn to love, truth and freedom and in harmony with God would be capable of using logic?

In other words does logic get warped if our values and principles and perspectives are warped, but does logic work if our minds are in harmony with God’s? Are we expected to do this?

2. Blocking problems from our minds when we need divine solutions. – thoughts? Do we ever block problems from our mind with Bible texts and religiosity?

3. Escaping reality and avoiding God when we need communion with God for divine power. – thoughts?

Bottom section asks us to look at Zechariah 4:1-14 taking particular note of verse six. What Temple is the primarily talking about? See Zech 6:12. Notice, that the Temple is going to be built by the Branch and that it cannot be done by power and might but by the way the Spirit works – what Temple?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

What leads us to do this? We must first acknowledge our diagnosis as terminal in sin, we must recognize a cure is available and we must trust the one who has the cure – we must come to the truth and knowledge of God.