

The Wonder of Jesus Lesson 7 2Q 2008

The Puzzle of His Conduct

Thoughts about the title? Is there anything in Jesus' conduct that puzzles you? Something you have a question about? Something you would like to discuss this morning?

If Jesus' conduct is puzzling why would that be? Would it be some inherent problem in what Jesus did or some problem in our awareness, insight, discernment, values, methods, principles?

In other words, if we could see things from God's perspective would it be so puzzling?

What about the angels, did the angels find the incarnation and mission of Christ puzzling? Do you think they puzzled over the same things we do?

1PE 1:10 Concerning this salvation, the prophets, who spoke of the grace that was to come to you, searched intently and with the greatest care, ¹¹ trying to find out the time and circumstances to which the Spirit of Christ in them was pointing when he predicted the sufferings of Christ and the glories that would follow. ¹² It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves but you, when they spoke of the things that have now been told you by those who have preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven. Even angels long to look into these things.

What things were the angels longing to look into? Was it not God's plan to save mankind? God's plan to bring an end to sin? God's plan to restore the universe into unity again?

Here are a couple of quotes from one of the founders of our church, powerfully stating and revealing the perspective upon which our church was founded:

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice--its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man--the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,--God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name,"--"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"--"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law

of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto.
DA 19, 20

Besides the text quoted from Peter above any other Bible texts which would support this position?

1 Corinthians 4:9 For it seems to me that God has put us apostles on display at the end of the procession, like men condemned to die in the arena. We have been made a spectacle to the whole universe, to angels as well as to men.

Job chapter one when Satan presents himself before God

SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts?

Doesn't everyone eat and drink? Why were they accusing him of being a glutton and drunkard? Do you think he was gorging himself or becoming intoxicating stumbling around? Of course not! Then why would they accuse Him of this? Because the Pharisees had man made rules that to be truly right with God you had to regularly fast. Many would fast one or two days each week in order to show how right they were with God. Jesus behavior condemned their self-righteousness so they said, "See someone who doesn't fast like us can't be from God, He's a glutton and drunk."

Also, who did Jesus associate with? And how do you think it would make the "leadership" feel for Jesus not to recognize them? For Jesus not to pay them attention? Would those whose hearts are filled with pride and self-centeredness find Jesus conduct hard to take?

Who would Jesus be associating with today?

Why did Jesus associate with such people?

1. They were open to Him
2. Jesus said "I did not come into the world to condemn it but to heal it" Do we find that Jesus demonstrated this in His life and associations? Does this reveal more of His mission?
3. Jesus said He did not come to call the righteous but the sinners

Read second paragraph "One of our problems..." thoughts?
How do we attempt to make Jesus in our own image?
Examples?

1. We make Him too human, someone without any divine abilities which He could access
2. Someone who is on our side in war, conflict, disagreement?
3. Caucasian? African? Do we see Him as Middle Eastern?

In the beginning how many races were there – in Eden? In the end when all things are made new will we be one race again or will we keep our ethnic diversity?

SUNDAY

Read Luke 2:41-51

LK 2:41 Every year his parents went to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back

to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions.

⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

LK 2:49 "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

LK 2:51 Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart.

Read next three paragraphs beginning "The incident..."

Thoughts?

Did this incident ever give you the impression Jesus was being irresponsible?

In the last paragraph it states "Nor is there any indication that He ever apologized for the terrible inconvenience He had caused His anxious parents." Thoughts? Did Jesus have anything to apologize for? Had He caused them anxiety? Had He been negligent? Had He been thoughtless? Does the question asked by the quarterly imply such was the case and there was a place for Him to apologize?

The quarterly ought to apologize to Jesus for putting such a distortion of His character into print!

What about the assertion of the quarterly that this is one of those events that shows the limits of using Jesus' conduct as a model in every case? Does it really? Or is it that the lesson has made Christ to be too much like us, in our own image?

Who was Jesus? Was He not still King of the universe? What were His responsibilities, mission and duties in coming to this earth? What were the responsibilities of His parents? When the president of the US travels he has secret service travel with him, what is their responsibility? Do you think that Joseph and Mary had the responsibility to look after Jesus and rather than Jesus being negligent they were negligent in their responsibilities to Him?

Here is one perspective from the Desire of Ages:

Rapt in the contemplation of these scenes, He did not remain beside His parents. He sought to be alone. When the paschal services were ended, He still lingered in the temple courts; and when the worshipers departed from Jerusalem, He was left behind... {DA 78.2}

Meanwhile Joseph and Mary were in great perplexity and distress. In the departure from Jerusalem they had lost sight of Jesus, and they knew not that He had tarried behind. The country was then densely populated, and the caravans from Galilee were very large. There was much confusion as they left the city. **On the way the pleasure of traveling with friends and acquaintances absorbed their attention, and they did not notice His absence till night came on.** Then as they halted for rest, they missed the helpful hand of their child. Supposing Him to be with their company, they had felt no anxiety. Young as He was, they had trusted Him implicitly, expecting that when needed, He would be ready to assist them, anticipating their wants as He had always done. But now their fears were roused. They searched for Him throughout their company, but in vain. Shuddering they remembered how Herod had tried to destroy Him in His infancy. Dark forebodings filled their hearts. They bitterly reproached themselves... {DA 80.4}

In the school of the rabbis they found Jesus. Rejoiced as they were, they could not forget their grief and anxiety. When He was with them again, the mother said, in words

that implied reproof, "Son, why hast Thou thus dealt with us? Behold, Thy father and I have sought Thee sorrowing." {DA 81.2}

"How is it that ye sought Me?" answered Jesus. "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" And as they seemed not to understand His words, He pointed upward. On His face was a light at which they wondered. Divinity was flashing through humanity. On finding Him in the temple, they had listened to what was passing between Him and the rabbis, and they were astonished at His questions and answers. His words started a train of thought that would never be forgotten. {DA 81.3}

And His question to them had a lesson. "Wist ye not," He said, "that I must be about My Father's business?" Jesus was engaged in the work that He had come into the world to do; but **Joseph and Mary had neglected theirs**. God had shown them high honor in committing to them His Son. Holy angels had directed the course of Joseph in order to preserve the life of Jesus. But for an entire day they had lost sight of Him whom they should not have forgotten for a moment. And when their anxiety was relieved, they had not censured themselves, but had cast the blame upon Him. {DA 81.4}

It was natural for the parents of Jesus to look upon Him as their own child. He was daily with them, His life in many respects was like that of other children, and it was difficult for them to realize that He was the Son of God. They were in danger of failing to appreciate the blessing granted them in the presence of the world's Redeemer. The grief of their separation from Him, and the gentle reproof which His words conveyed, were designed to impress them with the sacredness of their trust. {DA 81.5}

Thoughts? So what about the limitation in using this event as an example for our conduct? Jesus was going about doing what God would have Him do, completely, perfectly, would you not want this for your child?

The lesson authors on page 83 in the TQ ask, “Should He [Jesus] not have felt bad that He caused His parents so much pain?” thoughts?

Many of my patients are afraid to do what they know is right, reasonable and healthy because of fear that someone else might get their feelings hurt. And usually the person who would get their feelings hurt is the one in the wrong.

In my book I use the analogy of the 16 y/o girl who is afraid to hurt the feelings of the boy who is making inappropriate physical advances – would she be in the wrong for saying no if he got his feelings hurt? Was Jesus in the wrong because His parents felt bad?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Do we know the tone of Jesus voice? Does tone make a difference?

In the movie “My Cousin Vinny” a young man was accused of murdering two people. The Sheriff said, “You murdered those two people.” The young man responded with incredulity and a questioning tone and said “I murdered those two people?” When asked on the stand by the prosecutor what were the exact words of the defendant when you confronted him about murdering the two victims. The sheriff pulled out his notebook and read in a flat, matter of fact tone, “I murdered those two people.” Does tone make a difference?

What tone do you think Jesus had? What look do you think He had on His face?

What do you think about what Jesus said? What is the meaning of this passage?

Read bottom two paragraphs – thoughts?

Again, do you think the lesson needs to apologize to Jesus for such implications?

What are the implications in how the lesson attempts to apply the actions of Jesus? That Jesus was miffed because He didn't get His personal appetite satisfied and in anger retaliated against a tree, is that how you see it?

What was the significance of cursing the tree? Fig trees put out fruit before leaves, so when a person sees a fig tree in full foliage, the fig tree is basically advertising it is full of fruit. When Jesus went to the tree to get some fruit He found it barren and cursed it. Why? The tree/vine was a well known metaphor of the Jewish nation. The Jewish nation/leaders advertised themselves as being full of spiritual fruit, having the bread of life, but they were barren of fruit and thus destined to die. Christ used this opportunity as an object lesson to teach His disciples the folly of mere professions of holiness.

What about the idea that Christ "cursed" the tree and thus inflicted death upon it and therefore God will inflict death upon the wicked?

From where does all living things obtain life? God, and what is the curse of God? Granting someone their free choice to be severed or cut off from God and what happens when one is cut off from the source of life? Death, Jesus was demonstrating that without connection to Him, the true Vine, no life is possible.

What about the suggestion of turning over pews in church if the preacher asks for money? What is the problem with this analogy?

TUESDAY

Read dark section beginning "Why do you think..." then read next paragraph and bottom pink section – thoughts?

Why do you think Jesus asked the name of the demon? Some suggest it was to increase confidence of the disciples as they see the power of Jesus over an entire legion- I wonder whether it was because Jesus knew everyone of the fallen angels and was asking, as we might, which one are you?

In Luke 8:26-39 we have account of the same event and the demons asked not to be thrown into the abyss or the deep, what do you think this means?

In Mark 5:1-20 the demons ask not to be thrown out of the area – does that give us a clue? The demons were asking not to be sent away into isolation with their own selves.

The lesson suggests Jesus directed the demons to destroy the pigs. Did Jesus direct the demons to destroy the pigs? What does this mean? Were the demons free to influence the pigs as they wanted or was Jesus forcing the demons to run the pigs over the cliff? Does this reveal something about the source of pain, suffering, destruction and death?

The lesson implies Jesus was indifferent to the finances of the owner of the pigs and fig tree – what do you think?

As Jesus looks into your life right now, what is Jesus' number one goal for your life? Is it not healing of heart/mind/character so that you will live forever? Is it not your salvation? Would His concern not be the same for the owners of the pigs? Then was Jesus being indifferent to the owners or actually concerned for their eternal interests?

Here is the way one of the founders of our church saw it:

It was in mercy to the owners of the swine that this loss had been permitted to come upon them. They were absorbed in earthly things, and cared not for the great interests of spiritual life. Jesus desired to break the spell of selfish indifference, that they might accept His grace.

But regret and indignation for their temporal loss blinded their eyes to the Saviour's mercy. {DA 338.4}

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Does this give us any insights on how we can tell who is actually one of God’s children, who is actually on God’s side? Is it by which day of the week they go to church? Is it by how they were baptized? Is it by eating the right foods or wearing the right apparel?

What is it that determines who side someone is on? Their heart devotion with subsequent character development, for we become like the one we worship and admire.

Read last paragraph “One of the...” and then pink at bottom – thoughts?

Is God silent or are we deaf? Is God silent or are we so full of our own crying, self-pity, heartache, hurting, pain, suffering that we can’t hear what God is saying to us?

When Jesus came to the tomb of Lazarus Mary and Martha were so grief stricken they couldn’t hear or see that Jesus was going to raise their brother even when he was telling them this was what he was going to do.

But, does anyone have any questions on why things in this world unfold the way they do? Why bad things happen to good people?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph “If we apply...” thoughts?

In TQ 87 it states, “Consider an imaginary situation in your church. For some time rumors have been floating that an elder has been behaving inappropriately with members of the opposite sex. There has also been talk of two deacons

misappropriating some church funds. You feel concerned about it. Will you be justified in exposing this during a divine worship service and demanding action? If not why not?"

Do we act publicly on rumor? Do we publicly expose individual private sins?

The lesson authors are attempting to utilize Christ's actions in cleansing the Temple as a model for this situation. What is the problem with their attempted application of the cleansing of the Temple in this situation?

Christ intervened to bring to a halt public sin in action, and not just public sin in action, but public misrepresentation of God in action, misrepresentations that obstructed the ability of the people to come to God. If you were in church and the preacher was making out on stage with someone other than his wife and encouraging others to do the same would you then make a public statement about it?

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph, "Christ's method..." Notice He wasn't there to command them how to live or tell them what to do as a dictator, but to win them to willingly, voluntarily follow Him.

Read and discuss questions 1, 2, 4.