

Loved and Loving John's Epistles Lesson 3 3Q 2009

Walking in the Light Turning Away from Sin

SABBATH

Read the entire section starting with "In 1982..." thoughts?

Can you stare at sin and not be harmed? Is the harm that comes from staring at it different from the harm that comes from participating in it? What have angels and intelligences in heaven been doing? How have they been harmed? How have we been harmed? Wouldn't the analogy be closer if when sitting in front of the loaded shotgun you had your finger on the trigger? Don't we have to decide to sin or not sin – of course without the Holy Spirit we wouldn't have a choice.

SUNDAY

Read 1John 1:5 – What does it mean to you "God is light, in him is no darkness at all"?

MONDAY

Read 1John 1:6-10

If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word has no place in our lives.

Thoughts about this passage?

Read the two paragraphs starting with “The first statement discusses...” – thoughts?

What does walking in darkness mean? Isaiah 60:2 Darkness covers the people and gross darkness the people – what was the darkness? Jesus is the light which lightens all men? The light about what? Is the darkness acts of sin? Or is the darkness something else that results in acts of sin or sinful living?

What does it mean to live in sin? What does living in sin look like?

- Not attending church?
- Smoking, drinking, carousing?
- Violence?
- Lying, cheating, stealing?
- Breaking the commandments?
- What was John dealing with in his Epistle? What kind of sin? Was he dealing with people who were openly sinning?
- What about Paul in his Epistles when dealing with what was called the Judaizers?
- Would those who wanted Christ crucified constitute as people who live in sin? What did their lives look like to the community?
- What is the greatest commandment? Love the Lord and the second to love each other – what might the greatest sin be? Not to love God and second not to love each other, which means to be selfish. What might that look like?
 - Seeking glory for self rather than God? A church musician who plays to be seen?
 - A pastor who preaches to be recognized, get promoted, have power?
 - A church leader who exercise authority over those who disagree with Him – misrepresenting God by the methods employed?

What does it look like to walk in the light? To love God and others more than self – this is the light of the world – the truth about God’s kingdom of love!

What hope do you hear from this passage? What attitude do you hear regarding God toward the sinner in this passage?

Why is it important that we acknowledge our sinfulness? What happens if we don’t? Does God get mad? What happens if you have cancer but refuse to acknowledge it?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Yes absolutely right, sin will destroy us, why then do so many teach that God is the one who destroys the sinner? Does it make a difference if we believe that sin, if unremedied, will destroy us versus believing God will destroy us? What difference?

What is sin? Lawlessness or without the law or outside the law – what law? The law of love and why is this significant? What difference does it make if an intelligent free will being chooses to go outside the law of love?

Satan’s version says that if you choose to violate God’s law that God, in order to be just must use His power to punish you. This is from the book Desire of Ages and states it beautifully:

- In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. DA 761

What are the consequences to believing Satan's lie about God, to believing that God is required to punish sin?

- In Satan's version where is the origination of pain, suffering and death? Where does death arise? From God!
- If it is true that God is the source of death, the great grim reaper of the universe, could we really trust Him?

Why is Satan's version of reality wrong? Why does God not have to punish sin?

- Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law Romans 13:10
- If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. James 2:8
- We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. 1John 3:14
- In living for self he has rejected that divine love which would have flowed out in mercy to his fellow men. Thus he has rejected life. **For God is love, and love is life.** COL 258
- Our only definition of sin is that given in the word of God; it is "the transgression of the law;" it is the outworking of a principle at war with **the great law of love which is the foundation of the divine government.** GC 493
- **The law of love being the foundation of the government of God,** the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. {GC 493}
- Jesus, the express image of the Father's person, the effulgence of His glory; the self-denying Redeemer, throughout His pilgrimage of love on earth, was a living representation of the character of the law of God. In His life it is made manifest that **heaven-born love**, Christlike principles, underlie the laws of eternal rectitude. . . . Those principles that were made known to man in Paradise as **the great law of life** will exist unchanged in

Paradise restored.--Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 48-51.

- He came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, he showed that **the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness**. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {The Southern Work April 23, 1907 par. 5}
- But turning from all lesser representations, we behold God in Jesus. Looking unto Jesus we see that it is the glory of our God to give. "I do nothing of Myself," said Christ; "the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father." "I seek not Mine own glory," but the glory of Him that sent Me. John 8:28; 6:57; 8:50; 7:18. In these words is set forth **the great principle which is the law of life for the universe**. All things Christ received from God, but He took to give. So in the heavenly courts, in His ministry for all created beings: through the beloved Son, the Father's life flows out to all; through the Son it returns, in praise and joyous service, a tide of love, to the great Source of all. **And thus through Christ the circuit of beneficence is complete, representing the character of the great Giver, the law of life.** {DA 21.2}

What is the basis of all life in the universe? Love – the principle of giving, other centeredness! What happens when this law is broken?

- The wages of sin is death Romans 6:23
- Sin when full grown brings forth death James 1:15

Where did the law of love originally get broken and how was it broken?

- In heaven itself **this law was broken. [Law of love] Sin originated in self-seeking**. Lucifer, the covering cherub, desired to be first in heaven. He sought to gain control of

heavenly beings, to draw them away from their Creator, and to win their homage to himself. Therefore **he misrepresented God**, attributing to Him the desire for self-exaltation. With his own evil characteristics he sought to invest the loving Creator. **Thus he deceived angels. Thus he deceived men.** DA 21

What difference does it make today if we teach God is the one who must inflict punishment upon sinners? We continue to spread Satan's lie, which prevents the circle of love from being restored! Such doctrine opposes God's plan to heal and restore us to unity and oneness with Him!

Read second paragraph "Forgiveness of sins..." What does this mean? How can these words be understood to be in harmony with Scripture? How can these words be understood to misrepresent God and obstruct His healing plan?

Why was forgiveness of sins not possible without the death of Christ? Was God forbidden, prevented, restricted, unable to be forgiving without the death of Christ? Was Christ's death somehow designed to get God to extend forgiveness to the sinner? Or was the death of Christ somehow the means employed by God to convey His forgiveness to mankind?

Read last paragraph Thursday's lesson:

- When we talk about Jesus as our Advocate and take great comfort in the fact that He is instrumental in providing forgiveness for our sins, we must be careful not to give the impression that the Father is mean and harsh and must be persuaded by a go-between to forgive us. Such a picture of God is unwarranted. He is the One who sent Jesus in our behalf (John 3:16). Also, a few verses earlier we were told that He is faithful and just to forgive and cleanse us (1 John 1:9). Jesus does not have to pacify the Father. On the contrary, the Father is the One who has revealed, through Jesus, His desire for our salvation.

Thoughts?

The lesson is absolutely right on this point! So, if Jesus didn't die to somehow work on His Father how is Jesus' death connected to forgiveness?

From Thursday's lesson we read,

- “our forgiveness is secured because, through His sacrificial death, Jesus brought about propitiation, or atonement; this means that He paid the penalty for our sins. The debt that we owed, which we could never pay, Jesus paid for us.”

Is this clear or does this confuse after the fantastic statement about not working to change the Father? Does He pay a penalty to the Father? The law? Did Jesus pay our legal debt? Did God forgive us our debt? If our legal debt was paid then what need is there for forgiveness? If we are forgiven our debts what need is there for payment?

Jesus death was absolutely essential for our salvation, but not as a legal payment in the sense of a fine, imposed penalty, or judicial enforcement, rather it was necessary as the means to destroy Satan, death and the devil's work thus providing the remedy to sin (Heb 2:14, 2Tim 1:10, 1John 3:8)!

What does it mean His blood purifies us from all sin? What is sin? Lawlessness, being outside the law – what law? The law of love, which is the law of life, what would it mean to be purified? Wouldn't it mean to be put back in harmony with the law of love? What does the blood of Jesus represent? His life, which was the law of love lived out perfectly. Where did Jesus say His blood was to be put? John 6 – unless you drink my blood... What does this mean?

- I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith

- in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.
Galatians 2:20
- His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. ⁴Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. 2Pet 1:3,4
 - Jesus said, Be perfect as your Father is perfect. If you are the children of God you are partakers of His nature, and you cannot but be like Him. Every child lives by the life of his father. If you are God's children, begotten by His Spirit, you live by the life of God. In Christ dwells "all the fullness of the Godhead bodily" (Col. 2:9); and the life of Jesus is made manifest "in our mortal flesh" (2 Cor. 4:11). **That life in you will produce the same character and manifest the same works as it did in Him. Thus you will be in harmony with every precept of His law;** for "the law of the Lord is perfect, restoring the soul" (Ps. 19:7, margin). Through love "the righteousness of the law" will be "fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit" (Rom. 8:4).--Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 76-78.
 - "Till heaven and earth pass," said Jesus, "one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled." By His own obedience to the law, Christ testified to its immutable character and proved that through His grace it could be perfectly obeyed by every son and daughter of Adam. On the mount He declared that not the smallest iota should pass from the law till all things should be accomplished--all things that concern the human race, all that relates to the plan of redemption... So long as heaven and earth continue, the holy principles of God's law will remain. His righteousness, "like the great mountains" (Psalm 36:6),

will continue, a source of blessing, sending forth streams to refresh the earth. {MB 49.3}

Because the law of the Lord is perfect, and therefore changeless, it is impossible for sinful men, in themselves, to meet the standard of its requirement. This was why Jesus came as our Redeemer. **It was His mission, by making men partakers of the divine nature, to bring them into harmony with the principles of the law of heaven.** When we forsake our sins and receive Christ as our Saviour, the law is exalted. The apostle Paul asks, "Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid: yea, we establish the law." Romans 3:31. {MB 50.1}

The new-covenant promise is, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10:16. While the system of types which pointed to Christ as the Lamb of God that should take away the sin of the world was to pass away at His death, the principles of righteousness embodied in the Decalogue are as immutable as the eternal throne. Not one command has been annulled, not a jot or tittle has been changed. **Those principles that were made known to man in Paradise as the great law of life will exist unchanged in Paradise restored. When Eden shall bloom on earth again, God's law of love will be obeyed by all beneath the sun.** {MB 50.2}

Why will all in the Earth renewed obey the law of love? What would the place be like without perfect love?

So, why would we be eternally condemned if Jesus didn't die? Because the law of love, which is the basis of life, would not be restored within us!

Read third paragraph, "However, from our side...." Thoughts?

What does it mean forgiveness of sin comes only from God? Would it mean anything different if it said, "forgiveness comes only from God?"

According to the Bible what will the universe, relationships in the universe, look like when God finishes His work of salvation? Unity, oneness, at-one-ment, does that mean unity with God only or unity with each other? Have you ever been wronged, injured, exploited, sinned against? Will God's forgiveness of the sinner who wronged you fix your heart and bring you into unity with the rest of creation if you refuse to forgive your offender?

Then, do each of us not only need to experience forgiveness but also extend it? So, what about the idea that all forgiveness comes from God, just as all love comes from Him. As we experience His forgiveness we are enabled to forgive and in so doing we move from isolation into unity?

WEDNESDAY

Read 1John 2:1 "My little children, I am writing these things to you so that you may not sin. And if anyone sins, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;"

Thoughts? What do you think about the admonition to sin not? Is John telling us something that is impossible to do? Is he saying something equivalent to "breathe not" or "feel not" or "physically move not"? All impossible for a living human being to do, is John saying something similar when he says "sin not"?

When he says, but if you do sin we have an advocate with the Father – what does this mean? Jesus is God's thoughts made audible and visible, Jesus is the medium through which God fulfills His purpose for mankind – therefore, we are to love perfectly, but if we don't, we have a resource, in the Father's hands to perfectly heal and restore us, Jesus Christ the Righteous!

The last two sentences in Wednesday's lesson states, regarding Christians who sin, "Therefore they need help. They need someone to help them resist temptation, but they also

need someone who intervenes for them after they have sinned.”

Intervenes to do what? What intervention do we need after we have sinned?

- Do we need healing?
- Do we need the lies removed?
- Do we need the self loathing, guilt, shame removed?
- Do we need the rationalizations, excuses, blame of others removed?
- Do we need to be brought to repentance?
- Do we need the desire to sin removed?
- Do we need the fear and selfishness removed?

Is this where our Advocate is intervening? Is He intervening in us to heal, change and transform us?

THURSDAY

Read second and third paragraph beginning with “How? First, He is...” – thoughts?

What about this idea that our forgiveness is “secured”? What does this mean? What ideas are being connoted? Secured from who? What was obstructing our forgiveness? How did Jesus’ death bring about propitiation or atonement?

Would it be more clear if the lesson said, “Our forgiveness is secured because, through His sacrificial death, Jesus destroyed Satan, death, the devil’s work and achieved our remedy unifying us with God. This cost God everything He had to give, Himself!

Read paragraph, “John therefore portrays...” thoughts? What is Jesus doing in heaven?

Read first paragraph in FRIDAY’s lesson – who is Christ pleading to? You and me!

Read and discuss questions 3, 4 in Friday's lesson