

The Fruit of the Spirit Lesson 7 1Q 2009

The Fruit of the Spirit is Goodness

SABBATH

What is goodness? What does goodness look like?

Read Memory verse:

For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph 2:10

– thoughts?

God's workmanship – thoughts about this? Ty Gibson points out that the Greek for workmanship is *poiema* and can also mean poem, or artwork, or masterpiece. Thoughts about that idea?

What was God's original purpose for the creation of mankind? What was transpiring in the universe when God created earth?

The loyal angels mourned the fate of those who had been their companions in happiness and bliss. Their loss was felt in heaven. The Father consulted Jesus in regard to at once carrying out their purpose to make man to inhabit the earth.-- ST Jan. 9, 1879. {TA 47.3}

Was man created before or after Lucifer's rebellion?

Is the creation of mankind part of God's response to Satan's rebellion?

After the earth with its teeming animal and vegetable life had been called into existence, man, the crowning work of the Creator, and the one for whom the beautiful earth had been fitted up, was brought upon the stage of action. To him was given dominion over all that his eye could behold; for "God said, Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness: and

let them have dominion over . . . all the earth. . . . So God created man in His own image; . . . male and female created He them." Here is clearly set forth the origin of the human race....

He was placed, as God's representative, over the lower orders of being. They cannot understand or acknowledge the sovereignty of God, yet they were made capable of loving and serving man. The psalmist says, "Thou madest him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands; Thou hast put all things under his feet: . . . the beasts of the field; the fowl of the air, . . . and whatsoever passeth through the paths of the seas." Psalm 8:6-8. {PP 45.1}

Man was to bear God's image, both in outward resemblance and in character. Christ alone is "the express image" (Hebrews 1:3) of the Father; but man was formed in the likeness of God. His nature was in harmony with the will of God. His mind was capable of comprehending divine things.

Did God create mankind, in Eden, to do good works? What good works? Could it be the good works of revealing the truth about God?

The life of Christ is to be revealed in humanity. Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God; but Satan has labored to obliterate the image of God in man, and to imprint upon him his own image. Man is very dear to God, because he was formed in His own image. LHU 48

What is the nature of God? Love! And mankind was created in God's image, what do you think God designed to be the basis of life in Eden? Love, and what would Adam and Eve reveal about God had they stayed loyal? Mankind was created as the repository of God's law of love, the showcase!

Is it a good work to reveal God in our lives? How do we treat others when we love as God loves?

What does it mean “in Christ Jesus”? That because of Adam’s fall we cannot, naturally, in our own ability love or do anything good. Therefore, Christ came to restore in humanity God’s law of love, God’s goodness, God’s character, to make man again the dwelling place of God.

In the cleansing of the temple, Jesus was announcing His mission as the Messiah, and entering upon His work. That temple, erected for the abode of the divine Presence, was designed to be an object lesson for Israel and for the world. From eternal ages it was **God's purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator.** Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. **But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple.** God designed that the temple at Jerusalem should be a continual witness to the high destiny **open to every soul.** But the Jews had not understood the significance of the building they regarded with so much pride. They did not yield themselves as holy temples for the Divine Spirit. The courts of the temple at Jerusalem, filled with the tumult of unholy traffic, represented all too truly the temple of the heart, defiled by the presence of sensual passion and unholy thoughts. In cleansing the temple from the world's buyers and sellers, **Jesus announced His mission to cleanse the heart from the defilement of sin,**--from the earthly desires, the selfish lusts, the evil habits, that corrupt the soul. "The Lord, whom ye seek, shall suddenly come to His temple, even the Messenger of the covenant, whom ye delight in: behold, He shall come, saith the Lord of hosts. But who may abide the day of His coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth? for He is like a refiner's fire, and like fullers' soap: and He shall sit as a refiner and purifier of silver: and He shall purify the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." Mal. 3:1-3.
{DA 161.1}

It is only through Christ, His personal life on earth, His victory, His death and resurrection and our connection with Him that we can experience again the indwelling of God, the writing of the law of love on the heart and doing good works.

SUNDAY

Read fourth paragraph, "Think of human relationships..."
Thoughts?

Absolutely true that we were created by God to experience love, caring, compassion etc. Is that why we are able to experience these things today, because God created us that way? Or is something else going on besides the fact God created us this way?

The Lord says, "I will put enmity between thee and the woman." The enmity does not exist as a natural fact. **As soon as Adam sinned, he was in harmony with the first great apostate, and at war with God; and if God had not interfered in man's behalf, Satan and man would have formed a confederacy against heaven,** and carried on united opposition against the God of hosts. There is no natural enmity between evil angels and evil men; both are evil through transgression of the law of God, and evil will always league against good. Fallen men and fallen angels enter into a desperate companionship. {ST, July 11, 1895 par. 5}

Thoughts? It is true God created us to love and care for others. But God's creative designed was marred by sin/selfishness. Today, natural man has no capacity for love and care and concern. Any good, love, compassion is evidence of God's work in the human heart to restore and recreate. Thus, it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.

MONDAY

The title of the day's lesson is "All Have Sinned." Why? Why have "all sinned?" How many of you made a choice to be a sinner? How many of you sinned before you were capable of experiencing a

changed heart and having, through God's grace, victory over sin? Does God blame us for being sinners? What is sin?

All sin is selfishness. Satan's first sin was a manifestation of selfishness. He sought to grasp power, to exalt self. A species of insanity led him to seek to supersede God. And the temptation that led Adam to sin was Satan's declaration that it was possible for man to attain to something more than he already enjoyed, possible for him to be as God Himself. **The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world.** God desires every one to understand the evil of selfishness, and to co operate with Him in guarding the human family against its terrible, deceptive powers. The design of the gospel is to confront this evil by means of remedial missionary work, and to destroy its destructive power by establishing enterprises of benevolence. {The Worker's Bulletin, September 9, 1902 par. 3}

How many of you were selfish from birth? Psalms 51:5 "born in sin conceived in iniquity." Why do all sin? Because we all have sinful hearts, and left on our own, without God's grace, God's power, God's Spirit we cannot help but sin. But, God has intervened to provide us an option. We do not have to remain under the domination of our inherent selfish nature.

What are we held accountable for? Are we held accountable for being born sinners or for not choosing the remedy, the truth which sets free? For not loving the truth, for not loving God.

They perish because they refused to love the truth and so be saved. 2Thes 2:10

We are held accountable for rejecting the truth, for rejecting the salvation offered us freely. We are not held accountable for the fact we were born in a condition we had no choice to avoid.

Read dark section "How often we hear..." thoughts? All good, done by anyone is only because the Holy Spirit is working in their lives.

Read last paragraph, “Years ago...” thoughts?

Where does man look? Where does God look?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “While it cannot...” – thoughts?

What does it mean “blood bought”?

- Was Christ’s death necessary for our salvation? Absolutely yes!
- Are we saved by the blood – i.e. the red corpuscles? Or is the blood symbolic of something else?
- When Christ said unless we eat His flesh and drink His blood was He speaking of literal flesh and blood? Was He speaking of the same “blood” that was shed to save us or a different blood?
- When scripture speaks of the shedding of blood for the remission of sins are they speaking merely of spilling blood, as if Christ cut Himself and shed blood that would be enough, or is it a way of saying Christ’s life sacrificed?
- Did Satan, through Herod, try to kill baby Jesus? Was baby Jesus sinless? If Herod would have succeeded would the blood of Jesus have been shed? Then why didn’t God do that? Because the mere shedding of blood was not enough to ensure our salvation. It is not about red corpuscles. It is about what the blood represents and it represents His human life (divinity cannot die so the blood cannot represent the death of divinity). And as a baby, what had Christ accomplished in His human life/brain?
- Did the red corpuscles of Christ “purchase” anything? If somehow we recovered a piece of the burial cloth of Jesus, and it still had dried blood of Jesus on it. Could we present this to God and say, “Here is the blood of Jesus and with this I purchase my salvation”?

What is the blood of Christ symbolic of?

Christ did not soften down **His symbolical representation**. He reiterated the truth in yet stronger language: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink His blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is meat indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He that eateth My flesh, and drinketh My blood, dwelleth in Me, and I in him." {DA 389.2}

To eat the flesh and drink the blood of Christ is to receive Him as a personal Saviour, believing that He forgives our sins, and that we are complete in Him. **It is by beholding His love, by dwelling upon it, by drinking it in, that we are to become partakers of His nature.** What food is to the body, Christ must be to the soul. Food cannot benefit us unless we eat it, unless it becomes a part of our being. So Christ is of no value to us if we do not know Him as a personal Saviour. A theoretical knowledge will do us no good. We must feed upon Him, receive Him into the heart, so that His life becomes our life. His love, His grace, must be assimilated. {DA 389.3}

"In the **study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God**, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life." Fundamentals of Christian Education 378

"The leaven of **truth** works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, **washed in the blood of the Lamb.**" COL 102

What is the blood represent? The life of Christ which reveals the truth to set us free from lies and win us to trust and His perfect character which He wrought out in His human brain and which we receive by trust in Him!

None of the apostles or prophets ever claimed to be without sin. Men who have lived nearest to God, men who would sacrifice life itself rather than knowingly commit a wrong act, men whom God had honored with divine light and power, have

confessed the sinfulness of their own nature. They have put no confidence in the flesh, have **claimed no righteousness of their own, but have trusted wholly in the righteousness of Christ**. So will it be with all who behold Christ. {FLB 111.4}

The righteousness of Christ, as a pure white pearl, has no defect, no stain, no guilt. This righteousness may be ours. Salvation, with its blood-bought, inestimable treasures, is the pearl of great price. {FLB 111.5}

What is "blood-bought"? Salvation, and what is it that Christ achieved which provides us salvation?

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But **Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them.** His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

What did Christ purchase? A restored and healed and perfectly regenerated humanity! He, in His person, destroyed the infection of sin (carnal nature, selfishness, the law of sin and death) and restored perfectly God's law of love into the human species.

Now, why are we to do good works? Because God wants us to be the happiest, healthiest, holiest beings possible and in His universe such happiness is only experienced in giving, in blessing others in love! It is for our good that He calls us to such a life!

And how are we to do good works? By receiving the infusion of Christ's character rebuilt within us, via the work of the Holy Spirit when we trust Him.

Why will those who don't do good works not be "allowed" into the kingdom of heaven?

What is the kingdom of heaven? Is it not the kingdom of love?

In reply Jesus declared, "I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again." John 3:3

What does this mean? Why can't they see it? What about those who pierced Him, won't they see Him coming in the clouds?

They will see His physical presence, but they have believed the lies of Satan and rather than seeing a God of love, they see what Satan alleges, a God of anger and wrath, thus, they will not, cannot, see the kingdom of God!

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "The problem..." thoughts? Well said, exactly. Can the diagnostic instrument cure the problem? No! The written law cannot cure the sin problem, but it diagnosis perfectly.

How is the sin problem cured? Jesus – how? How does what Jesus do benefit us?

Read next paragraph, "In the plan..." thoughts?

Read dark section "In Psalms 40:8..." thoughts? Why do some people believe keeping the law is a burden? Because the law is presented as arbitrary, an arbitrary set of rules from an arbitrary God, who will inflict punishment if you don't obey. Rather, than the truth that the law is the principle of love, the design template for life and our happiness and health is dependent upon it. That only in harmony with the law is there real freedom.

WEDNESDAY

Read memory text at top and first paragraph – thoughts?

Okay, married folk, how easy is it to change a spouse? Can you actually change another person?

Excellent point about motives and right heart – this is what it is all about, being renewed in the inner man to have a change in heart motive!

Read last paragraph, “In chapter 7 of Romans...” thoughts?

Has chapter seven of Romans ever confused you? Here is my paraphrase starting with 7:7:

^{7:7} What shall we say then? Is the law evil and selfish because it increases the amount of evil and selfishness we see? Absolutely not! For I would not have known what evil and selfishness looks like if it wasn't for the diagnostic efficacy of the law. I would not have realized that coveting was evil and selfish if the law didn't say, “Don't covet.” ⁸ But selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the law is only a diagnostic instrument and not a remedy, magnified every covetous desire within me. For apart from the diagnostic ability of the law, sin is unrecognizable. ⁹ Once I thought I was healthy and free from the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness, but then the commandment examined me, exposed how utterly infected I was and diagnosed me as terminal. ¹⁰ I discovered that the very commandment given only to diagnose my condition, I had unwittingly attempted to use as a cure and thus my condition only worsened. ¹¹ For selfishness, taking advantage of the fact that the commandment could only diagnose and not cure, deceived me into thinking I could be cured by working to keep the commandments, but instead my terminal state only worsened. ¹² So understand this, the law diagnoses perfectly, and the commandment is the standard of what is right and good, set apart by God, to reveal what is evil and destructive.

^{7:13} Did the law, which did good by diagnosing what was wrong with me, become the source of my terminal condition? Of course not! It only exposed what was already in me so that I could recognize how totally decayed, putrid and near death I was, so that through the lens of the

commandment I might become utterly disgusted with evil and selfishness and long for a cure.

Romans 7:14 We know that the law is consistent, reliable and reasonable; but I am inconsistent, unreliable and unreasonable, because the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness has warped my mind and damaged my thinking.¹⁵ I am frustrated with what I do. For having been restored to trust, I want to do what is in harmony with God and his methods and principles; but I find that even though I trust God, old habits, conditioned responses, preconceived ideas and other remnants of the devastation caused by distrust and selfishness are not yet fully removed.¹⁶ And if I find an old habit causing me to behave in ways that I now find detestable, I affirm that the law is a very helpful tool revealing residual damage in need of healing.¹⁷ What is happening is this: I have come to trust God and desire to do his will, but old habits and conditioned responses, which present almost reflexively in certain situations, have not yet been totally eliminated and thus cause me to do things I do not want to do.¹⁸ I know that my mind was completely infected with distrust, fear and selfishness which totally perverted all my desires and faculties, so that even when distrust has been eradicated and trust has been restored, the damage caused by years of distrustful and selfish behavior has not yet been fully healed. So I find, at times, I have the desire to do what is right, but do not yet have the ability to carry out the desire.¹⁹ For the old habits and conditioned responses are not the good I want to do; no, they are remnants of my selfish unconverted mind.²⁰ So, if I find myself doing what I no longer desire to do, it is not I, but vestiges of old habits and conditioned responses that have yet to be removed, and through God's grace will soon be removed.

7:21 So, I find this reality at work: When I want to do good, old selfish habits and residual feelings of fear are right there with me.²² For in my mind I rejoice in God's methods and principles;²³ but I recognize I remain damaged from years of being infected with distrust and practicing Satan's methods, so that even though the infection of distrust has been removed, the old habits of fear and self-promotion tempt me from within.²⁴ What a damaged and corrupt man I am! Who will deliver and heal me from a brain and body so diseased and deformed?²⁵ Praise be to God – for he has provided the healing solution through Jesus Christ our Lord!

So then, I find that in my mind I am now renewed with trust for God and love of his methods, but my brain and body remain damaged by years of self-indulgent behavior.

Romans Chapter Eight

Romans 8:1 Therefore, those who trust in Christ Jesus are no longer destined to die, ² because through Christ Jesus the law of love has cleansed and healed me from the law of selfishness and death. ³ Because the written law was powerless to restore trust – as it could merely diagnose the infection of distrust and selfishness pervading us all, God accomplished this restoration of his character of love in man by sending his own Son in human flesh to eradicate selfishness from humanity, to reveal the truth about God, expose the lies of Satan, and reveal what happens when the infection of sin is not cured. And so he condemned the infection of selfishness as the destroying element in sinful man, ⁴ in order that the law of love – the principle upon which life is based, might be fully restored in us, who no longer live according to the selfish desires but in harmony with the Spirit of love and truth.

Thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 2,3,4 and 6