

Worship Lesson 11 3Q 2011

In Spirit and in Truth

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, "As we have seen..." thoughts?

- What is the gospel we are proclaiming?
- Is the gospel we are proclaiming different than any other Christian gospel? Should it be?
- How would you explain the gospel to others?

- What are we doing to proclaim the everlasting gospel?
- How can we be more effective?
- What obstacles do you see that impair our ability to proclaim the gospel?
- What can we, as a class, do to proclaim it more effectively?
- Who would like to be involved in proclaiming the gospel?
- What aides, materials, resources would you need to help you proclaim the gospel?
- Would you like handouts to give to people? On different topics?

To where should we look for support in spreading the gospel?

After last week's class Dennis emailed me the following:

"The Sanhedrin had rejected Christ's message and was bent upon His death; therefore Jesus departed from Jerusalem, from the priests, the temple, the religious leaders, the people who had been instructed in the law, and **turned to another class to proclaim His message**, and to gather out those who should carry the gospel to all nations. {DA 232.1}

As the light and life of men was rejected by the

ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so it has been rejected in every succeeding generation.

Again and again the history of Christ's withdrawal from Judea has been repeated. When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; **but the religious leaders would not tolerate the light**, and those that bore it were **forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth**. In our day few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth in whatever guise it may be presented.

Often those who follow in the steps of the Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. **And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching obliged to leave the church of their fathers, that they may render obedience.** {DA 232.2}

The people of Galilee were despised by the rabbis of Jerusalem as rude and unlearned, yet they presented a more favorable field for the Saviour's work. They were more earnest and sincere; less under the control of bigotry; their minds were more open for the reception of truth. In going to Galilee, Jesus was not seeking seclusion or isolation. The province was at this time the home of a crowded population, with a much larger admixture of people of other nations than was found in Judea. "{DA 232.3}

Thoughts? When I read this my heart was saddened.

Where can we focus our energies in taking the gospel to our world?

We would like to do more than just meet once a week for class, we would like to start an awakening, a movement, a reevaluation of thinking, a spark to start the investigation of

truth so that we may move forward in the truth rather than defend truths of a past generation.

Read second paragraph, “Think through...” thoughts?

Do we ever become so accustomed to the story of Jesus incarnation that we fail to be awed by it? What have you found to be effective in keeping your heart and mind in a state of wonder and admiration for what Christ has done?

How is the cross foolishness to the world? Why is it foolishness to those who are perishing?

Those who are perishing live in harmony with the prime directive of this world, which is survival of the fittest. From the perspective of our natural instinct to survive, does it make any sense to lay down your life so that you may find it?

Then Jesus said to his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.” MT 16:24, 25.

What does this mean?

God’s kingdom is the kingdom of love, which is the principle of giving. The cross is where God’s principle of love destroyed Satan’s infection of survival of the fittest in the human brain of Jesus Christ. It is only as we know God, His methods of love, that the Cross make sense.

SUNDAY

The lesson is about Mary and her response to being told she would be the mother of Christ.

Lady's take a moment and consider, what would it have been like for you at age 13-16 to be told you are going to be pregnant with God's Son?

- How might you have responded?
- What do you think your parents would have said when you told them you were pregnant but had not known a man?
- How do you think your friends and classmates at school would have responded?
- What about school administration?
- What about church leaders?

Do you think there would be any social stress involved? Would you have been rejoicing to find this out?

What about Mary? What of her response? It appears it was one of joy and thanksgiving. What enabled this response?

Did Mary know something we don't?

Read bottom green section – thoughts? Anyone want to share a miracle they experienced in their lives?

MONDAY

The lesson is describing how we serve what we worship,

Read bottom paragraph, "Thus, we..." thoughts?

Healthy worship does protect our minds and develop our faculties. Thus it is essential to engage in healthy worship.

And unhealthy worship will damage our faculties and corrupt the mind and character.

Can people be members of a Christian church, be baptized, take communion, attend church weekly, hold church office, tithe and given offerings and still be an idolater? How?

What is the basis of idolatry? Is it not worshipping anything other than the true God? And what if one worships God but invests Him with the character of Satan?

Did Jesus state that people would think they were worshipping Him but He wouldn't even know them?

What can we do to enhance our ability to know God and worship Jesus in truth?

How can one tell? Would the methods one uses in living their lives change as one comes to know the true God? Do we treat others differently? How about those who disagree with us?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "As we have seen..." thoughts?

Do we agree? Is the form of worship what matters or is it the heart?

What do you think about our forms, rituals and liturgy? Do they enhance our relationship with God, or have they become an obstacle to experiencing what God wants for His people?

What does God want His church on earth to look like?

Could we use the New Testament as a guide to answer this question?

What did the church in the New Testament look like? How did it function?

Do each of you believe you are qualified to lead the church?
Do each of you believe you are ordained of God to be the church pastor?

Do each of you believe you are authorized of God to baptize, lead out in communion?

What would the New Testament say about whether you are authorized of God or not?

How was the church of God to function? Who were the priests in God's New Testament Church? Who was authorized to lead worship? Who was authorized to hold communion, baptize?

As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a **holy priesthood**, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ...But you are a chosen people, **a royal priesthood**, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1Pet 2:4,5,9,10

What impact does it have on a believer to lead others to Christ? What impact does it have on a believer to lead out in worship? What impact does it have on the body of Christ if all members are serving each other as equals?

Does our liturgy, forms, rituals enhance every member functioning in the body of Christ or undermine it?

What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, **everyone** has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. 1Cor 14:26

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as **you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.** Col 3:12-16

Are we **all** to be priests of God serving each other in love or is the church to be divided into the professional clergy and the unqualified laity?

Are we **all** to be ministers to each other, serving each other in love, or are we to go to service and sit and be entertained by the professional musicians and speakers who choose for us what to sing, think and speak?

- What are we to be experiencing in our hearts?
- Does the organized church help break down the dividing wall of hostility?
- Do we experience closer intimacy, acceptance, with others? Or does the church foster a costume party in which we each dress up and present ourselves in the “right” way to ensure we will be accepted by the system and not chastised or criticized?
- Do we open our hearts, souls and selves up to each other to bear one another’s burdens and difficulties, helping each other overcome in the name of Christ or do we hide our faults and problems pretending we are victorious for fear of rejection?
- Does the church today function as God designed it to function?

How can we, in this class, break out of a man made tradition and come to know, love, support, uplift, encourage, and promote the development of God’s character in each other?

How can we in this class move beyond tradition, forms, rituals and habits and enter into the at-one-ment, the unity of heart, mind and spirit God designed for His children to experience?

WEDNESDAY

Read top Bible verse, John 4:23 – thoughts?

What does “Truth and Spirit” mean? How do we worship God in spirit and in truth?

The Teacher from heaven, no less a personage than the Son of God, came to earth **to reveal *the character of the Father to men, that they might worship him in spirit and in truth.*** Christ revealed to men the fact that the strictest adherence to ceremony and form would not save them; for the kingdom of God was spiritual in its nature. Christ came to the world to sow it with truth. He held the keys to all the treasures of wisdom, and was able to open doors to science, and to reveal undiscovered stores of knowledge, were it essential to salvation. He presented to men that which was **exactly contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to *the character of God,*** and sought to impress upon men the paternal love of the Father, who "so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." [John 3:16.] He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, **enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them, who treated them spitefully. In this he was revealing to them *the character of the Father,*** who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth. Those who accepted his teaching were under the guardian care of angels, who were commissioned to strengthen, to enlighten, that the truth might renew and sanctify the soul. {CE 74.1}

What does it mean to worship in Spirit and in Truth?

Does it have anything to do with the character of God? How is the truth about God's character related to worshipping God in spirit and in truth?

What happens when we come to see God as He truly is? What impact does the "knowledge of God" have on us?

Life eternal is to "know" God, what does this mean?

This is more than intellectual knowledge, it is a personal knowing of God.

Does "spirit and truth" mean in our intellectual understanding (truth) and in our heart assimilation and experience with the truth, which changes the way we live (spirit)? Thus we must not only understand the truth, but embrace and assimilate the truth into our own individuality, identity, character?

Even so, the mighty **cleaver of truth** has taken out a people from the quarry of the world and is fitting this people, who profess to be the children of God, for a place in His heavenly temple. **We want the cleaver of truth to do its work for us.** . . . We are here as probationers, and we must pass under the hand of God. All rough edges and rough surfaces must be removed, and we must be stones fitted for the building. We are brought into church capacity **with defects of character, but we must not retain them.** We must be fitted and squared for the building. We must be "labourers together with God," for we are "God's husbandry," we are "God's building." In view of this we must see that the temple is not defiled with sin. We should be lively stones, not dead ones, but live ones that will reflect the image of Christ. **We must be worshipers in spirit and in truth.**—Manuscript 49, 1886 (Manuscript Releases, vol. 3, pp. 230-232). {CTr 155.5}

Thoughts?

Read last paragraph, “At the same time...” thoughts?

What is the balance between correct beliefs and correct attitude of the heart?

Will anyone, when Christ appears in the clouds, know correctly everything in Scripture? Will there be any human being that has 100% correct beliefs when Christ first returns?

What is essential for salvation? Is it correct beliefs, or a renewed heart?

What is the attitude of those who have a renewed heart toward their beliefs?

The heart of those who will be saved is the heart that loves truth, that wants to grow in truth, they acknowledge their own finiteness and are hungry to grow in truth as more truth is understood.

The heart of those who are not ready to meet Christ is the heart that does not love the truth, but loves their beliefs and refuses to grow in truth, but instead holds to the traditions or old beliefs and defends them to the exclusion of growing in truth.

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

Notice they perish, not because they don't have the right beliefs, but because they don't love the truth.

Eve really believed the words of Satan, but her belief did not save her from the penalty of sin. She disbelieved the words of God, and this was what led to her fall. **In the judgment men will not be condemned because they conscientiously believed a lie, but because they did not believe the truth**, because they neglected the opportunity of learning what is truth. {CC 15.7}

Why will men be condemned? Not because they have some misunderstanding on some belief, or even believe the wrong thing, but because they were not lovers of truth and thus could not be moved out of a distorted belief system.

How do we see this today? In my experience tradition, the desire to “protect” the beliefs of the past, the idea that we must hold to what previous generations understood is a great lie.

Only in theology is it a virtue to not grow in truth, knowledge understanding. In every other field of study the expectation, passion, desire is to learn and understand more, even to the point of overthrowing previously held dogma – consider medicine, physics, biology, mechanical engineering etc. All fields of study grow in knowledge – except theology, somehow in theology it has been a virtue to resist growth, to hold to old ideas and old concepts.

Churches even say things like, we don't want any change, we want things to remain like they are... How sad, what can God do for such people? Do you see how such an attitude delays the coming of Christ?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “Throughout the long...” thoughts?

Was Christ fully God or was He a demi-god?

Read third paragraph, “Jesus was very clear...”

This is a great point. If Jesus was not God why did He allow Himself to be worshipped?

What is the basis for your belief that Jesus is fully God?

What do we lose in the plan of salvation if Jesus is not fully God?

Read last paragraph, “The point here...” thoughts?

What did Jesus say His purpose was in coming to earth? Who did He say He was pointing our minds toward? Did Jesus seek His own glory or that of the Father? Did Jesus want us to worship Him or the Father? Did Jesus say if you’ve seen me you’ve seen me, or you’ve seen the Father?

Jesus purpose was to reveal the Father to man and make Him known, thus when we rightly worship Jesus we put the truth about the Father at the center of all our worship!

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 2