



The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 4 3Q 2016 Justice and Mercy in the Old Testament: Part 2

SABBATH

Can anyone recap for us what we discussed last week about Justice and Mercy?

What is Justice? What is Mercy? Are they different? What law lens do you view it through?

What is the typical, common, view of justice? Punishment—why is this the common view? Because it is through the law lens of sinful beings—the imposed law lens which requires coercive enforcement. So, this idea leads us to think justice requires broken law to have punishment inflicted.

But, what is justice in God's kingdom of love—through design law lens? Doing what is right—which is what? Healing all who will allow it, and setting free those who reject healing to their own choice, which is what?

What is mercy under imposed law? Setting aside punishment—which is transmuted in Christian thought for those still operating upon the infection of imposed law to God actually punishing an innocent in the place of the guilty so God can let the guilty off.

But what is mercy in design law? God through Christ mercifully sacrificing Himself to provide the cure, the remedy, the needed treatment to heal and restore those who will allow Him!

SUNDAY

Alive in Christ—what does this mean? What does it mean to be “in” Christ?

I was doing some research on this concept and came across this in the book *Evangelism*:

It is not orthodox theories, not membership in the church, not the diligent performance of a certain round of duties, that gives evidence of life. In an ancient tower in Switzerland I saw the image of a man that moved as if it possessed life. It looked like a living man, and I whispered when I came near, as if it could hear me. But though the image looked like life, it had no real life. It was moved by machinery. {Ev 116.6}

Motion is not necessarily life. We may go through all the forms and ceremonies of religion; but unless we are alive in Christ, our work is worthless. The Lord calls for living, working, believing Christians.-- Review and Herald, April 21, 1903. {Ev 117.1}

What do you hear? Do you agree? What is being suggested that is required to be alive in Christ?



What about this quotation from one of the founders of the SDA church?

The fourth chapter of Ephesians contains instruction which we should all heed. After speaking of the need of unity, the apostle says, "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; but speaking the truth in love, may **grow up** into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ." **To speak the truth in love means to walk in the truth, to practice the truth in the transactions of life, to walk worthy of the vocation wherewith we are called, doing works which correspond to the elevating influence of the truth. It means to have a faith which works by love and purifies the soul, making us alive in Christ. It means to have in the soul the living water, which Christ gives and which springs up unto everlasting life.** {3MR 59.2}

What do you hear? Did you hear from Ephesian we are "grow up"—would being alive involve growth? If one doesn't grow up, which means develop, mature then would that be a sign of going through the mechanical motions of life but not being alive?

What does it mean to grow up? Does it mean to think for oneself, to reason, to weigh evidences? Remember Hebrews 5:14, "the mature are those who have developed by practice the ability to discern the right from the wrong"?

What is the living water? The living water is the principle upon which life is built, which is what? It is love! Unless we have love in our hearts we are not alive. In order to be alive we must speak the truth in love, truth and love are the prevailing powers in God's government and to be alive in Christ means we have hearts that love the truth.

This sounds good, but it is not natural. The natural position of the human heart is to lie—lie to self, to deceive oneself, to distort the truth, to deny. What does Scripture say?

The heart *is* deceitful above all *things*, and desperately wicked: who can know it? Jer 17:9 NKJV

What does this mean? Why is the heart deceitful? In what way?

The heart deceives about our own condition, the selfish heart doesn't want to look in the mirror, the sinful heart doesn't want to see its defects—why?

- Fear—fear of failure—don't want the responsibility to make the decision, what if it is the wrong one?
- Fear of rejection—what if I offend someone?



- Fear of inadequacy, guilt, shame—fear of our own defects in character, mistakes—people couldn't love us if they knew how defective we are. So we deny, distort project, because we don't want to look into the mirror of truth and see ourselves as we are.

The false law construct inflames this fear and causes more deception, and obstructs the truth. Those who believe in the false law construct, the idea that sin must be punished, are afraid—they fear there might be some sin that will keep them out of heaven, something they have forgotten to confess. They fear if people really knew their secret sins they would not be loved, would be rejected, would be punished because the just thing to do is to punish defects and sin—in that false model. Thus their theologies deny truth and obstruct God's healing:

- Sins confessed erased from history and no one will know
- God can't see me if I am covered by the robe of righteousness

This is why those in this view reject the integrative evidence based approach, which requires the harmony of Scripture, Science and Experience. Because science and experience—how life actually works—when harmonized with Scripture make it much harder to deny truth. But when Scripture is used detached from science and experience the Scripture itself can be twisted and used to perpetuate deceit.

Consider this quote sent by Mark Cox this week:

"A true experience will be in perfect harmony with natural and divine law. False experience will array itself against science and the principles of Jehovah." { 3T 72.2 }

Wow—did you hear that? Those whose theologies array against science, design law, the integrative evidence based approach, according to this author, have a false experience, they are living in a distorted understanding of how reality works!

And if they are denying reality, they are not growing in truth, and if a person is not growing then would that mean they are not alive in Christ?

Being alive in Christ doesn't mean one knows all truth, for we will never know all truth, it means we have hearts that love God, other and also love truth, that we have minds that are hungry and eager to grow in truth and we have not set up mental blockades that obstruct the truth so that we advance, develop and mature in Christlikeness.

Read last three paragraphs, "Our acceptance with God is sure..." What does it mean that our acceptance with God is sure only through Jesus?

Traditional answers are that Jesus paid the price and that only the innocent blood of the Son could satisfy God's justice and assuage His wrath. Or, that only the blood of Jesus is the proper offering,



gift, legal payment, necessary to present to God to get God to accept us. And that to be accepted with God a person has to make a specific legal declaration of acceptance of Jesus' payment for their sins—and if someone doesn't do this they cannot be saved.

What about Romans 2:12-14:

All who sin apart from the law [the knowledge of Scripture] will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ **(Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.)**

What is the new covenant?

This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord.

I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.

I will be their God, and they will be my people. Heb 8:10

So, those who have never heard Scripture have the law written on the heart, would be part of the new covenant experience, yet they haven't heard about the new covenant—how is that possible?

Impose law constructs, which are false, get stuck on this because in their view the legal process requires the intelligent acceptance of the legal payment. Someone has to come to Jesus, say the sinners prayer, legally get accounted in the ledgers of heaven etc. etc. They see it through the false law of a human court system.

However, when we view it through Design Law, and remember God as Creator, then we realize sin is deviation from God's design, lawlessness, outside His construction protocols. And we are all suffering from the same defective condition. We realize that God loved us too much to allow us to die in this condition without providing a Remedy that cures, heals, saves. Thus, Jesus came to be sin for us so that we can be restored to righteousness, or set right, or healed.

Therefore, Jesus procures the Remedy, which is a perfect character, which the Holy Spirit applies to the hearts and minds of all who allow it.

So, as an example, if we have people dying from anthrax infection, and an antibiotic called ciprofloxacin (cipro for short) is the cure and all who take it will live: Do people have to call it cipro to



benefit from taking it? What happens if they call it rose water, or jungle juice, or Buddhas delight, or Muhammad's magic—will calling it some other name change the effectiveness of the antibiotic?

On the other hand, what happens if they take something they are told is cipro, but is actually a counterfeit, either nothing but plant fiber, or even something toxic like more anthrax—what happens if they call anthrax cipro?

Likewise, if people cherish and embrace truth and Godly love, and follow truth and Godly love the Holy Spirit takes what Christ achieves and transforms those people, writing God's law back on their hearts/characters. They are being healed by what Christ achieved, even if they don't know about Christ.

But whenever people choose to deny truth, say no to truth, they obstruct the working of the Holy Spirit, they stop the healing process, regardless of their religion. So people who use the name Jesus, but promote selfishness, elitism, bigotry, including denominational prejudice, denying truth, clinging to ritual without enlightenment, living in fear of judgment and punishment—they are not partaking of Jesus, but promoting the counterfeit.

Consider this quotation from the book *The Desire of Ages*. In my opinion this author has it right:

Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. [Where would they have discovered God's principles to cherished if they had no theological instruction? From nature and real life experience via the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit!] Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. **Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives.** [selfless love manifest in their hearts before Scripture presented—how? Only because of Jesus' work being applied by the Holy Spirit, even though they don't know its source they value its rightness] **Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required.** Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God. {DA 638.2}

Now, is it possible for such heathen to be transformed to love others without Jesus? No! Jesus is the means whereby God introduces His law, methods, presence back into the human species. Jesus developed the Remedy to our condition, which the Holy Spirit applies.

Here is another quote from the same book:



The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He [Jesus] could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. **The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.** The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead,** who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. **It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer.** It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. *Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature.* Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2}

Jesus developed a perfect character—the Holy Spirit reproduces that divine nature/character in all who trust Him and let Him do His work in us!

What does it mean that we are accepted through the merits of Christ alone? What do you understand merits to be? Is it legal payment or is it meritorious achievement?

Would it make more sense if it said, “We are restored to harmony with God through the achievements of Christ alone?” or “We are healed through the Remedy achieved by Christ alone?”

But what about James, faith without works is dead? If it is by grace through faith we are saved, and only through what Jesus accomplished and our works play no role in our salvation, then what about faith without works is dead?

What is faith?

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Heb 11:1 NKJV

The Greek for substance is: hypostasis

- Hypo = under or below
 - Hypoglycemic (low blood sugar)
 - Hypotension (low blood pressure)
 - Hypodermic (injection under the skin)
- Stasis = Standing

Translated to Latin as *Substance*

- Sub = under or below
 - Subway
 - Subterranean
 - Submarine



- Stance = Standing

Translated to English Faith is our *under-standing*

Understanding has two meanings first, comprehension, we do have to comprehend before we can have faith, but in the Bible sense this alone is not faith. Bible faith includes the next part.

Imagine you had fractured your leg, and in the ER, the orthopedic surgeon meets you and says, “I can set the bone in your leg, but I need your permission. And after the surgery you will need to take antibiotics for five days and then go to physical therapy—do we have an *understanding*?”

What happens if you say yes to the surgeon, but you don’t take your antibiotics or do physical therapy? Your understanding, your faith, is dead, it doesn’t result in the healing outcome. Why? Because your healing requires your active participation. But does your participation heal set the bone, produce the antibiotic, or even provide the life energy which causes the cells to knit themselves back together? But will your refusal to participate obstruct all the healing energy, resources, and remedies coming from the doctor?

Now, if you take your antibiotics are you healing yourself? Or does the antibiotics do something you can’t do for yourself? But do you still have to take them, apply them to your life?

Understanding, also means an agreement—and what is the agreement with have with God?

We agree or trust God with our hearts/minds/characters to heal and transform us, but we must be active participants to apply His methods to our lives as we comprehend them. We do not procure the Remedy, we do not make the transforming changes in our own character, but we must choose to grant God permission and choose to align ourselves with God’s plan and this results in healing.

We must do this because only by our active choosing do we embrace and internalize the healing power of God. God cannot, by force, by divine power, inflict, inject, insert, impose His healing power into our minds/hearts/characters because do to so would destroy our individuality and we would no longer be us. The only way, in God’s universe of genuine love and freedom is for us sinful beings to choose to partake of what Jesus has procured for us!

Here is another quote from the same book:

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. **In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself.** True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine



energy of the Holy Spirit, and **they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God.**
{DA 466.4}

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read Ezekiel 47:1-8:

The man brought me back to the entrance of the temple, and I saw water coming out from under the threshold of the temple toward the east (for the temple faced east). The water was coming down from under the south side of the temple, south of the altar. ² He then brought me out through the north gate and led me around the outside to the outer gate facing east, and the water was flowing from the south side.

³ As the man went eastward with a measuring line in his hand, he measured off a thousand cubits and then led me through water that was ankle-deep. ⁴ He measured off another thousand cubits and led me through water that was knee-deep. He measured off another thousand and led me through water that was up to the waist. ⁵ He measured off another thousand, but now it was a river that I could not cross, because the water had risen and was deep enough to swim in—a river that no one could cross. ⁶ He asked me, “Son of man, do you see this?”

Then he led me back to the bank of the river. ⁷ When I arrived there, I saw a great number of trees on each side of the river. ⁸ He said to me, “This water flows toward the eastern region and goes down into the Arabah, where it enters the Sea. When it empties into the Sea, the water there becomes fresh.

What do you think this means? Is it literal or symbolic?

What is the temple symbolic of? We are temples to God, individually and corporately—but, while we were created to be temples where God dwells, sin corrupted our beings so that we were no longer temples of God—something had to happen to cleanse the human temple, the temple had to be rebuilt.

Tell him this is what the Lord Almighty says: ‘**Here is the man** whose name is the Branch, and **he will branch out from his place and build the temple of the Lord.** ¹³ It is **he who will build the temple of the Lord**, and he will be clothed with majesty and will sit and rule on his throne. And he will be a priest on his throne. And there will be harmony between the two.’
Zech 6:12, 13

The temple first and foremost represents Jesus, who when speaking of His body said, “destroy this temple and I will raise it in three days” and who cleansed humanity by His perfect life and selfless death. Secondly, it represents us individually and corporately.

What does the water represent? Remember Jesus’ discussion with the woman at the well? Is this symbolic of the water of life, which is what? Love—and from where does the water flow? From the



Temple, which symbolically represents Jesus the source love and truth, the source of water of life. He is the source!

The water comes from the south side of the temple—Jesus came up from Egypt “So he [Joseph] got up, took the child and his mother during the night and left for Egypt, where he stayed until the death of Herod. And so was fulfilled what the Lord had said through the prophet: “Out of Egypt I called my son.” Mt 2:14,15 Where is Egypt in relationship to the temple? South!

To where is the water flowing? Into the desert which would represent what? The world without the truth and love of God, a world dying for lack of truth and love. The sea becomes fresh, what does this represent? What sea is east of the temple? This is the *Dead Sea*, the sea in which there is no life, the sea of selfishness, which symbolically represents the sea of selfish humanity inhabiting the world—dead in trespass and sin—terminal in our condition deviant from God’s design! But love and truth from God flows out from Christ and transforms the dead sea of humanity into living stones, built together into the house for the Lord!

TUESDAY

What do you think of the title, “The Church: A Source of Life.” I would feel more comfortable if it would have said, “The Church: A Conduit of Life” what do you think?

Jesus said to the woman at the well:

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the *water I give* him will never thirst. Indeed, the *water I give* him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.” Jn 3:13,14 emphasis mine

Jesus is the source of living water that we can partake of and that living water will transform us and flow out from us to others, but we are not the source are we?

Regarding the Church as a Conduit of life—what would the church communicate, deliver, and provide that would bring life? Would it not be the truth and love of God?

And what church is the conduit of life? Is it a specific denomination that is being referred to or is it the church invisible—the church made up of all those who are united with God in heart, mind, and spirit and are cooperating with God to provide God’s true healing Remedy?

Would the heathen referred to above, who is not a member of a denominational church, but doing what the law requires be part of the church that is the conduit of life?



Could this understanding give hope to people who have family members who don't belong to a denominational church? Is the question one of denominational affiliation, or being united with Jesus and on mission for Him?

Does that mean organized denominational churches are bad and we should avoid them? Of course not! Organization allows cooperation and support and growth and ability to achieve goals and reach people we could never do on our own. So organized denominational churches can do great good for God's cause—I just wanted to be clear that when it comes to salvation it is about unity with God in heart, mind, character not membership in a specific denominational system.

One evidence that a person is united with Christ in heart is that they are seeking to connect to people, to use their energy and resources to uplift, enlighten, enrich, heal, restore other human beings back to God's original design and intent for us. So, while membership in a specific denominational institution doesn't qualify for salvation, those who are growing with God will be increasingly engaged with others for the saving of souls.

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, "Isaiah 61 begins with..." What does it mean to preach good news to the poor?

What is the good news and who are the poor?

- Would the good news be the good news about God and His methods of truth and love?
- Would it be the good news of a remedy for our condition?
- Would the poor be the same as the poor in spirit, the poor in the gold described in Revelation—the gold tried in the fire, the gold of a righteous character?
- And would the good news be that God is not only good, but He has provided richness, the gold of a perfect character freely for all who will accept it?

What does it mean to bind up the brokenhearted?

- Would it mean to create new hearts in people broken by sin and selfishness?
- Would it mean to circumcise the heart by the Spirit?
- Would it mean to write the law on the heart—which would mean to recreate the inner being to love others more than self?

Who are the captives and from what are they freed?

- Would they be people captive to fear, selfishness and sin?
- Would it be people captive in addictions?
- Would it be people in the bondage of destructive habits?
- Would freedom be free to love, free to live in harmony with God's design, to experience the last fruit of the Spirit—self-control?



Who are being released from darkness and despair?

- Would it be the darkness of misunderstanding about God, darkness about sin, about one's own condition, about what is necessary to be free?
- Would it be the darkness of the penal/legal system of appeasement and punishment?
- Would it be from all lies, distortions and misunderstandings, but primarily about God?

Well how? How is all of this accomplished and by whom?

THURSDAY

The lesson is focusing on Micah 6, so let's read versus 6-8:

With what shall I come before the Lord
and bow down before the exalted God?
Shall I come before him with burnt offerings,
with calves a year old?
⁷ Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams,
with ten thousand rivers of oil?
Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression,
the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?
⁸ He has showed you, O man, what is good.
And what does the Lord require of you?
To act justly and to love mercy
and to walk humbly with your God.

What do you hear? What is the message?

What did God want in OT times? Was it sacrifice? No, it was transformation of heart, renewal of character, which is always what God has wanted. It has never a legal problem with a legal solution, it was always a condition of being that needed curing/healing/transforming/renewing.

Read third paragraph, "Today God continues to reject..." What does it mean "God continues to reject"? Is it implying that God is deciding, determining, making a ruling on what constitutes true religion i.e. what is acceptable? Is that how it works?

Or is it that true religion is religion that is in harmony with God's design and methods for life whereas false religion violates God's design?

For instance, the practice of Corban in which during Christ's time people could mark their property to be given to the Temple at their death and thus this property was only used for themselves and they were not using their resources for others, including caring for their own family i.e. parents. Thus their



religion caused them to violate the design protocols of love and institutionalized selfishness as something a virtue. Other ways selfishness becomes institutional religion?

- Fasting for effect—Christ called them on this one too
- Praying in public
- Giving offerings to be recognized
- Paying tithe so God will give you more

FRIDAY

Discuss questions 2 and 3



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website: http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

***The Remedy* – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase**—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Remedy—Is Now Available in Print Version in the US. We have printed 10,000 to give away and will reassess demand for them after those are gone. We are shipping a small number to Canada and Australia. **How to get copies:** In the US email orders@comeandreason.com with a valid US postal address; In Canada email canada@comeandreason.com and in Australia/New Zealand email Australia@comeandreason.com and request the number you want and we will ship them to you. If you are giving them away please give them only to people who want them. In other words, don’t put one at every seat in the church, or place setting at a potluck, or car in a parking lot. Such distribution methods result in vast numbers being thrown away. Let people know they are free and allow them to take one if they want too works best.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a HARD COVER book at Amazon as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa