



The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 7 3Q 2016 Jesus Desired Their Good

SABBATH

Read Sabbath's lesson, "On Sabbath morning..." Isn't this a beautiful thing, to love others and connect with people like this? Can you envision your church doing this?

Now, the real question—would you be willing to do this? And, if you were willing to do this would you be willing for your children to bring their skateboards and skateboard with the children from the community around your church on Sabbath?

Why or why not?

Is it okay to skateboard on Sabbath before joining the church but not okay to skateboard after joining the church?

Should the message to those youth skateboarding around the church be that if they accept Jesus they must stop skateboarding on Sabbath? Or, do they only have to stop skateboarding on Sabbath if they join the SDA church—if they join any other Christian church they can be united with Jesus and still skateboard on Sabbath?

Do we show more compassion and grace to people we view as being outside the church than to those inside the church? Are we more critical and restrictive to those we view as being in the church?

Is joining Christ, becoming a member of His Church Universal, supposed to result in greater restrictions or greater liberty?

Do we as church members communicate a message that is freeing or a message that is enslaving?

What makes the difference?

What did Jesus mean when He said: "And you experts in the law, woe to you, because you load people down with burdens they can hardly carry, and you yourselves will not lift one finger to help them." Lk 11:46

Do you think it is an accident, a coincidences, that Jesus states that those who are burdening people are the experts in the law? How do the legal theologians burden people?

They focus on behavior and arbitrary, artificial rules, not on design law.



Sabbath—the legal religionists 2000 years ago wanted to restrict healing on Sabbath, Christ wanted to heal, which would set people at liberty, set them free, give them more autonomy and independence—by healing on the Sabbath!

Did Jesus heal only emergency cases on the Sabbath?

The legal religionists wanted to restrict how far someone could walk on Sabbath—Christ never gave any such restrictions—should we be able to walk freely on Sabbath?

The legal religionists wanted to restrict how much someone could carry on Sabbath—Christ never gave any such restrictions—should we be free to carry whatever we judge to be necessary on Sabbath? Even today some Jewish people observe such laws. I read this on a Jewish website describing some of these carry restrictions:

On Shabbat one may not carry or transfer objects between a "*reshut ha-yachid*" (private, enclosed domain, such as the house); and a "*reshut ha-rabim*" (public domain, such as the street). Examples of this prohibition include: carrying in one's pocket; carrying anything in the hand; wheeling a baby carriage or shopping cart, going outside with gum or food in the mouth.

Under such restrictions I could not carry the Bibles, study guides, DVDs and other materials we give away here each Sabbath. Should Sabbath be a day of such legal restrictions?

The legal religionists in Christ's day wanted to restrict pulling heads of grain on Sabbath and eating—Christ defended the disciples, giving them freedom to provide nutrition to their bodies on Sabbath.

What about today? Do we get caught in arbitrary rules that restrict liberty, or do we live free in Christ—harmonizing with His design law thus experiencing greater liberty?

Jesus said, ““Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.” MT 11:28-30

What was Jesus providing that the legal theologians were not?

Jesus was providing restoration to how life is constructed to operate! Real healing for not just body, but for mind and soul!

Legal religions occur because of people, who often intend to do good, but who fail to understand reality and instead operate upon level four and below thinking.

This is one of the dangers when people try to jump levels, remember level seven is not only loving others and understanding God's design but fulfilling God's purposes for your life. What is the danger



when a person is operating at level four and below and they get inspired to live a purpose filled life, to go out and do what they believe is God's purpose? They may misconstrue God's purpose through a false legal lens and do exactly what Jesus said the teachers of the law were doing, burdening people, or worse.

SUNDAY

The lesson contrasts Jonah's message to Nineveh with Jesus' message to Jerusalem—what lessons to we learn from these two messages?

First, identify the characters and the roles they play and see where the differences occurs:

- God—who sent both Jonah and Jesus
- Jonah the messenger to Nineveh
- Jesus the messenger to Jerusalem and the world
- The people of Nineveh
- The people of Jerusalem and the world

Did God have a different agenda for the two cities?

Was the specific presentation, appeal, message presented differently?

Why were the messages presented differently if God had the same goal for both cities?

How would you characterize the message from Jonah to Nineveh? Threat, imminent destruction, punishment—was it a message of love and mercy or a message of intimidation and fear?

How would you characterize the message from Jesus to Jerusalem? Grace, love, forgiveness, the goodness of God?

Which message more accurately reflected God's true character, ideal, and government?

What was the response of the two cities? Which message appears to be more effective in bringing to repentance? What lesson do we learn? Why would the lesser light be more easily accepted than the greater light?

What caused the different response?

What is God's heart, goal, for both cities?

So, while Jonah's presentation of the message was different that Jesus' presentation, what did God, by His actions, reveal to Nineveh? Didn't God reveal the same character of love, patience, mercy to Nineveh in sparing that city that Jesus presented in His ministry to Jerusalem?



What was Jonah's response to God's mercy? If Jesus would have been there physically in Nineveh when they repented, what do you think would have been His response to their repentance?

If Jonah was in Jerusalem when Jesus appeared, whose side do you think Jonah would have chosen—Jesus or the church authority? Might Jonah have been at risk to side with those who hated the Samaritans?

What was God's attitude toward Jonah and Jonah's anger and selfishness?

Here is a brief description from one of the founders of the SDA church:

Jonah revealed that he did not value the souls in that wretched city. He valued his reputation, lest they should say he was a false prophet. . . . Now when he sees the **Lord exercise His compassionate** attributes and spare the city that had corrupted its ways before Him, Jonah does not co-operate with God in His merciful design. **He has not the people's interests in view.** It does not grieve him that so large a number must perish who have not been educated to do right. Listen to his complaint:

“Therefore now, O Lord, take, I beseech thee, my life from me; for it is better for me to die than to live. Then said the Lord, Doest thou well to be angry? So Jonah went out of the city, and sat on the east side of the city, and there made him a booth, and sat under it in the shadow, till he might see what would become of the city. And the Lord prepared a gourd, and made it to come up over Jonah, that it might be a shadow over his head, to deliver him from his grief. So Jonah was exceeding glad of the gourd.”

Then the Lord gave Jonah an object lesson. He “prepared a worm when the morning rose the next day, and it smote the gourd that it withered. And it came to pass, when the sun did arise, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah, that he fainted, and wished in himself to die, and said, It is better for me to die than to live.” . . . “Then said the Lord, Thou hast had pity on the gourd, for the which thou hast not laboured, neither madest it grow; which came up in a night, and perished in a night: And should I not spare Nineveh, that great city, wherein are more than sixscore thousand persons that cannot discern between their right hand and their left hand; and also much cattle?”

In the history of Nineveh there is a lesson that you should study carefully. . . . You must know your duty to your fellow beings who are ignorant and defiled, and who need your help.—Manuscript 164, 1897. {CTr 172}

What is our duty to our fellow human beings?



What message will most likely reach people today—the message of impending doom and destruction that Jonah preached, and some people eagerly preach today, OR the message of love presented by Jesus? From the book *Christ's Object Lessons*:

“It is the darkness of misapprehension of God that is enshrouding the world. Men are losing their knowledge of His character. It has been misunderstood and misinterpreted. **At this time a message from God is to be proclaimed, a message illuminating in its influence and saving in its power. His character is to be made known.** Into the darkness of the world is to be shed the light of His glory, the light of His goodness, mercy and truth... **The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is the revelation of His character of love.**” *Christ's Object Lessons*, p.415

Why is the message of love to be the final message to the world?

What happens when we present a message of fear?

What is the result when we present God as full of anger and wrath as the one who inflicts punishment and pain? It undermines trust! Such a message may convert people to a religion, but it hardens their hearts and obstructs their healing and maturing of character.

Only the message of love has the power to actually transform lives.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “A leper approaches...” What do you think of the idea of “the anyway principle?”

What is being presented by this idea? Is it that what matters to us is NOT what matters to God. What is it that seems to matter to us?

- Ethnicity—Jews were very prejudiced, do we struggle with this today?
- Status—social class, wealth, position
- In earthly politics—which the Bible describes as beastly, the systems of the beast—do they pursue unity or division? Right now, whether from the political left or right do you hear messages that result in unity or stirring up division? Why? Power, it is about mobilizing people to serve one’s own agenda, creating an enemy to unite followers against.
- Health—do we shy away from people with health problems? What about mental health problems, do we discriminate against people with mental health diagnoses?
- Religion, do we discriminate against others based on religion?
 - How about beliefs within a religion, were there divisions amongst the Pharisees and Sadducees?
 - Do we have divisions that matter to us within Christianity, within our own denominations, but do those divisions really matter to God?



- History of sin, do we discriminate because of someone's past failings?
 - Polygamy—Abraham
 - Deceit and fraud—Jacob
 - Murder—Moses?
 - Adultery and Murder—David
 - Making idols—Aaron, Gideon
 - Would any of these people be permitted into leadership in our churches today? Why not?

What matters to God? Why did God allow the people cited above to remain in His service?

What is the only issue that has ever mattered?

- The condition of the heart/character—do we genuinely trust God, enough to open our hearts to him so that we are healed and restored to God's design? Are we willing to allow Christ into our hearts! That is the only issue—partaking of Jesus!
- Will there be people in heaven who have not been renewed in heart and character to be like Jesus? No!
- Will there be people in heaven who
 - belonged to different religious groups while on earth?
 - were baptized in different ways, or who never even had ritual baptism?
 - who partook of communion ceremony and those who never partook communion?
 - who worshipped on Sabbath and who never worshipped on Sabbath?

Read last paragraph, "Jesus is calling..." Read bottom green section—"How do we understand..."

Do we believe God is actually kind to the wicked? Or do we believe He is only kind up to a point and He keeps score and if the kindness of God fails to lead a person to repentance then God stops being kind and turns to His scorecard and begins inflicting proper amounts of punishment to make the unrepentant pay?

What is wrong with such a picture? What is the basis for such a picture?

TUESDAY

Love Never Fails—what does this mean? How does love never fail? When does love never fail?

If love never fails what happened to Lucifer and Judas—did Jesus not love Lucifer and Judas? So what happened?

Are there limits to what love can achieve? What determines those limits? What obstructs love?



Why will love never fail? Do we understand love is more than emotion, more than concern, more than goodwill, that love is life itself—how is love life itself?

Does understanding love as the basis of life give insight into how it never fails? What fails is sin—selfishness fails, because sin/selfishness breaks love which fail—that is what fails, love doesn't fail.

Why do selfishness and breaches in love fail? Because those breaches result in pain, destruction and death, but this understanding only works when we return to seeing God as love and His law as love and the universe constructed to operate upon love!

Middle section of the lesson asks, “What are some examples you can find in history, or even today, of how ‘Christians,’ or at least people bearing the name ‘Christians,’ have done some terrible deeds, sometimes even in the name of Jesus?”

- Crusades
- Inquisition
- Burning dissenters at the stake
- Salem witch trials
- Slavery
- Domination of women
- Any use of state power to coerce conscience
- Catholic and Protestant violence
- Rwanda
- Blowing up abortion clinics or shooting abortion doctors
- Domestic violence

Others?

Why would Christians act in such ways? What would cause a person who identifies themselves as Christian to believe it is right to carry out the Crusades, or Inquisition, or torturing unbelievers, or slavery etc.?

What is necessary for such things to occur under the name Jesus Christ?

For the law of God—the law of love, the design protocols of life, to be replaced with the human imposed law concept and to accept the idea that God operates His government no different than humans operate theirs. Once people believe that sin is breaking rules and that broken rules require inflicted punishment then it inevitably leads to the practice of punishing those who don't believe and live the way we do.



Further the false legal definition of sin allows for selfishness to remain in the heart—how? Because under the legal view the problem is the deeds, not the selfishness in the heart, and the legal problem of behaviorally breaking the law is addressed through—

- legal payments
- substitutionary propitiation
- blood sacrifices
- penance
- rituals
- works

All of these concepts allow people to remain self in heart while falsely believing they are right with God. This leads to intolerance in those who are not behaving as we feel pressured to behave. So, what do people do? They seek to control government to force people to obey the rules they want obeyed.

But if one practices such methods what happens to love? Why?

The lesson asks us to examine 1Cor 13 and consider what love does and doesn't do—what does love not do?

Love keeps no record of wrongs—is God love? Then does He keep records of wrongs? Why do so many teach that God has recording angels following you around to keep track of every wrong to make you face and punish you for? But love doesn't do this—something is wrong, what?

If love keeps no record of wrongs does that mean there are no records? Or does the Bible teach there are records? And does the Bible teach people are judged by what is in the records? Then what is the proper understanding, where is the harmony?

Do doctors keep medical records? And do the medical records document the pathology, the disease, the symptoms, the problems? For what purpose? To find wrongs in the patient in order to punish the patient, or to find problems in order to heal? And if a patient refuses treatment and dies of a curable disease whose remedy was provided by the doctor and the family sues, what comes into evidence. The records, for what purpose? To vilify the deceased person or document the proper diagnosis and to demonstrate the death was a result of the choices to refuse what the doctor provided thus the records also vindicate that the doctor did everything right and the only reason the person died was their refusal to accept their diagnosis or what the doctor was providing? This is the purpose of the records in the end!

WEDNESDAY

Read Mark 8:22-25:



They came to Bethsaida, where some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged him to touch him. ²³Jesus took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village. After spitting on the man's eyes, Jesus placed his hands on him and asked him, "Can you see anything?"
²⁴The man looked up and said, "Yes, I can see people, but they look like trees walking about."
²⁵Jesus again placed his hands on the man's eyes. This time the man looked intently, his eyesight returned, and he saw everything clearly. ²⁶Jesus then sent him home with the order, "Don't go back into the village." GNT

The top of the lesson asks, "What spiritual lesson can we learn from the fact that Jesus' first healing touch didn't fully heal the blind man?"

Did you notice the lesson interpreted what was stated in Scripture. Did the Scripture state the man was not fully healed on the first touch? No, only that the man didn't see clearly—could there be another explanation—that the man was fully healed the first time, but something else was causing his inability to see clearly?

Here is from *The Remedy*

²²When they came to Bethsaida, some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged Jesus to touch him. ²³He led the blind man by the hand outside the village. Then, to avoid introducing doubt, Jesus met the man's expectations for how healing was done and put saliva on the man's eyes and then placed his hands on him. Then Jesus asked, "What do you see?"
²⁴The man looked up and said, "I see people; but its kind of blurry; they look like trees moving about."
²⁵So Jesus touched the man's eyes once more, wiping them clean. Then the man could see everything clearly. ²⁶Jesus sent him home, instructing him, "Don't go back to the village."

To me it sounds like Jesus first healing touch was effective, but the man still had saliva in his eyes that needed to be cleared away. Or, is it more likely that the first touch wasn't enough and Jesus the Creator had to give it a second go?

The lesson asks what spiritual lesson from this description?

Could it mean that when God does something in our lives to enable, equip, empower us for His service that we instead are blinded by the miracle, the equipping, the empowering that we lose sight of where we are to put our ability to use?

Other applications?



THURSDAY

Read top memory text, Philippians 2:3-5: “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴ Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵ Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus:”

Does this mean all of us are to be doing the same thing? Or, has God gifted people with different abilities in order for the entire body of believers to be benefited?

Have you ever found yourself pressured by a church member to do something for others outside your calling? For instance, some people are not gifted as teachers or speakers, and have no calling by God to teach or speak, but someone might say, “You claim to be a Christian but you won’t speak or teach?”

What about saying to someone, “you claim to be a Christian but you don’t visit those in prison?” Are all Christians called to visit people in prison? If 100% of Christians visited those in prison as their ministry, who would preach, who would write, who would heal, who would teach the children, who would feed the hungry?

Are we able to recognize that it is okay for a Christian to follow the path God has called for them and not to be derailed onto *worthwhile* missions that God has called others to fulfill?

When Christ ascended to heaven, He left the work on earth in the hands of His servants, the undershepherds. **“And He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:** till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ.” {5T 237.3}

In sending forth His ministers our Saviour gave gifts unto men, for through them He communicates to the world the words of eternal life. This is the means which God has ordained for the perfecting of the saints in knowledge and true holiness...

All who have been benefited by the labors of God's servant should, **according to their ability**, unite with him in working for the salvation of souls. This is the work of all true believers, ministers and people. They should keep the grand object ever in view, each seeking to fill his proper position in the church, and all working together in order, harmony, and love. {5T 238.1}

Every branch of the work of God is to have recognition. “He gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ.” Ephesians 4:11, 12. This Scripture shows that there are to be **different workers, different instrumentalities. Each**



has a different work. No one is required to lay hold of another's work, and, though untrained, try to do it. God has given to each according to his ability. One man may think that his position gives him authority to dictate to other workers, but this is not so. Ignorant of their work, he would enlarge where he should retrench, and retrench where he should enlarge, because he can see only the part of the vineyard where he is working. {8T 170.2}

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1 and 4



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