



The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 3 3Q 2017

The Unity of the Gospel

SABBATH

Read memory text, “Complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.” Philippians 2:2 ESV

What is the text telling us the one thing we are to be unified upon is? We must have the same mind, be in one accord about what? Love! We must come to the truth about what God’s character of love is; His methods of love, how love works. It is a unity of love that we must have!

Can anyone tell me how love works? Love gives, love is other-centered, love is outward moving, love is selfless, love is patient, kind, gentle, humble, interested in the welfare of others—which means love does what is in the eternal best interest in how we relate to others. So this means—we always give what the other wants? Does God give us everything we want? Why not?

Read paragraph one: “Protestant reformer John Calvin...” Avoid schism on what?

Read the next two paragraphs, “But should unity be preserved...” What does it mean to not compromise on truth?

Does it mean we are unified with the right facts, the right interpretations of Scripture, the right doctrines, the right definitions, the right fundamental beliefs, the right rituals, that this is what matters?

Can we obtain unity of the gospel by coming to unity of fundamental beliefs?

Before we get into historical evidence, let’s break it down to some very straightforward questions:

- When Jesus comes again—at the moment of His appearing in the clouds, amongst those who ARE saved, will there be any single person who understands every detail and fact of the Bible correctly; interpret every symbol accurately, knows the true meaning of all prophecy?
- Or will every saved person have many facts wrong?
- But will there be some element that will be common amongst all the saved? What?
- Will all the saved have been renewed in heart/character to love God and others more than self?
- Will all the saved have been changed in character to practice Godly methods, which are truth i.e. honesty, love, and liberty?
- Will any selfish and deceitful person be amongst the saved?
- And what is the avenue for the heart change to occur?

Remember the cascade of sin:



- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
- Fear and selfishness result in acts of sin
- Act of sin damage mind, body, relationships—terminal condition

Healing cascade:

- Truth believed destroys lies and restores trust—about what?
- Restored trust we open the heart to God and love is poured in
- Love and trust cast out fear and we engage in acts of righteousness, giving, beneficence, love
- Acts of righteousness, giving, love, witness God’s kingdom and we grow in godliness

But the healing always starts with the truth about God and His character and methods of love. When we substitute other TRUTHS for the truth about God we obstruct healing.

For instance, if we substitute the truth of God’s character and methods of love, which win us to trust and open our hearts so we experience the indwelling Spirit and are transformed, with say...the truth about baptism by immersion and suggest if a person isn’t baptized by immersion then they have not obeyed, and God has rules and doesn’t tolerate deviations in the slightest from His rules—Adam and Eve only ate a piece of fruit but God wouldn’t tolerate it. Uzzah only touched the ark but God wouldn’t tolerate it. So, if you haven’t been baptized by immersion God won’t tolerate disobedience and you won’t be saved.

Do you see what just happened? The truth about God has been replaced with the truth about baptism, but because the truth about God is not central then a lie about God is presented, and people rather than having trust in God restored have fear of God increased and instead find security in legalism, either rule keeping, or the false penal substitutionary fable of paying God a legal fee.

We are to be united in character, and this only happens when we come back to the truth about God.

Now to examine some history:

Was Martin Luther’s protests primarily focused on doctrines, or were His 95 thesis examples of evidences to point out some other problem?

When a doctor identifies a constellation of symptoms, what is the purpose? To help recognize an underlying problem or disease state. It is the underlying disease state which causes to the constellation of symptoms.

What was Martin Luther’s list designed to expose? That salvation, or healing from sin, comes from trusting God, and the 95 thesis were examples of practices and teaches that undermined trust in God. Why? Martin Luther exposed that the methods of the institutional church are not the methods of God and that the methods the institutional church used of falsehood, coercion, bribes, manipulation, fear,



survival exploitation, were not God's methods, and therefore failed to win trust, heal hearts and minds, and transform characters to be like Jesus.

As evidence that Martin Luther was right, and that we are right, what have so-called Christians who value the imposed law, with all these human methods done throughout history?

- Crusades
- Inquisition
- Run mafia organizations—then attend mass and church
- Attack, murder, exploit, and deceive the American Indians, then go to church each Sunday and sing hymns while calling the native people savages.
- Murder one million Tutsis by rival Hutus in a few months, primarily killing zones were the churches, often right after kneeling at the alter and partaking mass

Is there a difference in examining doctrines and examining the impact those doctrines have upon our views of God and our character development and how we treat others?

Did the Pharisees in Christ's day have wrong doctrines about:

- Which day was the Sabbath?
- God as Creator?
- The Inspiration of Scripture?
- Which foods were on the permitted list?
- Paying of tithe?
- Who could serve as priest?

Did they have the right view of God? Did they have God's methods in their hearts? Were they united with heaven in fulfilling God's purposes?

So, is the most important thing to get doctrines right, or to get our understanding about God and His methods right and then form our doctrines?

Would it be a good test of our doctrines to ask, what do they say about God?

Can we have a healthy belief system if we have stand-alone doctrines that we support with proof texts—but which are not directly connected to how we understand God and His methods?

What did Jesus say would demonstrate we are His followers?

That we love one another—is there a difference between unity of love and unity of doctrine?

Why is there such an emphasis on right doctrines? It is because of people stuck at level four thinking who believe right doctrines are actually what matter, when they are only important in regard to how they enlighten us to God and His reality.



SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, “Having refuted...” Who was saying Paul’s gospel was not in harmony with Peter and the other Apostles?

Was it teachers who knew and practiced God’s love?

And what was it about Paul’s teaching that they used to suggest Paul was a renegade and disagreed with the other Apostles?

- He didn’t require circumcision
- He didn’t require Jewish feast days
- He didn’t require Jewish dress

What did Paul require? That people be reborn with new hearts that love God and others more than self, and that Jesus Christ is the Remedy to sin, and we receive a new heart, i.e. reborn by accepting Jesus into our lives.

Why did Paul require this and not Feast Days, or circumcision, or dress, or any other ritual? Because this is what is necessary to actually heal and fix what is wrong with us and unite us with God’s design for life!

Do such obstacles and difficulties occur today? Are there people today teaching the truth about God’s character and kingdom of love, the importance of being healed in the inner man, having a new heart and right spirit, but who are opposed by others, even church leaders, perhaps even being accused by such people for being renegades and disagreeing with the Apostles?

We have had many friends from around the world contact us and tell us that when they try and tell their church members about God’s character and methods of love they have met opposition, often from the pastor or other church leaders, even accusing them of being heretics and telling them not to come to church any more.

Hmmm...why?

Because the accusers are still stuck in the false law construct, which means they have the wrong diagnosis. They believe falsely that our problem is a legal problem and therefore promote a false legal solution. In such a world the focus is on legality, ensuring the ritual is carried out properly, ensuring the doctrines are properly defined etc.

Imagine scuba diving and you get your foot caught and your tank is running out of air, and another diver comes along with a spare tank and offers it to you, would it matter to you if the other diver was a man or a woman?



Imagine you were dying of an infection and a doctor came along with an antibiotic which would save your life, would it matter to you if the doctor were a man or a woman?

Imagine you are lost in a forest it had been days, you are dehydrated, hungry, weak, frightened, and a forest ranger comes along who can lead you to safety, would it matter if they were a man or a woman?

Why does it **not** matter in any of these situations if the person who helps you is a man or a woman?

Because the laws in question, which are threatening your life, are design laws.

What about when we take the gospel to the world, why is it the church says only men can be ordained? Because the church is still operating under the false law construct and they wrongly conclude that it really does matter, and sadly they end up making decisions that obstruct the healing gospel.

Jesus gave a parable to illustrate this problem to the church in His day.

The parable of the Good Samaritan: We could give the same parable today and replace the Samaritan with a woman, all the ordained pastors, conference presidents and General Conference committee leaders walk by, while a woman helps the injured man. Hmm... Again design law, laws of health as the injured person is helped.

Notice, in the parable of the Good Samaritan who of the actors in the parable kept the Sabbath, ate the right foods, paid tithes, dressed the right way, believed in the Sanctuary and Advent message? The Priest and Levite adhered to all the right doctrines and practiced all the right rituals, but were they commended for being right with God?

Who was commended for being right? What made the difference doctrine or love in the heart? It is a renewed heart that loves like God loves that brings unity and doctrines are only important as they lead us back to the truth about God.

When we place doctrines as test of fellowship, separated from what they tell us about God and God's methods of love, truth and freedom, then we actually create barriers to love!

Read bottom green section, "What are some issues that threaten church unity today? More important, after we define them, how do we deal with them? What issues are more important than unity itself?"

Evidently to many people there seems to be a lot of things more important than unity—such as power, authority, orthodoxy, protecting history, protecting the perceived prestige of the institution, correct definitions of doctrines—others?

But what is another term for unity? At-one-ment and what does the Bible say the outcome of God's work through Christ will be?



And he made known to us the **mystery of his will** [why was this a mystery? Was God keeping secrets? What made this difficult to comprehend or understand? It was Satan's lies about God which caused all kinds of wrong and confused thinking which kept hidden the truth of God's character and will –notice what is God's will] according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, ¹⁰ to be put into effect when the times will have reached their fulfillment—to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ. Eph 1:9,10

This is atonement—unity—healing and restoring His universe back to the perfection of love.

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Circumcision was a sign of the covenant relationship that God established with Abraham, the father of the Jewish nation.”

Of what was circumcision a sign?

What was the importance of circumcision?

Could a person be saved by being circumcised?

Did a person in OT times have to be circumcised in order to be saved?

Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, the Patriarchs, Melchizedek...no evidence is found that these persons were circumcised, yet good evidence is found that they were saved.

Was circumcision required for Jewish males to be saved, but not for others? Then are there two paths of salvation?

No! So it wasn't required for Jews to be saved either, for what was it required? To be a member of the acting troupe known as Israel, to act out the plan of salvation in type, in theater, in symbol—and perhaps a helpful tool for the Jewish men who were frequently tempted to worship at the fertility cults of the day. Perhaps it was a last line of defense as the Jewish man approached the cult prostitute, maybe the awareness he was Jewish would call into question why he was worshipping there instead of worshipping Yahweh.

The Bible tells us that circumcision of the body is not required for salvation. The circumcision that is required for salvation, for both Jew and Gentile, is not bodily circumcision, but circumcision of the heart.

What is circumcision of the heart?



How does physical circumcision typify this?

- Can you tell by looking at a person on the street if they have had circumcision of the body?
- Can you tell by looking at a person on the street if they have had circumcision of the heart?
- Can you tell if you reach a certain level of intimacy if a person has had circumcision of the body?
- Can you tell if you reach a certain level of intimacy if a person has had circumcision of the heart?
- Is circumcision of the body painful?
- Is circumcision of the heart painful?
- Is circumcision of the body less painful when we are younger?
- Is circumcision of the heart less painful when we are younger and have less sin habits developed?

What about Moses, why did Moses end up in a confrontation with God because his son had not been circumcised?

It was theater—and only those who follow the Script can be on stage. Exodus 4:24 is commonly translated as God was about to kill Moses—but the Hebrew doesn't say that, it says "him" and the context is about Moses uncircumcised son. Thus, what is most likely is that God was about to take Moses son off stage because he was not following the Script so Moses wife got him in costume very quickly and he was permitted to stay on stage and be an actor in the drama.

Also, Moses was about to become leader of Israel, and God was about to give instructions for salvation to a bunch of people who were very primitive and rebellious and what would have happened to the lessons God was going to give through Moses, if Moses and his family did not follow the ritual handed down through Abraham?

I think this demonstrates that Moses understood there was no direct value in circumcision; that it was the condition of the heart that mattered. But it also demonstrates that Moses didn't fully appreciate the utter primitive thinking of the Jews, their rebellious and stubborn hearts and therefore the importance of consistency in acting out the symbols. Therefore, God needed to remind Moses to be consistent lest false ideas creep into the symbolic system, which happened even with the scrupulousness to the Script.

Read bottom green section, "Maybe today circumcision isn't the issue. But what (if anything) do we as a church struggle with that parallels this problem?"

What about any doctrine that promotes sectarianism—i.e. that it really does matter what denomination one belongs to. That we are saved by denomination, and thus we begin to identify doctrines that set us apart from other denominations and make those doctrines tests of fellowship, marks of distinction and even tests of salvation?



TUESDAY

The lesson talks about the freedom we are to have in Christ, read first paragraph, “Freedom, as a description...” thoughts?

The lesson states, “Freedom from being enslaved to the desires of our sinful natures, freedom from the condemnation of the law, and freedom from the power of death.”

What law lens do you hear these promises through?

If through the false imposed law lens, what is often taught?

- That we are not condemned to be executed by God for our sins, because the law that condemns us has been paid by the perfect blood of Jesus so it has been satisfied and God can now pardon us.
- That we are freed from the imposed punishment of the eternal death sentence, which would be inflicted by God if Jesus didn't pay the penalty for us
- That we will one day get a new heart and right spirit and in that future day be delivered from the domination of the sinful desires

What is the truth? It is all design law truth:

- That when we accept the truth about God we open the heart and God's Spirit enters and takes the perfection that Jesus achieved and reproduces it in us. We get the victory over the sinful desires here and now as we experience new motives and new thoughts within
- That we are not condemned by the law because we are now renewed to be in harmony with the law because we love God and others more than self
- That we have victory over death because we have been healed from the terminal condition which causes death

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about Peter's fear of what other Jews would think of him when he was associating with Gentiles, so Paul confronts Peter publicly.

What lesson do we learn from this event?

- Was Peter wrong on this issue?
- Was his error on this issue before or after he experienced the gift of the Holy Spirit, what some might call the gift of prophecy? It was after.
- Does this mean that because he was wrong about this issue, that he was not inspired? No!
- Does it mean that his writings are not inspired? No!
- What does it tell us about how inspiration of the Holy Spirit works?



- When a person is inspired by the Holy Spirit does that mean they are now perfect, sinless and never make any mistakes again and never get any Bible issue wrong?

What about EGW? Many people believe she was inspired, does that mean she was correct on everything she ever did and said? Did she claim to be correct on everything she ever did or said?

Do some people in the SDA church hold EGW up almost as an icon and use her writings as a litmus test of orthodoxy?

Does a person have to accept the writings of EGW to be saved? No! Can a person deny EGW was inspired by the Holy Spirit and still be saved? Yes!

Why then the hard line some take on the writings of EGW? Is it because they are more concerned about the SDA institution and what it might mean for the institution than for saving souls?

Now—have I, by asking these questions and pointing out that a person, like Peter, can be inspired and still be wrong on some issues, stated whether I believe EGW was or was not inspired?

Many people argue over this issue—it is a pointless argument that causes division and does not bring unity. Here is how we deal with that.

Does the Bible say that spiritual things are spiritually discerned? Yes (1Cor 2:14), what does this mean? That only by the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit are sinful human beings capable of understanding and communicating the truths of God's kingdom—do we agree?

Then, to whatever degree a person communicates the truth of God's kingdom, whether it is Peter, Paul, Martin Luther, John Calvin, John Wesley, Ellen White or whomever, they are only able to communicate truth as the Holy Spirit enlightens their mind.

So, to argue over whether someone is a prophet or not, is mute and causes division not unity. It is exactly what the Bible warns against:

My brothers, some from Chloe's household have informed me that there are quarrels among you. ¹² What I mean is this: One of you says, "I follow Paul"; another, "I follow Apollos"; another, "I follow Cephas"; still another, "I follow Christ."

¹³ Is Christ divided? Was Paul crucified for you? Were you baptized into the name of Paul?
1Cor 1:11-13

Were you baptized into the name of Martin Luther, or Calvin, or Wesley or White? No, you were baptized into Jesus! These arguments or quarrels are pointless and lead to division.



Why then to people do it? Because of spiritual immaturity—believing the false law construct that getting the answers right on a Bible test is what matters. People who have yet to think through from cause to effect, why things are the way they are, instead look to an authority to tell them the answer: Mom whose right, Dad, Teacher, Preacher, Umpire, Referee, Judge, Pope, prophet...someone tell me the answer.

THURSDAY

The lesson asks what reasons did Paul give for confronting Peter publicly, and references Galatians 2:11-14:

- ¹¹ When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong.
¹² Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³ The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.
¹⁴ When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?”

What was the issue?

That division would be introduced, based on a false artificial, imposed law, ritualistic criteria, rather than based on the actual condition of heart and mind.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 1-3, why is there no doctrine on the character of God as the central issue in the GC in our church?



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Korean and Polish Translations: A publisher in Korea has contracted to translate *Could It Be This Simple?* (CIBTS) into Korean, and a publisher in Poland has contracted to translate *The God-Shaped Brain* (GSB) into Polish. We will let you know when these are available.

Currently CIBTS is available in English, Spanish, Portuguese, and German and GSB is available in English and Korean.

July 14,15, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Lakeport SDA church, in Lakeport CA.

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

Love is more than emotion, more than compassion, more than positive regard for another; love is power—the power to live, heal and be free. Love is functional, operational, with specific design parameters built into the fabric of reality. Love is intelligent and as we intelligently choose to harmonize with how love functions we not only experience greater health, fulfillment and wellbeing, we are transformed to become forces for good in the world. In *The God-Shaped Heart* Christian psychiatrist Dr. Tim Jennings explores the healing power of love, exposes a belief system infecting Christianity that obstructs love, and identifies eternal truths that open the heart to God's transforming power of love.

September 15,16 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Church in the Valley, Aldergrove, British Columbia, Canada.

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

October 12-16, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Garden Grove SDA church in Garden Grove, CA. This will be a multi-speaker event focusing on the atonement. For more information contact:

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October 27, 28, 2017: Dr. Jennings will speaking at the Arlington SDA church in Arlington, TX. For more information contact: <http://www.arlingtonadventist.com/>