

## The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 11 3Q 2017

### Freedom in Christ

#### SABBATH

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What does the title of the lesson mean to you? Freedom from what? Freedom from God's punishment for sin?

19<sup>th</sup> Century Evangelist George MacDonald wrote:

"The Lord never came to deliver men from the consequences of their sins while those sins yet remained ... Yet, feeling nothing of the dread hatefulness of their sin, men have constantly taken this word that the Lord came to deliver us from our sins **to mean that he came to save them from the punishment of their sins.**

**"This idea has terribly corrupted the preaching of the Gospel.** The message of the Good News has not been truly communicated. Unable to believe in the forgiveness of the Father in heaven, imagining him not at liberty to forgive, or incapable of forgiving forthright; not really believing him God who is fully our Savior, but a God bound—either in his own nature or by a law above him and compulsory upon him—to exact some recompense or satisfaction for sin, **a multitude of religious teachers have taught their fellow men that Jesus came to bear our punishment and save us from hell. But in that they have misrepresented his true mission.”<sup>1</sup>**

Freedom from sin, which if unremedied, brings its own punishment? What is sin's punishment? From where does sin's punishment originate?

What about freedom from guilt and shame?

How do we experience freedom from guilt and shame? What causes the guilt and shame to go away?

Is it not healing and restoration to righteousness? Is it not the truth displacing lies, restoring trust in God and recreating the heart to be in harmony with God? Is it not experiencing the truth that God is not mad at us, He loves us and only wants to heal us.

What does it mean to be "in Christ"?

Does it not mean to be in unity, one-ness, in heart, mind, attitude, values, methods, practices, trust, confidence via our accepting the truth, opening the heart and experiencing His indwelling Spirit?

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<sup>1</sup> George MacDonald, *Discovering the Character of God* (Minneapolis: Bethany House, 1989), p. 39.

We had an online listener, Russell Bantin, email a quotation from one of the SDA founders, Ellen White this week, that I had never read before. I thought I would share a few paragraphs:

**But the moral law, which is to be written in the heart, is the law of love. It is the expression of the very nature of the God of love as interpreted to us in the life and teachings of Christ,** who said, “I have kept My Father’s commandments.” John 15:10 . **To keep this law is to love as God loves.** To the natural heart this is impossible, and so God has promised to give us a new heart: “A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.” Ezekiel 36:26 . In harmony with this provision is the prayer of David: “Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a steadfast [margin] spirit within me.” Psalm 51:10 . **We may call this conversion, or regeneration, or the new birth, or the new creation; but in any case it is the impartation of a new life from God, that life which is love, and is revealed in loving.** Those who have this experience are “partakers of the divine nature” ( 2 Peter 1:4 ), and that nature is expressed in obedience to the divine **law of love.**

“**When the principle of love is implanted in the heart,** when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new covenant promise is fulfilled, ‘I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them.’ And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? ... Here is the true test. If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in us, our feelings, our thoughts, our purposes, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God as expressed in the precepts of His holy law.”

**And this experience is guaranteed to us by the promise of God, and is provided for us through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of love:** for we know that “the love of God hath been shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Spirit which was given unto us.” Romans 5:5. “Salvation is of Jehovah.” Jonah 2:9. Taken from the pamphlet, The Savior of the world - SOTW p. 81 <https://m.egwwritings.org/en/book/1409.319#333>

And this week on our Facebook page, Francesca posted a beautiful picture with 1John 4:21 from *The Remedy*:

God’s prescription is this: Internalize God’s love—which transforms the entire being—so that you love both God and people; for whoever loves God will also love others.

What does it mean to be In Christ? To have our hearts united in a love with Christ such that we live like Christ united with the principles of heaven!

Read second paragraph, “Paul addresses...” What is legalism? What is the motivation suggested in the lesson? Earning God’s favor, in this case by observing the law or rule keeping. This is classic legalism, what I refer to as legalism type I.

Do you recognize two types of legalism?

- Type 1—we keep the law and by rule keeping we earn or merit our reward
- Type 2—we try to earn favor with the Father through the legal application of someone else's actions, deeds, or achievement. The idea that a legal penalty had to be paid so that the legal payment could be legally applied to our accounts in heaven and we could be receive the legal approval of God and be declared to be legally righteous—even though we are not

Both are legalism and both have a god who needs something done to him in order to earn his favor. Both types have a form of godliness with no power and both types are lies that obstruct God's true healing plan, which is the plan to restore sinners to actual, not declared, righteousness. How? By restoring God's design law of love in the heart/mind as the way of living.

What is the greatest threat to lapsing into licentiousness? It is the false imposed law, that God runs His universe like humans run earthly governments which has led to all the distortions about God, including penal substitutionary thoughts about salvation. Why is this the greatest threat to holy living and the most likely cause of licentiousness?

For two reasons—first this is rules oriented, coercive and without reason. Thus, it is motivated by fear, violates the law of liberty and results in rebellion. For thinking people this view of God will be nonsense and many will reject the idea of God altogether and thus end up leading a licentious life.

Second—those who stay in the church believing in Christ, do so under a false legal view which leads to theologies that say things like, “all sin was placed on Christ at the cross and legally accounted for and punished by God then. If you accept Jesus as your Savior then His legal payment for ALL your sins, past, present and future is accepted in heaven and all your future sins are also already paid. We can't live victoriously, oh, try your best, but don't expect to, so once saved you are always saved.”

People seek to have the sin problem resolved in legal books, through legal application of Christ's legal payment, rather than seeking a new heart and right spirit. In fact, they don't even expect to live victoriously—they are told by their pastors that it isn't possible, don't even try.

Remember—under this false penal legal system of theology pornography rates are the same in Christian homes as non-Christian homes, spouse abuse and child abuse rates are no different in Christian than non-Christian homes. And teen pregnancy and abortion are higher in America than any western country, and America has the highest percentage of Christians.

The fact is that the penal legal religion doesn't result in freedom from licentiousness and never can because it gives a false diagnosis and thus provides a solution with no power to free people.

God prophesied through Paul:

Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the **man of lawlessness** is revealed, the man doomed to destruction.<sup>4</sup> He will oppose and

will exalt himself over everything that is called God or is worshiped, so that he **sets himself up in God's temple**, proclaiming himself to be God. 2Thes 2:3,4

What temple? The Spirit temple—how? Notice it is the man of lawlessness, i.e. he rejects God's law, which is design law and replaces it with something that is not God's law—which is a system that functions like sinful beings, setting up rules and then enforcing those rules with threats of punishment—the false law. Seeking to change God's law just as Daniel prophesied. And what is the result of this?

But mark this: There will be terrible times in the last days.<sup>2</sup> People will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy,<sup>3</sup> without love, unforgiving, slanderous, without self-control, brutal, not lovers of the good,<sup>4</sup> treacherous, rash, conceited, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God—<sup>5</sup> **having a form of godliness but denying its power.** Have nothing to do with them. 2Tim 3:1-5

Thus, God foretold through John that at the end of time a special message was to go to the entire world:

Then I saw another angel flying in midair, and he had the eternal gospel to proclaim to those who live on the earth—to every nation, tribe, language and people.<sup>7</sup> He said in a loud voice, "Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water." Rev 14:6,7.

Which means what? If one has already accepted the false legal view it means be afraid of God because the time has come for God's tribunal to meet and the records of all bad behavior will be reviewed and punishment for sin will be determined, and you better come back to worship in the way God said or you will be punished.

But, when we come back to design law—the reality of who God is it reads differently. From *The Remedy*:

Then I saw another messenger flying in midair, and he had the eternal good news about God's character of love to proclaim to everyone living on earth—to every nation, tribe, language, and people—which represents a movement of people who arise to proclaim the truth about God's character of love throughout the world.<sup>7</sup> He said in a clear, resounding voice, "Be in awe of God, and glorify him by living his methods of love, because the hour has come for everyone to make a judgment about God, and worship the Designer, Creator and Builder who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and springs of water—all of which operate upon his law of love."

And connecting all of this to why the legal view contributes to more licentiousness, we read the second angel's message:

A second angel followed and said, "Fallen! Fallen is Babylon the Great, which made all the nations drink the maddening wine of her adulteries." Rev 14:8

What does this mean? From *The Remedy*:

A second messenger followed the first, proclaiming throughout the world: "Don't trust Babylon the Great—a symbolic description of religions that misrepresent God—as it is fallen into the lies about God and intoxicates the world with its pagan views of God, maddening the people with its adulterous idea that God coerces and must inflict punishment if not properly appeased."

The view that God's law is imposed and God polices His law like humans do their laws, and God will inflict punishment is the core idea within Christianity that has gone to the world. And it is a lie—and it has intoxicated the entire world and people have reacted to it by either becoming abusive like this God and coercing people with wars, or sanctions, or imprisonment; or they have rejected the idea of God altogether and thus the world is becoming increasingly secular why? As a direct rejection of this false view of God taken to the world by Christianity!

We are talking in the lesson today about freedom in Christ and this is genuine freedom—from fear, from addiction, from selfishness, from bad habits, but this freedom can only be realized and experienced when we come back to the truth about God—God who is love and who created all reality to operate upon His design protocols of love. The truth combined with love, which is found only in Jesus Christ, is the power that transforms us and enables us to be free!

Why is freedom so important? What happens if liberty or freedom is violated?

- love is damaged and eventually destroyed
- desire to rebel instilled
- destroyed individuality

What will God never do? Violate liberty or freedom, because to do so would destroy love. Thus the false human imposed law construct is revealed to be false. Many theological ideas are ruled out like:

- All the teachings in which God is the source of inflicted pain, suffering and death—even though presented under the guise of justice
- God makes all things happen
- Certain views of God's sovereignty: like God is in control—but of what?
  - Is God in control of our choices? Why not?
  - And if He is not controlling the choices of people then is He in control of the pain and suffering in this world?

## SUNDAY

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Read memory text: “Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.” Gal 5:1

What kind of bondage?

What holds us in bondage?

- fear? what kind of fear? fear of rejection, fear of what people think? fear of someone getting their feelings hurt? fear of death?
  - I have so many patients who see me who are tender hearted people, but who have never learned to tolerate the negative responses from others. They live in fear of rejection, fear of someone being mad at them and make decisions based on what others might think, rather than on what is actually true, healthy and reasonable.
  - These people are not free but slaves—slaves to the attitudes of others
  - Hebrews 2:14,15 tells us Christ died to free those held captive by their fear of death
- opinions of others?
  - In addition to the attitude of others some are fearful of the opinions of others, if others think them ignorant, or disagree with their ideas, or are in authority in the organization or have a doctoral degree then their opinions must be right so the surrender thinking to someone’s opinion—these people are not free.
- habits?
  - Can be healthy or unhealthy—I have the habit of brushing my teeth, of drinking a glass of water each morning, of putting on my seat belt when I get in the car. I have many habits—am I a slave to my habits, or are my habits fulfilling my will?
  - In other words, are the habits I have formed habits that are developed because of purposeful self-discipline in harmony with truth and facts to make my life healthier, or are the habits formed by neglect and thoughtlessness and in harmony with impulse, emotion and desire?
- lies?
  - Truth sets free—lies enslave, are our beliefs based on truth, or do we cling to falsehood?
- guilt?
- health problems?
- others?

From *The Remedy*:

“Christ has set us free from selfishness, free from fear, free from ignorance about God—free to be his friends. So stand firm in the truth about God as revealed in Jesus, and don’t let yourselves be duped back into a system of rituals and works motivated by fear and selfishness.” Gal 5:1

Read last paragraph, “This formula shares...” What do you hear? Is there legal elements being promoted in this paragraph?

What is meant by “at least not without forfeiting our lives.”? Are they suggesting we could pay the price ourselves if we gave our lives? But in fact, this is not true. They think this because they have a false diagnosis, which is a legal diagnosis. They think sin is a legal problem and thus requires the infliction of the just penalty, which God established in Eden as death, and thus in that model we could pay that penalty ourselves—but we would then be dead, but the legal penalty would have been paid.

The problem with this view is that it misdiagnoses the problem. Our problem with sin is not legal; it is our actual condition of being out of harmony with how God designed life to operate and thus we are terminal. We are dead in trespass and sin, i.e. out of harmony with how God built life to function.

So, would our death create a remedy? Would our death cure the condition? In other words, would our death provide what the law requires? You see in the false legal view the law requires death. But that is not so. When we understand design law, what does the law require? Harmony with it, which the Bible calls righteousness. It is like saying the law of respiration requires we breathe. So one of the founders of the SDA church wrote things like this:

- **The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character;** and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. {DA 762.2}
- **But the law requires that the soul itself be pure and the mind holy, that the thoughts and feelings may be in accordance with the standard of love and righteousness.--RH, Apr 5, 1898. (2SM 211.) {2MCP 564.1}**
- **The divine law requires us to love God supremely and our neighbor as ourselves.** {A New Life NL 32.1}
- **That which God required of Adam before his fall was perfect obedience to His law. God requires now what He required of Adam, perfect obedience, righteousness without a flaw, without shortcoming in His sight. God help us to render to Him all His law requires.** We cannot do this without that faith that brings Christ's righteousness into daily practice. {2SM 380.4}
- **God offered them, in His Son, the perfect righteousness of the law. If they would open their hearts fully to receive Christ, then the very life of God, His love, would dwell in them, transforming them into His own likeness; and thus through God's free gift they would possess the righteousness which the law requires.** {MB 54.2}
- **His law requires your heart's supreme affection for your Maker. It requires you to do unto others as you would have them do to you.** {BEcho, February 15, 1889 par. 8}

Notice, imposed law demands or requires punishment, design law demands or requires harmony with its design.

Would the death of a sinner restore the sinner to harmony with God's design? NO!

Thus Christ, who knew no sin, came and became sin for us so that we might become the righteousness of God. Christ destroyed the infection of fear and selfishness, in His human self, and restored God's design law of love in His human self, by the exercise of His human will, thus He rose again in a perfected humanity, in possession of a perfect human character. He offers this as a Remedy a free gift to all who will trust Him. Thus, we surrender our old fear and selfish selves and receive a new heart, with new motives of love and trust and become partakers of the divine nature!

Now, it is true to achieve this cost God and Christ a high price; it required Christ to die as the only means to reveal the truth, destroy the infection of fear and selfishness and perfectly seal God's law of love into His humanity. But this wasn't a legal price; it was the price that reality required.

## **MONDAY**

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Read first paragraph, "Paul's command..." How would you describe what Christ has done for us? How do we stand free? What does it mean to stand free?

The lesson points us to some Bible texts and asks from what does Christ set us free:

Rom 6:14: "For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace." NIV

What does this mean? What law? What law lens?

Here is Rom 6:14: from *The Remedy*:

For distrust, fear and selfishness will no longer hold control over you, as you are no longer under the law's terminal diagnosis, but—having partaken of God's gracious Remedy—you are under his healing care.

Rom 6:18 "You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness." NIV

What does this mean?

From *The Remedy*:

Therefore you have been freed from distrust, fear and selfishness, and have been bonded to love, truth and liberty, doing what is right because it is right.

Romans 8:1,2: "Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,<sup>2</sup> because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death." NIV



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What does this mean?

From *The Remedy*:

Therefore, those who trust in Christ Jesus are no longer destined to die,<sup>2</sup>because through Christ Jesus the law of love has cleansed and healed them from the law of selfishness and death.

It is always about reality—about our condition being out of harmony with how God built life to operate and God working through Christ to free us from this condition and restore us to righteousness, purity, love which results in life eternal.

Gal 4:3: “So also, when we were children, we were in slavery under the basic principles of the world.” NIV

So what would it mean to be freed?

From *The Remedy*:

Likewise, when we were childlike in character and immature in our thinking, we had no self-control and were slaves to selfish impulses.

So what does it mean to be freed?

Gal 4:8: “Formerly, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods.” NIV

From *The Remedy*:

In the past, before you knew God as revealed by Jesus, your minds were held in the bondage of fear and superstition by gods of your own darkened imaginations.

What does it mean to be freed? How?

Gal 5:1: “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery.”

From *The Remedy*:

Christ has set us free from selfishness, free from fear, free from ignorance about God—free to be his friends. So stand firm in the truth about God as revealed in Jesus, and don't let yourselves be duped back into a system of rituals and works motivated by fear and selfishness.

The last paragraph states, “The context suggests that Paul is referring to freedom from the bondage and condemnation of a law-driven Christianity, but our freedom includes much more. It includes freedom from sin, eternal death, and the devil.”

What is sin? Transgression of the law—what law? Which causes what? Thus freedom from sin frees us from death, because sin causes death.

What about freedom from the devil—how do we get free from him?

What is the devil’s power (Heb 2:14, John 17:3)?

## **TUESDAY**

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The lesson points out problems with submitting to circumcision for the purpose of getting right with God. First, they point out that to try and get right by keeping the law requires one to keep all the law.

Then, read second paragraph, “Second, the person...” Did Abraham get circumcised to save himself? Then why did Abraham get circumcised? Wasn’t it to demonstrate that his heart was already circumcised? So was there a circumcision that was not a means of salvation, but a result of salvation?

What about today? Are there any Christian rituals that function like circumcision, as an evidence of a changed life, but that do not change the life?

Baptism by water? Communion?

Have any of these ever come to get misapplied and function as means of salvation or requirements to salvation? If you don’t confess sins to a priest they are not removed from your ledger and God will punish you? If you don’t partake mass you don’t have the sacrifice of Jesus placed to your account in heaven? If you don’t undergo water baptism you don’t cleansing from sin?

Can any behavior be misunderstood and misapplied?

Can eating a healthy diet get misunderstood and misapplied that salvation is dependent on eating?

Can church attendance get misunderstood and misapplied such that day of worship becomes a test of salvation?

What is the only test? Have we actually be renewed in heart to be like Jesus!

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## **WEDNESDAY**

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What causes a person to live a healthier life—having a list of rules to obey, go to bed at a specific time, eat this food, exercise so many minutes and feeling obligated to obey the rules or else they will get punished – or understanding the laws of health and choosing to live in harmony with them?

Who is more likely to cheat? Why do cheats never get away with cheating?

If you are paying a trainer to train you and he gives you exercises to do and you cheat and don't do them, do you get away with it?

What about in God's plan of salvation?

This is why the legal views fail—because they are all about cheating. They cheat people from true victorious living by proffering off legal loophole living. Just claim Jesus perfect record to your account—no need for you to apply God's principles to your life, all the sins are already taken care of...

This false freedom is the classic adolescent who asks, “If God will forgive me for having premarital sex, what's wrong with having premarital sex.”

## **THURSDAY**

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Read second paragraph, “This is not to imply...” What do you think about the sentence “It is not an abandonment of the law, nor a reduction of the law only to love; it is the way through which the believe could experience the true intent and meaning of the whole law!”

Can the law be reduced to love? Can God's law ever be anything other than some aspect of love?

What is revealed by the statement? A level of understanding that has yet to comprehend reality as God created it.

Read 1Cor 13

The last sentence of the third paragraph states, “Without love, the law is empty and cold; without law, love has no direction.”

What does this mean? It means they don't comprehend love as design protocol or law, but as feelings, sentiment, emotions, compassion. They don't comprehend how love functions.

## **FRIDAY**

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discuss question 2



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## ANNOUNCEMENTS:

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

**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/>

**November 17,18, 2017:** Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr. SDA church in California.