

The Refiners Fire Lesson 9 4Q 2007

Before we do this week's lesson there was one point from last week's lesson we never got to I wanted to go over. It was in Wednesday's lesson:

Last paragraph states "But does God still care enough to intervene when a divorce is looming or we feel totally useless? The Bible says that He cares enough to transform any situation." Does God care enough? Does that mean any situation, such as a pending divorce will be transformed by God?

The Bible says God wants all men to be saved 1Tim 2:4, will they be? Why not?

Are there some things God cannot do?

God cannot lie Heb 6:18

God cannot be tempted by evil James 1:13

God cannot love and program us like robots at the same time for love requires freedom – Zech 4:6.

So can God transform any situation?

In bottom pink it asks "is there anything too hard for God?" How about the hearts of some men and women and Satan?

A Life of Praise

SABBATH

Read first three paragraphs – thoughts?

Any examples of praise in face of pain? What enables us to praise in the face of pain? Does our perspective on what is happening make a difference?

Have you ever heard of the man who said, “I used to complain of not having shoes until I met a man with no feet”?

Does perspective make a difference?

Does God need our praise and adulation? Does He need us to adore Him and admire Him and tell Him how awesome He is? If we don't do this does He get His feelings hurt or get angry? Will He strike out against if we don't admire Him?

What does it mean to praise? What is praise?

Dictionary definition

- verb – to express favorable judgment or to glorify
- noun – an expression of approval – commendation

Is praising God merely a matter of singing songs? Of shouting hosannas? Of having praise celebrations? What does it mean to praise God?

As a parent what is the highest form of praise from your child? Would it be that your child grows up to be like Christ in character? Could your child do more to give praise than this?

Isn't it said that imitation is the highest form of praise? Do we praise God the most be living Godly lives?

- To praise God in fullness and sincerity of heart is as much a **duty** as is prayer. We are to **show** to the world and to all the heavenly intelligences that we **appreciate** the wonderful love of God for fallen humanity and that we are expecting larger and yet larger blessings from His infinite fullness. Far more than we do, we need to **speak** of the precious chapters in our experience. After a special outpouring of the Holy Spirit, our joy in the Lord and our efficiency in His service would be greatly increased by **recounting** His goodness and His wonderful works in behalf of His children. {COL 299.3}

These **exercises** drive back the power of Satan. They **expel** the spirit of murmuring and complaint, and the tempter loses ground. They cultivate those attributes of character which will fit the dwellers on earth for the heavenly mansions. {COL 300}

Such a testimony will have an influence upon others. No more effective means can be employed for winning souls to Christ. {COL 300}

We are to praise God by **tangible service**, by doing all in our power to advance the glory of His name. God imparts His gifts to us that we also may **give**, and **thus make known His character to the world**. {COL 300}

Thoughts?

Any examples of what this kind of praise might look like? Giving to others to benefit them – if God has shared with you knowledge and you share that knowledge with others to build them up in Christ are you not praising God? If you speak words of encouragement to others to heal, to build up are you praising God? If you give of your time, resources energies to promote the truth about God, to bring others into loving trust with Him are you praising God?

Is this type of praise more powerful, more meaningful and more acceptable to God than merely singing songs and shouting hosannas?

Does God praise us?

- Matthew 25:21 – 23 the parable of the talents those who invested wisely received from the master “well done thou good and faithful servant.” Who is the master? Jesus? Is He giving praise?
- Job chapter one, God says of Job, he is perfect and righteous in all his ways and there is no one on the earth like him. Is that praise?

- 2 Kings 3:10-14 The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this. So God said to him, "Since you have asked for this and not for long life or wealth for yourself, nor have asked for the death of your enemies but for discernment in administering justice, I will do what you have asked. I will give you a wise and discerning heart, so that there will never have been anyone like you, nor will there ever be. Moreover, I will give you what you have not asked for--both riches and honor--so that in your lifetime you will have no equal among kings. And if you walk in my ways and obey my statutes and commands as David your father did, I will give you a long life."
- Daniel 9:26, 10:11, 19 three times describes Daniel as "highly esteemed" would that be praise?

If you heard God say about you or to you, "Well done" or "you are highly esteemed" how would that impact you?

What does it say about God that He speaks of sinful humans like this? What about how He spoke of David – what does it say about God? Did God have a bad memory? Did He not know? Was Solomon more aware of David's life history than God? What does it mean?

How should we speak of others? Is God giving us an example of how we should speak about others, even when we know about some sin in their lives? If you spread rumors or gossip about another person, are you praising God?

Have you ever committed sin? Sin you are ashamed of? Have you, like David, repented and been reconciled to God? Have you experienced a change in heart? Then God will speak of you like David, a friend who does all He asks! And in heaven, everyone who is fitted for heaven will be just like God in character and will only speak well of you.

SUNDAY

Read fourth paragraph, "First, if we are..." thoughts?

What about Jesus in Gethsemane? How do you see Him rejoicing there?

- Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Hebrews 12:2

Thoughts about this text? Why does it say He went through the cross? For the joy set before Him. Is joy related to rejoicing? Could it be possible Christ was in some way rejoicing during His mistreatment and crucifixion?

Parents, if your children were being held by al kaida terrorists and the terrorists were torturing them and had announced they were going to cut their heads off broadcast live via the internet – and you could exchange yourself for them, would you? And would the knowledge that your children were safe give you joy in the midst of your torture and execution?

Is this why Christ was rejoicing because He recognized the purpose of what He was accomplishing?

- Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. John 12:31-33

What is Christ telling us in this text? Did He know He was going to be crucified? Did He realize His death would drive out the prince of this world – who is the prince of this world? Satan, has Satan been driven off of planet earth? Then what was Christ speaking of when He said, Now is the time, now the prince of this world will be driven out? Driven out from where?

The hearts and minds of all intelligences who come to value the truth that Christ's death would provide.

MONDAY

Read top section, first three paragraphs – thoughts?

Did God bring Israel to an actual corner – to a place with no way out? If you paint yourself into a corner that has a secret door you can open and escape are you really in a corner?

Do we ever find ourselves in situations that appear to us as if we are in a corner? Does that mean there is no way out?

- There are many whose hearts are aching under a load of care because they seek to reach the world's standard. They have chosen its service, accepted its perplexities, adopted its customs. Thus their character is marred, and their life made a weariness. In order to gratify ambition and worldly desires, they wound the conscience, and bring upon themselves an additional burden of remorse. The continual worry is wearing out the life forces. Our Lord desires them to lay aside this yoke of bondage. He invites them to accept His yoke; He says, "My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." He bids them seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and His promise is that all things needful to them for this life shall be added. Worry is blind, and cannot discern the future; but Jesus sees the end from the beginning. In every difficulty He has His way prepared to bring relief. Our heavenly Father has a thousand ways to provide for us, of which we know nothing. Those who accept the one principle of making the service and honor of God supreme will find perplexities vanish, and a plain path before their feet. {DA 330.1}

Thoughts? What is the world's standard? Self-promotion, self-gratification, self-advancement, selfishness – when someone seeks the world's standard how will they treat others?

They will exploit, take advantage, use others for personal pleasure or gain – and when that happens what is the consequence? The conscience is damaged the mind warped and increased insecurity and fear is experienced – there is no peace in selfishness.

What is God's standard? Selfless love – when we do what is right, healthy, giving, beneficent and loving for others, fear is removed and we have peace with God and with ourselves.

I know a lady who always worried about what others thought of her, constantly in fear, constantly anxious. The worst moments were whenever attention was called to her and others looked at her. Her daughter was getting married and as the day approached she became increasingly more upset, you see, she would have to walk down the aisle and everyone would be looking at her. I asked her, to rethink her priorities, whose day was this? Hers or her daughter's? I challenged her to take the focus off self and put it on the daughter and think about the joy in the daughter's heart that day. She told me it made all the difference and she had no anxiety at all.

Anyone want to share where God has delivered them from something they thought they were trapped in?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Does this mean it must be practiced like music lessons until we can do it by rote without thinking? Or until we can *perform* the praise correctly?

Or is it practice how we think, how we process information, how we see the world, what principles we practice (i.e. live by), practicing seeing the world as Jesus does, seeing others like He does, practice loving like Jesus does? Choosing to do that which we know is right and healthy, putting into practice what we know is good?

Number 1 in the lesson states praise is practiced as we look around us – as you look around is there something you see that brings your heart and mind to praise?

Number 2 states praise is practiced when we remember what we have seen and then suggests rituals and symbols to help us remember what we have seen. Thought about this – can this be beneficial? Are there any dangers? See Isaiah chapter 1.

Number 3 states praise is practiced when we talk about it, that praise is meant to come out of our mouths – thoughts? No doubt this is true, would you be comfortable with saying praise must come out of our hearts?

What about 4 – praise is practiced when we choose to actually do what we know is right because we know it and value the right in our own heart?

- The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely--because he is required to do so--will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right--because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Read top two paragraphs – thoughts? What do you think brought the jailer to conviction? Do you find it amazing that not only did Paul and Silas not leave but no other prisoner left either?

While Paul had come to know Christ and His love, do you think he still regretted how He had persecuted others in the past? Do you think his knowledge of being a persecutor gave him insights into reaching the jailer?

Would Paul have been wrong for leaving the prison? When Peter was in prison what happened? An angel came and freed him, should Peter have stayed?

THURSDAY

The story of Jehoshaphat, a vast army was descending on Judah and the king called out the choir to praise God – what lessons can we learn from this story?

FRIDAY

Questions 1 and 2 read and discuss