

The Refiners Fire Lesson 11 4Q 2007

Waiting in the Crucible

SABBATH

Read first two paragraphs – thoughts? Was this encouraging to read? Does it sound predetermined? Does it sound hard wired?

Are some children/people naturally more impatient than others? Are some more impulsive, aggressive, assertive are others naturally more laid back, lackadaisical, easy going? Can this be biological? Can this be environmental? Can this be impacted and modified and changed regardless of biological predisposition? These two paragraphs leave so much out – nutritional factors, environmental factors, social factors, biological factors all of which are modifiable.

The brain consists of billions of neurons (brain cells) that are arranged in complex networks. The individual brain cells communicate to each other by releasing chemical signals called neurotransmitters. After the cell sending the signal releases its neurotransmitter, it quickly activates reuptake pumps (like vacuum cleaners) to suck up the neurotransmitter for repackaging and reuse. In some areas of the brain where reuptake pumps are sparser, some of the released neurotransmitters remain in the fluid outside the cells. The brain has enzymes designed to remove the leftover neurotransmitters to prevent an overload or buildup.

The prefrontal cortex, the part of the brain immediately behind the forehead, is the place where we do our thinking and reasoning. The prefrontal cortex has fewer reuptake pumps, so more neurotransmitters remain outside the cells after stimulation. One particular neurotransmitter is important for sharp thinking and good memory. This neurotransmitter is called dopamine. The enzyme that breaks down dopamine is called Catechol-O-methyltransferase (COMT). The gene that produces COMT is located on chromosome 22. Dr. Egan and associates have discovered that a random mutation for the gene that makes COMT on chromosome 22 has entered the human gene pool. Therefore, two genetic forms of the gene can be found: one form with the amino acid valine (Val) at position 108 on the gene; the other with the amino acid methionine (Met) at position 108.

Because each person has two sets of chromosomes (one from his mother and one from his father), three possible genetic combinations exist: Met/Met, Met/Val, Val/Val. Interestingly, the COMT with a Met gene is heat sensitive and shows lower activity at body temperature. Therefore, persons with either the Met/Met or Met/Val combination have lower activity of COMT, and subsequently higher levels of

dopamine in their prefrontal cortex than those with the Val/Val combination. Memory testing has revealed that persons with the Val/Val combination perform worse on short-term memory tests than those with the Met gene. And those with the Met/Met combination perform better than those with the Met/Val combination. This study has demonstrated that a single gene mutation can directly affect brain chemistry with subsequent alteration in memory function. *Could It Be This Simple?* page 36.

ADHD – a dysfunction of prefrontal cortex – with increased impulsivity, children with untreated ADHD have impaired attention, focus, organization, tend to be impulsive, act out, miss information, score worse on exams, feel intimidated, have lower self esteem, don't extend themselves, don't expect as much out of themselves etc. and thus often don't turn out as adjusted or confident.

This paragraph is not describing patience in the Biblical sense but a medical disorder of impaired functioning of the PFC, that gets misperceived as a moral issue and the child gets ostracized, punished and shamed by his social network thus resulting in lower self-esteem, confidence and success, rather than proper treatment which results in overcoming and success.

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph “waiting is painful...” thoughts? What makes waiting painful? The unknown? Fear? Is it more difficult, more painful waiting for something positive or negative to happen? Why? When one is waiting for something negative to happen, what often occurs? Fears increase, the imagination begins to run wild and we create fantasy worlds that actually don't exist to dwell upon, which only worsens or fears and anxieties increasing the negative fantasies.

Read last paragraph – thoughts? When we trust God can we be certain what ever happens it will always be what is best for us? Or may we sometimes trust God and things happen to us that are best for God's cause or best for another, but not necessarily best for us? Stephen's stoning, was that good for

Stephen? Was it “best” for Stephen? Job’s experience, God had already pronounced that Job was perfect and righteous in all his ways, was this experience good for Job – or did it serve a greater good than just Job? If we trust God won’t we come to look beyond ourselves, beyond how things affect us and won’t we come to, like Christ sacrifice ourselves for others?

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers. 1John 3:16

They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of heir testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Revelation 12:11

Does it make a difference to see issues in the setting of the GC? Could being focused only on how we are affected lead to misunderstandings and cause problems? Such as?

MONDAY

In God’s time – have you ever had to wait on something? Is it easy to wait? When I was working on my book I struggled with patience in getting it published and while I am sure part of that was just personal fulfillment a large part was my belief that my book could help people. I was impatient to have a tool I could put in the hands of people that could help them. Is this type of impatience wrong? Is there a type of impatience that is healthy?

For troubles without number surround me;
 my sins have overtaken me, and I cannot see.
 They are more than the hairs of my head,
 and my heart fails within me.
 Be pleased, O LORD, to save me;
 O LORD, come quickly to help me. Psalms 40:12, 13

Is it wrong to be impatient for God’s presence, healing and deliverance from sin?

He who testifies to these things says, "Yes, I am coming soon." Amen. Come, Lord Jesus. Revelation 22:20

Is it wrong to, while we wait patiently, to long for the Lord to come quickly? Is such an attitude an oxymoron?

As Seventh-day *Adventists* what are we waiting for? Should we be waiting? Are we waiting for Christ to come or is Christ waiting on us?

But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day. The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.

But the day of the Lord will come like a thief. The heavens will disappear with a roar; the elements will be destroyed by fire, and the earth and everything in it will be laid bare.

Since everything will be destroyed in this way, what kind of people ought you to be? You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. 2 Peter 3:8-12

Can we speed the coming of the Lord? Do you want to speed the coming of the Lord? Would this type of "impatience" be wrong? Would it be better to sit back and say, "the Lord will come in His good time I will just sit patiently and wait?"

How can we speed the coming of the Lord? Two fold, apply to our own lives God's remedy so that we personally are ready to meet Him and secondly, as effectively as possible spread the Good News about Him that is to lighten the world for His coming.

“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

Do you want to do this? We have an opportunity coming up in 08 here in Chattanooga, for this class to sponsor the GNT, to spread this final message of mercy, to hasten the day of his coming.

How are we to wait?

Petra has a song called More Power To Ya

You say you have been feeling weaker, weaker by the day
 You say you can't make the joy of your salvation stay
 But good things come to them that wait not to those who
 hesitate so hurry up and wait upon the Lord
 More power to ya, when your standing on His word, when
 you trust Him with your whole heart in the message you
 have heard.

More power to ya, when we're all in one accord, they that
 wait upon the Lord they shall renew their strength.

What does it mean for us, as we wait for the Lord, to wait?

First paragraph Monday's lesson reminds us that the Bible teaches that Jesus came to die at exactly the right time, but the Bible doesn't tell us why it was the right time. Any thoughts on why it was the right time when He came? Does the GC perspective help? Does the reality that angels are longing to look into these things and are watching help?

Was there ever a time in earth's history prior in which God's people were to all outward appearances following His blueprint? And, what is learned by Jesus coming to a group who were apparently following His guidelines and instructions? That external conformity to a set of rules does not heal the problem of sin, that one can obey all the right rules and still be God's enemy.

Read last paragraph – thoughts?

Is waiting a difficult problem for an immortal being? Does time matter when one lives eternally? Does waiting lose its significance if there is never an end? Conversely, does the idea of running out of time heighten our sense of urgency and thus our temptation toward impatience?

Do athletes play differently as the clock is winding down? If there were no clock and the game went on eternally might the athletes play differently? Are we currently, on this planet being fitted for heaven? Might that preparation also have some part of it that impacts how we deal with time?

TUESDAY

David as an object lesson. David was promised the throne and anointed by the king, yet David had to wait many years to actually become king. Along the way he was persecuted by Saul and had opportunity to kill Saul, but would take action against him.

What lessons are there fore patience and waiting on God in this story? A danger that exists when God reveals to us His plan for our lives, is that if Satan cannot get us to reject God, to reject God's plan for our lives, then Satan says, okay go forward in what God has called you to do, but do so by my methods – Satan will tempt us to act in selfish ways to achieve what God has promised. He will tempt us to take what would be given to us if we would wait.

Last week I told you about Kent Whitaker, and how his son Bart arranged to have the family killed so he could inherit the family money. He attempted to take, via Satan's methods, what would have been his, freely given, had he been willing to wait.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

It states God had been vindicated – had He? How had God been vindicated? From this experience what did the people now know about God? That He is powerful. And from that knowledge did the children of Israel maintain forever loyalty and faithfulness to God?

But when Lucifer started His war against God what were His allegations against God? Did Lucifer ever allege God did not have power? So was the demonstration of power ever part of vindicating God? No, thus Zech 4:6 not by might nor by power but by the way the Spirit works says the Lord.

Did Elijah Himself actually understand this at that time? No, thus he ran and when God found Him what did Elijah need to learn? Turn to 1 Kings 19:8-13

⁸ So he got up and ate and drank. Strengthened by that food, he traveled forty days and forty nights until he reached Horeb, the mountain of God. ⁹ There he went into a cave and spent the night.

And the word of the LORD came to him: "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

1KI 19:10 He replied, "I have been very zealous for the LORD God Almighty. The Israelites have rejected your covenant, broken down your altars, and put your

prophets to death with the sword. I am the only one left, and now they are trying to kill me too."

1KI 19:11 The LORD said, "Go out and stand on the mountain in the presence of the LORD, for the LORD is about to pass by."

Now, if you were Elijah, you had just come from the Mt. Carmel experience and the Lord said go out and stand in the presence of the Lord for the Lord is about to pass by, what might you be expecting? Notice what lesson Elijah had to learn:

Then a great and powerful wind tore the mountains apart and shattered the rocks before the LORD, but the LORD was not in the wind. After the wind there was an earthquake, but the LORD was not in the earthquake. ¹² After the earthquake came a fire, but the LORD was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper. ¹³ When Elijah heard it, he pulled his cloak over his face and went out and stood at the mouth of the cave.

What lesson did Elijah learn? And after learning this lesson he was now ready for translation. What lesson do we need to learn about God? What kind of God are we worshipping, serving and looking for? While God is all powerful, to be sure, is it His power we must come to know, love and revere or His selfless character of love?

THURSDAY

Delight in the Lord, what does it mean to you to delight in the Lord? The lesson suggests to dwell in perfect trust, thoughts? What about also in perfect love? That we love God, His methods, principles, character, we find Him altogether lovely and beautiful and long to be like Him in every way. We lose site of ourselves and give ourselves to Him as living sacrifices rejoicing in the privilege of being useful to Him?