

Discipleship lesson 3 1Q 2008

Called to Discipleship by Jesus

Read memory text – thoughts?

From wikipedia:

- To believe without reason:
 - Believing impulsively, or believing based upon social traditions or personal hopes
- In either case, faith is based upon the interpretation of the intangible (feelings, emotions, etc.) instead of the physically tangible and is primarily associated with religion in modern times.
- According to the Bible, "*faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see*" (Hebrews 11:1, New International Version).

Thoughts about these definitions?

Does God want us to believe without evidence?

If God wanted His intelligent creatures to believe without evidence then why didn't He simply declare Lucifer a liar, demand everyone to make a choice on whom to believe, on whom to have faith and end the controversy?

What does God want? He wants the loyalty that stems from intelligent agreement with Him, can we obtain intelligent agreement without thoughtful review of the evidence?

Isaiah 1:18 – come let us reason together...

What is the central issue in the Great Controversy? The trustworthiness of God Himself –

If your spouse had been lied to and currently didn't trust you because she/he believed a lie – but you were totally innocent, what would you want?

Would you want an approach that says, don't consider any evidence, don't consider my character revealed to you over time, don't investigate the allegations, just believe either me or the accuser?

Or if all the evidence is on your side would you want your spouse to think, to investigate, to pursue evidence and truth?

How much evidence and truth supports Satan? How much supports God? All truth supports God, thus Satan develops strategies he infiltrates into Christianity that actually obstruct our ability to come into the truth – one of those strategies is this distortion of faith – faith is believing without evidence.

God has gone to great lengths, including the life and death of His Son to provide us the evidence. Jesus said, His work was to reveal the Father and He didn't simply declare the truth about God He gave evidence of that truth! Satan doesn't want us to really think about and consider the meaning of that evidence.

Having said all this, what evidence do we have that supports this position?

- John 1:35-39 The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!" When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?" They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?" "Come," he replied, "and you will see."
- John 1:44-46 Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law,

and about whom the prophets also wrote--Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." "Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip.

- Matthew 11:2-5 When John heard in prison what Christ was doing, he sent his disciples to ask him, "Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?" Jesus replied, "Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.
- Luke 24:13-27 – disciples on the road to Emmaus –
 - He said to them, "How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.

SUNDAY

Read number one at the top – thoughts?

John cited the text in Isaiah for his mission:

ISA 40:3 A voice of one calling:
 "In the desert prepare
 the way for the LORD;
 make straight in the wilderness
 a highway for our God.

ISA 40:4 Every valley shall be raised up,
 every mountain and hill made low;

the rough ground shall become level,
the rugged places a plain.

ISA 40:5 And the glory of the LORD will be revealed,
and all mankind together will see it.
For the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

Thoughts? In ancient times before a ruler came to a place, they had a road crew go before and make the road level, fill in the pot holes, knock down the mountains and make a smooth road for the ruler –

Anciently, when a king journeyed through the less frequented parts of his dominion, a company of men was sent ahead of the royal chariot to level the steep places and to fill up the hollows, that the king might travel in safety and without hindrance. This custom is employed by the prophet to illustrate the work of the gospel. "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low." When the Spirit of God, with its marvelous awakening power, touches the soul, it abases human pride. Worldly pleasure and position and power are seen to be worthless. "Imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God" are cast down; every thought is brought into captivity "to the obedience of Christ." 2 Cor. 10:5. Then humility and self-sacrificing love, so little valued among men, are exalted as alone of worth. This is the work of the gospel, of which John's message was a part. {DA 135.1}

How does this apply to John and the first advent?

How does this apply to God's last day people and the second advent?

What is the wilderness? Could it be the wilderness of this world which is hungering after a knowledge of God?

What is the voice? Could it be the voice of God's last day remnant people proclaiming the truth about His character as revealed by Christ?

How did the founders of the SDA church view this text and our mission as a people?

John was called to do a special work; he was to prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight His paths. The Lord did not send him to the school of the prophets and rabbis. He took him away from the assemblies of men to the desert, that he might learn of nature and nature's God. God did not desire him to have the mold of the priests and rulers. He was called to do a special work. The Lord gave him his message. Did he go to the priests and rulers and ask if he might proclaim this message?-- No, God put him away from them that he might not be influenced by their spirit and teaching. He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isa. 40:3-5). This is the very message that must be given to our people; we are near the end of time, and the message is, Clear the King's highway; gather out the stones; raise up a standard for the people. The people must be awakened. It is no time now to cry peace and safety. We are exhorted to "cry aloud, spare not, lift up your voice like a trumpet, and show my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isa. 5:1). {1SM 410.1}

Thoughts?

What message are we to be proclaiming? Could it be the truth about God which wins us to trust and opens the heart for God's healing and restoration in righteousness?

Question 3 – when we call others to follow Jesus what are we calling them for? What are we calling them to?

What would you say if someone asked you, what does it mean to follow Jesus?

Green question at bottom states, “If you were to tell someone about Jesus what would you say?” – What do we have to say about Jesus that would witness truthfully about Him?

Jesus said, “As the Father sent me, so send I you.” What did the Father send Jesus to witness about, to testify about?

They did not understand that he was telling them about his Father. So Jesus said, "When you have lifted up the Son of Man, then you will know that I am the one I claim to be and that I do nothing on my own but speak just what the Father has taught me. The one who sent me is with me; he has not left me alone, for I always do what pleases him." John 8:27-29

For I did not speak of my own accord, but the Father who sent me commanded me what to say and how to say it. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say." John 12:49,50

I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do... have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. John 17:4,6

Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring--those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus. Revelation 12:17

What was the testimony of Jesus? The truth about the Father! Could it be that the last day message, the last day people, the

people who the dragon becomes enraged at are those who have both God's law of love and the truth about God's character as revealed by Jesus? Is this the final message of mercy to go to the world?

The founders of our church thought so:

“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

Is this how we typically interpret “the testimony of Jesus”?

At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Do not do it! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy." Revelation 19:10

Here is Revelation 19:10 from the GNT

I fell down at his feet to worship him, but he said to me, “Don’t do it! I am a servant together with you and with your fellow-believers, all those who hold to the truth that Jesus revealed. Worship God!” For the truth that Jesus revealed is what inspires the prophets.

What about this translation? It is the truth about God as revealed by Jesus that inspires the prophets!

How can we do a better job of taking the truth about God to the world?

MONDAY

Read top dark section – “In Matthew...” thoughts?

Does this mean that they had never heard of Jesus, had no idea who He was, a stranger walked up and said follow me and they did?

Or had they already heard the testimony of John, heard the call to repentance, heard about Jesus’ ministry and when He called were ready to go?

Read bottom paragraph – what do you think about the sentence, “The Lord demands the whole heart.”

Would it sound different or mean something different if we worded it “The Lord requires the whole heart” Or, “It is a necessity to give the Lord the whole heart”? Do these statements sound different?

How could the “demand” statement be misunderstood? Could it inadvertently cause one to think of God as “demanding, exacting and severe?” If one thinks of God in this way, what is the problem? Fear rather than trust and the formation of constructs designed to protect us from Him.

But what, if we recognize it is a requirement, a necessity in order for our healing, our transformation, that it is the only way God can heal and restore us, and God leaves us free to make up our own mind? Does this decrease fear in God and increase our willingness to surrender all to Him?

TUESDAY

Read last paragraph “Despite our fallen natures...”

What does this mean? What do you think the lesson authors mean?

What is the blood symbolic of?

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. John 6:53-57

Thoughts?

The life is in the blood, whoever partakes of the life of Christ- His character, His methods, His principles, His law of love – those who partake of the truth about God He revealed have the lies about God removed, are won back to trust, open the heart and experience the infilling of the HS who actually transfuses Christ's character into our hearts and minds. We become partakers of the divine nature!

Now, when we have been recreated in heart, mind, character to be like Jesus is there any problem being His disciple or abiding in God's presence?

WEDNESDAY

What does it mean to you that Jesus called Levi Matthew, a tax collector, a person on the fringe of society, an apparent worldling to be one of His disciples?

Is there anyone who is too "wicked" to be called by God? Is there anyone whose history is too checkered to be redeemed by God?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

THURSDAY

Second paragraph – “Though, as we saw....” Thoughts? Why did they have such grave misconceptions about Christ’s ministry right up to the end? Was it because Christ was unwilling to share the truth with them? Or was it because their own biases, preconceived ideas, prejudices prevented them from accepting and appreciating the truth He told them?

Are we, as Christians, in danger of this happening to us? Could we be rejecting the truth about God as revealed in Christ?

I believe the final truth to be recovered to complete the reformation is the truth about God Himself, that God is just like Jesus in character. I think God is waiting for a people to actually put this truth into their understanding of doctrine and teach a unified understanding of the Great Controversy which began in heaven over God’s trustworthiness and which will conclude over God’s trustworthiness.

The reformation for almost 500 years has been recovering truths lost, salvation by grace through faith, the priesthood of believers, baptism by immersion, man’s mortality, Sabbath – but the last truth is the truth about God Himself, that He never needed His Son to do something to get Him to be on our side. That God is just as loving and trustworthy as His Son.

The final message of mercy is the truth about God’s character of love!

FRIDAY

Question 2 – read and discuss