

Discipleship Lesson 6 1Q 2008

Ethnicity and Discipleship

Read memory verse and first paragraph – thoughts? Any application for our society? How about visiting a home where they are serving meat? Or pork or some other food you don't typically eat? Is there a place to balance the health of the body with the opportunity to witness?

If you found yourself in a position where you thought a person would be offended and doors closed if you didn't eat their food, would you be willing to sacrifice yourself to reach them? Or would your own good health or good standing before God be more important than reaching another person for God?

MONDAY

The God – Fearers – speaks of the non-Jews who had faith and were in right relationship with God. Examples Naaman, Nebuchadnezzar, the Centurion, the Canaanite woman, but these never joined the Jewish nation and never practiced the Jewish rituals.

What might this tells us about the need for OT sacrifices and the OT rituals? Why was all that stuff given if we have examples of people coming to saving relationship with God outside of this system while this system was still in effect?

Because this system was never a means of salvation it was merely an acted out model to tell the story of salvation, to reveal God's plan of salvation. The Jewish people were God's actors in a "play", the acting troupe and therefore for them they had to abide by the "Director's" script very rigorously or else be kicked off the production. But the rest of the people of the world were to watch the production and learn lessons. Others could join the acting troupe and if they did they were expected to follow the script (Rahab, Ruth), but the script's importance was only one of education and demonstration.

Once Christ came and revealed the truth about God Himself and obtained what was necessary for salvation, once the reality of Christ's life and death were seen the acting program became obsolete.

Unfortunately, many have misunderstood the purpose of these OT instructions and think that somehow there was saving merit in the rituals and sadly some today still pursue observing these rituals as if they had some benefit to salvation.

And other look back on these rituals as if they were the great light and form their Christianity based off these rituals rather than using the Great Light – Jesus and His life to understand the meaning of the rituals.

Read last paragraph Monday – thoughts? Is it surprising that Christians back in Christ's day didn't understand the gospel and struggled with prejudice? What about during the Dark Ages? What about the founding of our nation with its great principles of all men being created equal, but we still practiced slavery? What about the Christians of Nazi Germany? What about the Christians of the Southern US during the last century? The KKK so called Christians?

Has anyone here experienced discrimination, bigotry, inequity based on ethnicity, culture, gender?

Do we struggle with biases toward Muslims today? What makes us vulnerable to this? Tribalism and serving a tribal god – a god who is on our side to help us fight our enemies, our hearts are united with kingdoms of this world rather than with the kingdom of God!

What areas do we struggle with in our society which impairs our ability to live as Jesus would have us? What areas can we improve in today to be more like Christ in how we treat those from different race or culture?

How can people take the name of Christ and act in such ways? Because they have accepted a false Christ a false God a false system of salvation, they have accepted Satan's lies about God and when we do, the mind becomes darkened. Romans 1

TUESDAY

Canaanite woman comes to Christ – thoughts about this exchange?

How did Jesus treat women? How did Jesus treat strangers and non Jews?

WEDNESDAY

Read the paragraph “In this story...” thoughts?

Do we in this class believe in Christ our Substitute? Absolutely, don't ever suggest that we don't believe Christ is our Substitute – but we have to ask for what? The error comes when some suggest He took our place on death row and His Father executed Him in our stead. This is a lie, straight out falsehood, heresy and paganism. And when we stand up to the truth that the Father did not kill His Son, some misunderstand and then say, “you don't believe in the substitutionary nature of the atonement”.

But we do, Christ took upon Himself our infirmity, our iniquity, our sinfulness, our condition, our predicament, our disability, our liability in order to 1) reveal the truth about God to clear up all the lies darkening minds here and throughout the universe but 2) to cure, fix, remedy, restore, purge, cleanse, recreate, set right humanity – and the only way to achieve this was through His perfect life and voluntary death!

Read bottom Green section –

Bottom green says the Eunuch rejoiced over discovering Jesus “died for his sins.”

When you hear this what does it mean to you?

Would we be wrong to say Jesus died for our salvation? For our healing? For our redemption? For our restoration? For our reconciliation to God?

What about if we said, He died because of our sin, our sinfulness, our unrighteousness? Would that be different than “for” our sins? The Greek word translated “for” can be translated “because of” do we hear it differently if we read it this way? Does the way of saying it, “He died for our sins” make it sound more like paying a legal debt we owed?

What about forgiveness through the death of Jesus? Was Christ’s death necessary for God to extend forgiveness? Was God free to forgive us without Christ dying? Yes, but what is the problem? The problem is that our troubles weren’t with God being unforgiving, our problem was that we were terminal and His forgiveness without a remedy doesn’t save.

Imagine having disobeyed your parent and drank some poison as a child and you are now in renal failure and dying. When you look up to see your father standing at your hospital bed what attitude do you think he would have? Would he need your brother to die for you in order for him to forgive you for your disobedience? Would he forgive you outright? You would certainly be relieved to find out he isn’t mad and still loves you without change – but you would still be dying. Now, how about if in addition to your father forgiving you, your brother donated one of his kidney which saves you – is there more joy?

Christ had to come to procure a remedy which actually, literally heals this creation. God’s forgiveness wasn’t the problem our sick condition was. Now it is true we couldn’t be saved if God was unforgiving, but we don’t have to worry about God being unforgiving, God was not the problem, sin is the problem.

THURSDAY

Paul and Barnabas taught at Antioch for 1 year and the lesson asks what does that tell us about the importance of teaching in discipleship?

Have you noticed that sometimes you have to think things through more than once before the issues becomes clear? And then once it does become clear you have to review again and again or it may get confused with old ideas?

Have you found that the hardest truths to learn are the ones which are replacing previously held falsehoods?

Is there benefit in sharing together, studying together? Is there danger in this? Is it as effective to go to class and hear the teacher without personal preparation, without personal study?

FRIDAY

Read #2 thoughts?

Is it possible our problem is that we have presented doctrines disconnected from their true setting – the truth about God, and when disconnected from their true setting they fail to have the power to transform lives, for doctrines cannot heal and transform only the indwelling HS can do this as He takes Christ's character and reproduces it in us. But what then becomes the central focus? The truth about God, His character, methods and principles, and the doctrines are important as they connect to Him!

Read #3 thoughts?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Several thoughtful things in this paragraph, first Christ is the member of the Godhead

through which creation was accomplished. Any member could have done it but Christ was the specific member who created:

Colossians 1:16 For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him.

Why was it necessary that Christ be the member who creates?

Where did sin arise? In heaven, with whom? Lucifer, and he was? A covering cherub – a created being. We all know that Lucifer's attack was on the trustworthiness of God, calling God's character into question, but what pretense did he use? What allegation did Satan make? That God isn't fair, but what could he possibly allege this about?

By alleging Lucifer and Christ were equals and that God was arbitrary in preferring Christ to Lucifer. Well how could Lucifer do this? What physical form did the Creator we now call Jesus, the pre-existent one, the Divine God, take prior to becoming incarnate on this planet?

Exodus 3:1-4 Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian, and he led the flock to the far side of the desert and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up. So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight-- why the bush does not burn up." When the LORD saw that he had gone over to look, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!" And Moses said, "Here I am."

Acts 7:30-32 "After forty years had passed, an angel appeared to Moses in the flames of a burning bush in the desert near Mount Sinai. When he saw this, he was amazed at the sight. As he went over to look more closely,

he heard the Lord's voice: 'I am the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob.' Moses trembled with fear and did not dare to look.

Daniel, 12:1 "At that time Michael, the great prince who protects your people, will arise.

Jude 9 But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, "The Lord rebuke you!"

Revelation 12:7 And there was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back.

1 Thes 4:16 For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first.

Who is the war between? Who fights Satan on our behalf? Who is our great prince? Whose voice is it that raises the dead? It is Michael
Christ – who is the archangel.

This was the view held by our founders:

The words of the angel, "I am Gabriel, that stand in the presence of God," show that he holds a position of high honor in the heavenly courts. When he came with a message to Daniel, he said, "There is none that holdeth with me in these things, but Michael [Christ] your Prince." Dan. 10:21.

Moses passed through death, but Michael came down and gave him life before his body had seen corruption. Satan tried to hold the body, claiming it as his; but Michael resurrected Moses and took him to heaven.

Satan railed bitterly against God, denouncing Him as unjust in permitting his prey to be taken from him; but Christ did not rebuke His adversary, though it was through his temptation that the servant of God had fallen. He meekly referred him to His Father, saying, "The Lord rebuke thee." {EW 164.2}

Does the fact Lucifer alleged equality with Christ give significance to understanding why Christ was the one who created this planet and Christ was the one to come and redeem this planet? Just to show that how our founders saw it:

Lucifer was envious and jealous of Jesus Christ. Yet when all the angels bowed to Jesus to acknowledge His supremacy and high authority and rightful rule, he bowed with them; but his heart was filled with envy and hatred. . . . Why should Christ thus be honored before himself? {FLB 67.3}

Lucifer might have remained in favor with God, beloved and honored by all the angelic host, exercising his noble powers to bless others and to glorify his Maker. But, says the prophet, "Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness." [EZE. 28:12-15, 17.] Little by little, Lucifer came to indulge a desire for self-exaltation. "Thou hast set thine heart as the heart of God." "Thou hast said: . . . I will exalt my throne above the stars of God; I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation." "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the Most High." [EZE. 28:6; ISA. 14:13, 14.] Instead of seeking to make God supreme in the affections and allegiance of his creatures, it was Lucifer's endeavor to win their service and homage to himself. And, **coveting the honor which the infinite Father had bestowed upon his Son, this prince of angels aspired to power which it was the prerogative of Christ alone to wield.** {GC88 494.1}

Pride in his own glory nourished the desire for supremacy. The high honors conferred upon Lucifer were not appreciated as the gift of God, and called forth no gratitude to the Creator. He gloried in his brightness and exaltation, and aspired to be equal with God. He was beloved and revered by the heavenly host. Angels delighted to execute his commands, and he was clothed with wisdom and glory above them all. Yet the Son of God was the acknowledged sovereign of Heaven, one in power and authority with the Father. **In all the counsels of God, Christ was a participant, while Lucifer was not permitted thus to enter into the divine purposes. "Why," questioned this mighty angel, "should Christ have the supremacy? Why is he thus honored above Lucifer?"** {GC88 495.1}

Leaving his place in the immediate presence of the Father, Lucifer went forth to diffuse the spirit of discontent among the angels. He worked with mysterious secrecy, and for a time concealed his real purpose under an appearance of reverence for God. He began to insinuate doubts concerning the laws that governed heavenly beings, intimating that though laws might be necessary for the inhabitants of the worlds, angels, being more exalted, needed no such restraint, for their own wisdom was a sufficient guide. They were not beings that could bring dishonor to God; all their thoughts were holy; it was no more possible for them than for God Himself to err. **The exaltation of the Son of God as equal with the Father was represented as an injustice to Lucifer,** who, it was claimed, was also entitled to reverence and honor. If this prince of angels could but attain to his true, exalted position, great good would accrue to the entire host of heaven; for it was his object to secure freedom for all. **But now even the liberty which they had hitherto enjoyed was at an end; for an absolute Ruler had been appointed them, and to His authority all must pay homage.** Such were the subtle deceptions that through

the wiles of Lucifer were fast obtaining in the heavenly courts.

So what reasons might Christ have been the direct Creator rather than the Father or the Spirit? Might his be to demonstrate there is a difference between Lucifer and Michael, that Lucifer is a created being whereas Michael is the Creator?

In this paragraph we also find the truth that Christ created all humanity – when did Christ do that? Is He still actively creating new people or did He create the human race in Adam and within the parameters of the Divine Law and Divine will mankind is able to reproduce himself without God acting to create new life?

What does this mean? God created one creation, we are all originally designed to be one, as the Father, Son and HS are One this creation was created to reveal the truth about God, His character of love and the Oneness of God and His intention for creation.

Satan is a divider, he causes separation, division, disharmony, disunity – splits, factions. Thus rather than seeing one unified creation operating on love, in the world we see the race split into multiple camps, prejudice, bias, bigotry, racism, ethnic cleansing.

But what do we do about the tower of Babel story? Who confounded the language causing divisions? If God is One and Christ prayed that all may be one, and Paul says that all will be brought together as one under one head Jesus Christ, then why did God cause the division of languages? To slow the spread of wickedness, as a emergency stop gap measure to prevent wickedness from spreading so quickly allowing time for the Savior to come.

Was the death of Christ for the human race only?

Colossians 1:18-20 “And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

God not only needed to heal this creation by Christ’s mission, He had to halt the rebellion from spreading throughout the rest of the universe, to secure the loyal beings in their perfection. Without the cross of Christ the perfect beings in the heavens were not secure, angelic perfection had failed in heaven. Thus this planet, created by God to reveal the truth to defeat Satan, targeted by Satan and co-opted by him to misrepresent God became the line in the sand, the battlefield, the place where the fight for the survival of the entire universe was fought.

Read last paragraph – thoughts? Why is it important to recognize that the Greek word for healing is the word for saved? What happens when we miss this? Christ came to heal and save and secure. It is important to recognize the totality of the problem so we can appreciate the solution.

What is the problem? Lies believed break the circle of love and trust and result in fear and selfishness, which results in acts of sin with result in death unless remedied.

Because of Adam the human species is out of harmony with the law of love, the law of life and is destined to die, save the interventions of God. Now, what is needed? Some say what is needed is that God’s law be appeased a payment in blood made to the law so that God can be just in saving us. But this misdiagnosis the problem and provides a false solution, this idea is promulgating Satan’s position:

Every sin must meet its punishment urged Satan... DA 762

But what does the law require? Righteousness a perfect character,

If your child had terminal leukemia in order to “save” your child what must happen? What does the “laws of health” require? The Law requires the cancer go into remission, that the cancer cells remit. Once the cancer remits death has been defeated!

Christ came to put sin into remission, to return the creation back to its original ideal, to purge the destructive principle from the species and what is it that the Law requires? Some say the law requires death – not so,

Psalms 17:3 The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul.

God’s law heals, restores, regenerates, when we open the heart and God writes His law within we don’t die we are recreated in His image!