

Discipleship Lesson 11 1Q 2008

More Lessons in Discipleship

SUNDAY

Read Mark 4:36-41:

Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

 MK 4:39 He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

 MK 4:40 He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

 MK 4:41 They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Thoughts? Read last paragraph, "Notice the element..."

What is the key to not being afraid? Is the recognition of the fact that God has power the key? Is seeing miracles the key?

Read MONDAY third paragraph "Though one account..." Are miracles a good barometer? How many think Satan could walk on water? Is controlling the weather a good barometer? Is there Biblical evidence Satan can control the weather?

JOB 1:12 The LORD said to Satan, "Very well, then, everything he has is in your hands, but on the man himself do not lay a finger."

Then Satan went out from the presence of the LORD....

JOB 1:16 While he was still speaking, another messenger came and said, "The fire of God fell from the sky and burned up the sheep and the servants, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"...

JOB 1:18 While he was still speaking, yet another messenger came and said, "Your sons and daughters were feasting and drinking wine at the oldest brother's house, ¹⁹ when suddenly a mighty wind swept in from the desert and struck the four corners of the house. It collapsed on them and they are dead, and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you!"

Who do you think brought that storm upon the disciples? Was it God? Was it Jesus or was it likely Satan trying to destroy Christ?

Notice how the servant reported to Job, "the fire of God fell" was it the fire of God? Did God do this? Do people today make the same mistakes when "natural disasters" occur?

What about the final plagues, will God use His power to inflict them or do they occur when God withdraws His protection?

Revelation 7:1-3:

REV 7:1 After this I saw four angels standing at the four corners of the earth, holding back the four winds of the earth to prevent any wind from blowing on the land or on the sea or on any tree. ² Then I saw another angel coming up from the east, having the seal of the living God. He called out in a loud voice to the four angels who had

been given power to harm the land and the sea: ³ "Do not harm the land or the sea or the trees until we put a seal on the foreheads of the servants of our God."

What are the four angels doing? Holding back the winds of strife, the forces of evil, satanic agencies, thus their power to harm the earth is by letting go their hold – just like God let Satan loose in the book of Job.

EGW supports this view:

The restraining Spirit of God is even now being withdrawn from the world. Hurricanes, storms, tempests, fire and flood, disasters by sea and land, follow each other in quick succession. Science seeks to explain all these. The signs thickening around us, telling of the near approach of the Son of God, are attributed to any other than the true cause. Men cannot discern the sentinel angels restraining the four winds that they shall not blow until the servants of God are sealed; but when God shall bid His angels loose the winds, there shall be such a scene of strife as no pen can picture.--Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 408.

Four mighty angels are still holding the four winds of the earth. Terrible destruction is forbidden to come in full. The accidents by land and by sea; the loss of life, steadily increasing, by storm, by tempest, by railroad disaster, by conflagration; the terrible floods, the earthquakes, and the winds will be the stirring up of the nations to one deadly combat, while the angels hold the four winds, forbidding the terrible power of Satan to be exercised in its fury until the servants of God are sealed in their foreheads. {ML 308.2}

Why does God have His angels let loose the winds of strife, the Satanic agencies?

"I was shown that the judgments of God would not come directly out from the Lord upon them, but in this way;

"They place themselves beyond His protection. He warns, corrects, reprove, and points out the only path of safety; then if those who have been the objects of His special care will follow their own course, independent of the Spirit of God, after repeated warnings, if they choose their own way, then He does not commission His angels to prevent Satan's decided attacks upon them.

"It is Satan's power that is at work at sea and on land, bringing calamity and distress, and sweeping off multitudes to make sure of his prey, and storm and tempest both by sea and land will be, for Satan has come down in great wrath. He is at work. He knows his time is short and, he is not restrained; we shall see more terrible manifestations of his great power than we have ever dreamed of." Manuscript Release vol. 14, p. 3

Are miracles a good way to establish our faith? Why? Because miracles can be counterfeited, but what about knowing God, knowing His character, knowing the One who has the power? When we know God's character as the primary most important thing to know does that preclude miracles?

How many Christians today have misconceptions about God and expect the final plagues to be at His direct hand to punish people for their sin? Then which God are they preparing to meet?

What is the power of God?

Romans 1:16,17 I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile. For in the gospel a righteousness from God is revealed, a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: "The righteous will live by faith."

What is the power? The gospel, which is? The good news, about what? About God's character His righteousness –

Thus in Zechariah 4:6 we read:

"This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: 'Not by might nor by power, but by my Spirit,' says the LORD Almighty.

Does the experience of the disciples have lessons for us as we prepare for the end of time? What lessons?

Where were the disciples focusing? On themselves, where was Jesus focusing? On glorifying God!

What perspective did the disciples have of events? Narrow, on just the immediate what they could see. What perspective did Christ have, eternal and universal, the Great Controversy perspective. Can we have such a perspective as we go forward?

Were the disciples unduly impressed with power and might? Miracles and wonder?

Had the disciples, at that point, surrendered their lives into God's plan? What about us as the time comes to an end?

Read bottom green in Sunday's lesson – thoughts? Is there ever a time when God does not care? NO!

TUESDAY

Excellent paragraph, read bottom paragraph "What a contrast..." thoughts?

Do we as SDA's have difficulty with this problem? How, with what?

We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed. {Counsels to Writers and Editors 37.1}

Notice her openness, we have many lessons to learn and unlearn, only God is infallible, we are to develop an attitude of openness to the truth rather than rigidity and clinging to tradition or comfortable ideas long held.

There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. {CW 35.2}

Notice again her attitude, not dogmatic, but open to investigation and even stating that all our SDA expositions are not without an error and we lose nothing by close investigation. But what about some in our church? Are there some who manifest an attitude of closed mindedness to new truth?

The rebuke of the Lord will be upon those who would be guardians of the doctrine, who would bar the way that greater light shall not come to the people. A great work is to be done, and God sees that our leading men have need of greater light, that they may unite harmoniously, with the messengers whom He shall send to accomplish the work that He designs they should. The Lord has raised up messengers and endued them with His Spirit, and has said, "Cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a

trumpet, and show My people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins." {CW 38.1}

Whenever the people of God are growing in grace, they will be constantly obtaining a clearer understanding of His word. They will discern new light and beauty in its sacred truths. This has been true in the history of the church in all ages, and thus it will continue to the end. But as real spiritual life declines, it has ever been the tendency to cease to advance in the knowledge of the truth. Men rest satisfied with the light already received from God's word, and discourage any further investigation of the Scriptures. They become conservative, and seek to avoid discussion. {CW 38.3}

The fact that there is no controversy or agitation among God's people, should not be regarded as conclusive evidence that they are holding fast to sound doctrine. There is reason to fear that they may not be clearly discriminating between truth and error. When no new questions are started by investigation of the Scriptures, when no difference of opinion arises which will set men to searching the Bible for themselves, to make sure that they have the truth, there will be many now, as in ancient times, who will hold to tradition, and worship they know not what. {CW 39.1}

Thoughts?

WEDNESDAY

Read Mark 9:30-32

MK 9:30 They left that place and passed through Galilee. Jesus did not want anyone to know where they were, ³¹ because he was teaching his disciples. He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days he will rise."

32 But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.

Why were they afraid? – They were afraid their ideas, their dreams, their wishes, aspirations and hoped for earthly power would be dashed by the truth – they were avoiding the truth because it would go against what they wanted to happen.

Do we do this? In dating relationships all the time people ignore the truth for fear it will mean the relationship won't last. Do we do it in other areas? What about Biblical truth? Do we avoid it lest we have to give up previously held ideas, what if we have spent years teaching another view, would it be hard to give up?

Read last two paragraphs – thoughts?

Did the disciples understand Christ's mission and the purpose of the cross? Was Christ's life and ultimately His death and resurrection the most important events in universal history? Are these events the key to winning the war with Satan? Then do you think Satan might focus his energies on misrepresenting Christ, His mission and the purpose of His death?

We saw the disciples misunderstood the mission of Christ, have we misunderstood? How?

I have heard from some that when I suggest that it is taught in mainstream Christianity that Christ died to appease God or satisfy His wrath or that God killed His Son that some have said that they never hear this in other churches. So, I will quote from Christianity Today excerpts from a paper called A Call to Evangelical Unity June 14, 1999 (But first I want to make it clear this paper has many very good things to say, many very powerful truths are expressed, but I think the one truth yet to be recovered to complete the reformation has not been recovered and thus woven in is a distortion about the cross and why Christ had to die):

Jesus paid our penalty in our place on his cross, satisfying the retributive demands of divine justice by shedding his blood in sacrifice and so making possible justification for all who trust in him (Rom. 3:25-26). The Bible describes this mighty substitutionary transaction as the achieving of ransom, reconciliation, redemption, propitiation, and conquest of evil powers (Matt. 20:28; 2 Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 3:23-25; John 12:31; Col. 2:15)....

We affirm that the atonement of Christ by which, in his obedience, he offered a perfect sacrifice, propitiating the Father by paying for our sins and satisfying divine justice on our behalf according to God's eternal plan, is an essential element of the Gospel.

We deny that any view of the Atonement that rejects the substitutionary satisfaction of divine justice, accomplished vicariously for believers, is compatible with the teaching of the Gospel.

Thoughts? If we view this to be true then can we ever really be free from fear? If we believe God is retributive, vengeful and severe and is only merciful because His Son propitiated Him by paying Him off with His blood, what kind of God are we describing? Can you trust such a one?

This leads us right into THURSDAY's lesson read first paragraph – thoughts?

Why would someone want to believe there is no God? Because God has been represented to them as someone not worthy of believing in.

Read first set of questions “Look at the above...” Thoughts?

Next set of questions “Now that you have...” thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read questions 1-4 and discuss