

Discipleship Lesson 13 1Q 2008

Patterns of Discipleship

SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts?

Is the Bible telling us that we should be doing these things literally today? What is the relevance of these words for our time in earth's history?

How many of you have done these things?

I believe these actions literally happened in Christ's day, but is it possible the literal healing, cleansing, raising and casting out are also metaphorical lessons, object lessons for a bigger issue?

For instance, do we believe that the children of Israel literally crossed through the Red Sea? But is this also a metaphor for baptism?

“They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea.” 1Cor 10:2

Do we believe the world was literally destroyed by a flood and only 8 were saved on the ark? Is this also a metaphor for baptism, dying to the old life and living a new life in Christ?

God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, ²¹ and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. 1 Peter 3:20,21

Do we find many examples of literal events having a larger lesson in the setting of the Great Controversy? The children of

Israel in the bondage of slavery, we in the bondage of sin, a savior Moses comes to deliver, Christ comes to deliver, they are fed manna from heaven, Christ is the bread of heaven we are to feed on. Do we find literal events often have a lesson in the setting of the GC?

The disciples on the sea in the storm fighting to save themselves but being overcome and only when they turn to Christ does the storm calm and they find peace and salvation. Does this represent our struggle with the storms of life, the storm of sin and no matter how hard we struggle on our own we will be overwhelmed but when we turn to Christ He calms the storm and we find peace and salvation?

Then what about this instruction in Matthew 10:8, while in there day it had literal application is it only a literal application or is there a deeper meaning?

Is it God's primary goal to heal our earthly physical bodies from our current diseases so we live to an old age and die at 100? Is it God's goal to heal leprosy so we die of an old age on this earth? Is it God's goal to raise the dead so they live again mortal lives of sin on this earth?

What is God's goal? To heal us for eternity, if we reexamine the commission is there an eternal commission involved here? Are we to bring the message of salvation so people will be saved for eternity? The Greek for saved is the same as heal, salvation comes from root salve and means to heal. We are to take the message of eternal healing to the world and that message is the truth about God as revealed by Jesus.

What about cleansing the lepers? Leprosy was a metaphor for sin, "unclean, unclean" our hearts, minds and characters are unclean with sinfulness, with selfishness we are to take the truth about God which results in hearts, minds and characters be healed from sinfulness to the world!

What about raising the dead? Doesn't the Bible teach we are all dead in our trespasses and sins? That those who don't know Christ are already dead? That it is only by coming back into unity with Christ we have life? Thus are we to raise the dead by introducing them to Christ so they live new lives in Him? In other words, the entire world is filled with the walking dead and it is by bringing people to Christ we raise the dead.

What about casting out devils? Are we not to proclaim the truth about God which casts out of the hearts and minds the lies of Satan? Remember Jesus said to the Pharisees, "you are of your father the devil." We cast out demons by proclaiming the truth which casts out lies about God and wins people back to trust.

How many of us are working with God to do these very things?

Read second paragraph – thoughts?

What is the most important, the most essential element to be a disciple of Christ? Would it not be revealing the same truths about God that Jesus did? Would it not be holding to the testimony of Jesus?

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 is the testimony of Jesus that we are to hold to?

In SUNDAY's lesson read second paragraph "Besides compassion..." Jesus said "if you have seen me you have seen the father." What is Jesus testimony regarding forgiving of sinners? Is this a revelation of the Father?

Is the Father just as forgiving as the Son? Do we accept this testimony? Are there ideas spread about which deny this testimony? What have you heard?

Read last paragraph Sunday "Our God is..." thoughts?

Is saving us and forgiving us synonymous? Can someone be saved without being forgiven? No, but can someone be forgiven without being saved? Yes, what does this mean? What does this truth uncover? That the issues in salvation are not legal, it is not about getting forgiven, it is about healing/saving, regeneration, recreation, restoration, reconciliation!

Christ came to unite us back with the Father by making Himself known, which wins us to trust and then we open the heart to God and the Holy Spirit takes what Christ has achieved and reproduces it in us thus saving us/healing us!

Do we believe the testimony of Jesus? What did Jesus say to the woman caught in adultery? Neither do I condemn you, go and sin no more... Do we hear the Father say these words?

What was Jesus testimony about atonement?

JN 17:20 "My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: ²³ I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

What is Jesus describing? At-one-ment, unity, being at one, do we believe Jesus testimony about atonement or have we replaced it with another idea? What?

What was Jesus' testimony in treating enemies? How did He treat His enemies? He protected their reputation and freely forgave them, do we believe His testimony that this is exactly

what the Father does? How do we believe the Father will treat Satan, the fallen angels and unrepentant men in the very end? Do we hold to the testimony of Jesus or not?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Where do we draw the lines? What about with ordination of women? Do we discriminate in the church today?

Where does such division come? From fear and selfishness, what is a Christlike attitude? He did not think equality with God was something to be grasped but humbled Himself....

Read second paragraph “Jesus neither...” thoughts? Who would this outcast group of people be in our society? And how do we treat them?

TUESDAY

Read bottom two paragraphs “From its beginning...” thoughts?

Do we as Christians struggle with prejudices? Biases? Bigotries?

Where do such biases enter our minds? As a child I remember being biased against the Soviet Union and Russians, why? Where did such bias come from? From my society, my earthly government. Are we vulnerable today to influences from government, society, environment, family, friends, culture? Do we struggle with bias toward Muslims today?

What can protect us from such bias? The larger view, realizing as the lesson says we are all one family, all descendents of Adam, all infected with the same sick condition, all terminal and all in need of the very same remedy.

The lesson correctly points out in the end there are only two types of people the saved and the lost, but what is it that is the distinguishing features of the saved and the lost?

In WEDNESDAY's Lesson we focus on the purpose of the church, the first paragraph calls our attention to the church's work in evangelism, ministry to outcasts, the needy and making disciples - What are the reasons the church is called to this mission? What reasons have you heard? To bring people to salvation? i.e. to bring people to join the church, to get baptized, to say the sinners prayer? Do we have health seminars, stop smoking classes, Samaritan centers, hospitals, food centers as a manipulation to get people to join our group? Or is there another reason? What is our reason for participating in these things?

What reason does a parent sacrifice to put food on the table, go without to have a Christmas for their child, work extra jobs to buy their child's medicine, donate a kidney to save their child?

One of the founders of our church saw the mission of the church like this:

All sin is selfishness. Satan's first sin was a manifestation of selfishness. He sought to grasp power, to exalt self. A species of insanity led him to seek to supersede God. And the temptation that led Adam to sin was Satan's declaration that it was possible for man to attain to something more than he already enjoyed, possible for him to be as God Himself. **The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world.** God desires every one to understand the evil of selfishness, and to co operate with Him in guarding the human family against its terrible, deceptive powers. **The design of the gospel is to confront this evil by means of remedial missionary work, and to destroy its destructive power by establishing enterprises of**

benevolence. {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 3} (The Worker's Bulletin)

As a remedy for the terrible consequences into which selfishness led the human race, God gave His only begotten Son to die for mankind. How could He have given more? In this gift He gave Himself. "I and My Father are one," said Christ. By the gift of His Son, God has made it possible for man to be redeemed and restored to oneness with Him. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." **Love is the great principle that actuates unfallen beings.** With amazement the angels behold the indifference that those who have light and knowledge manifest toward a world unsaved. The heavenly host are filled with an intense desire to work through human agencies to restore in man the image of God. They are ready and waiting to do this work. The combined power of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost is pledged to uplift man from his fallen state. Every attribute, every power of divinity has been placed at the command of those who unite with the Saviour in winning men to God. O, that all would appreciate the truth as it is in Jesus. O, that all would love God in return for the love wherewith He has loved them. {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 4}

Sin has extinguished the love that God placed in man's heart. The work of the church is to rekindle this love. The church is to co-operate with God by uprooting selfishness from the human heart, placing in its stead the benevolence that was in man's heart in his original state of perfection. {WB, September 9, 1902 par. 5}

Thoughts – how can our class move forward in this mission of working with God to restore His love in our hearts?

THURSDAY

The Prayer factor- what is prayer? What examples of prayer can we cite from the Bible?

Jesus' prayer, David in the Psalms, Solomon's prayer for wisdom, the tax collector –

But what about Abraham when he talked with God about sparing Sodom or Moses when He went into God's presence and spoke face to face as a man with a friend? Or what about the disciples talking with Jesus on the road, at the table or in the garden, would these be examples of prayer?

Here is one description in the book Faith I live by:

If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet, joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. . . . Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan. FLB 225

What do you think about this description?

What about praying in the name of Jesus? What does it mean to pray in the name of Jesus? Jesus told his disciples in John 16 that they had not asked anything yet in His name, but when they did their joy would be complete – what does it mean to ask in Jesus name?

In the Bible what does the name represent? Character, so to pray in Jesus name, would it mean to pray with a character like Christ's, wanting what Christ would want, valuing what Christ would value, desiring what Christ would desire? And what did Christ desire? To glorify the Father, is that to be our prayer?

Here are two descriptions:

But to pray in the name of Jesus is something more than a mere mention of that name at the beginning and the ending of a prayer. It is to pray in the mind and spirit of Jesus, while we believe His promises, rely upon His grace, and work His works. {SC 100.2}

But to pray in Christ's name means much. It means that we are to accept His character, manifest His spirit, and work His works. DA 668

Thoughts? How do we do this?

FRIDAY

How can we as a class be more effective disciples for Christ?