

## The Wonder of Jesus Lesson 4 2Q 2008

### The Wisdom of His Teaching

Before we get started this week I wanted to share an email with the class that came from a listener in London, England:

Dear Dr Jennings / Russell and the rest of the Come and Reason class,

I would like to thank you all from the bottom of my heart for making me see Jesus as He really is, and not through my human, sinful, spiteful eyes.

I became a Seventh Day Adventist about 10 years ago; I was hurting from the loss of my father when I was three years old and always felt that something was 'missing'; at the same time, I was zealous. Shortly after joining the church, I joined a bible class that taught judgement and damnation; I began seeing God as severe and exacting. I never knew that God was so loving and so kind, that He would die to reconcile us with the Father. who would go to the uttermost to save me and fellow men; little wonder, I was miserable and decided to leave the church as the standards were too 'high'. God, in His love and tender mercies, led me to your Sabbath School class and by God's grace, will continue to grow; what I like about my life now is the things that used to jump on my last nerve, no longer do – I wanted to affirm your class and continue to wish God's continued guidance, blessings, grace and love on you all.

Christian love and fellowship,

A sister in England

Thoughts from the class about this lesson?

## SABBATH

Read memory text – thoughts?

What gave Christ's teaching authority? Was it the tone of His voice? Or was it the compelling power of truth that made sense, that was reasonable, that was simply explained and easy to understand?

How do you suppose the teachers of the law taught?

Jesus said to them that they search the world to find a convert and when they did they made them twice the son of hell as he was before – why would that be the case? What kind of things were they teaching that would have caused this?

What kind of God were they looking to come? A God like Jesus or one in the mould and character of Satan, one who would use power and might to throw off the Romans? One who required blood to flow to appease his wrath? One who was severe and exacting and vengeful? One who would “punish” sin and sinners in order to be “just”?

Did Jesus say that He was an exact representation of the Father? Do we believe it? Do we find Jesus anywhere punishing sinners? Do we find Him anywhere being unforgiving? Do we see the Father in this? Didn't Jesus say He did not come to condemn the world but to save it? Do we realize these are the words of the Father?

Why do we have such false ideas about God in our head? Where do they get there? From well meaning parents, teachers and preachers who themselves have these distortions in their heads.

A few weeks ago I mentioned how as a child I heard these distortions about God in children's story – some said they never heard such things. Since our last meeting together I happened to be reading a book by Eric B. Hare – the most

famous SDA children's story teller ever. Let me share with you a story from his book Curse Proof page 51, 52.

What is the take home message of this story? That God doesn't like us, except for the fact His Son loves us, so for His Son's sake He will let us come to heaven.

But what did Jesus say? John 16:26 "I say not unto you that I will pray the Father for you, no the Father himself loves you."

This idea that God isn't tender toward us, that God doesn't like us, that God needs Jesus to do something to get Him on our side is a lie. We need to purge it from our minds.

Romans 1:18-31 Paul tells us as long as we reject the truth about God our minds become darkened, depraved and foolish, we cannot be healed as long as we hold to lies about God.

Read second paragraph "There is a danger..." thoughts?

What do you think the qualitative element of Christ's teachings was that distinguishes them from all other teaching? And can we have that element in our teaching? Was it not the truth about the Father, His character, methods, principles? The truth about how God created the universe, upon what principles?

## SUNDAY

The Sermon on the Mount in the bottom of the lesson it highlight specific points from the sermon to explore – notice number 5 and 6. Retaliation and love for enemies –

What did Christ teach about retaliation and love for enemies? Did He teach we should love our enemies? Did Christ demonstrate this love when He was here? Was His life a reflection of the Father?

Then what about the idea that Christ and the Father must punish sin and unrepentant sinners? Will God inflict punishment upon sinners? This was preached here in Collegedale two weeks ago.

Maybe we should look at some inspiration to find out whether God will inflict punishment or whether it is sin that inflicts punishment itself and God has been working to hold in check the destructiveness of sin?

Thoughts before we examine the evidence?

What is the problem with the idea that God has to inflict external penalties upon sin and sinners?

- It basically says there is nothing wrong with sin other than it offends the One in charge and if the One in charge would restrain Himself, get a grip, hold Himself in check then we could live forever in our sin because there is nothing wrong with sin there is something wrong with God
- It fails to understand the nature of sin fails to realize sin actually damages and destroys the sinner
- This is because it fails to understand the reality of God's law and God's character. That the law of God is a natural not imposed law and therefore has natural not imposed consequences. The law of love is the law of life and violations result in death unless interventions occur to restore one to harmony with the law of love
- The idea that God must inflict punishment misrepresents God as someone who punishes and thus undermines trust, holds minds in captivity of Satan and prevents people from experience healing and freedom and salvation that God offers.

Let's look at evidence:

- Romans 6:23 the wages of sin is death
- James 1:15 sin when full grown brings forth death

- Now these texts are descriptors texts, not direct evidence in themselves, (aside from the fact we believe the Bible is inspired and trustworthy). But these texts only make statements, they don't demonstrate the process occurring.
  - If I say, "Ice left in the sun on a 100 degree day will melt." This is a declaration, a description, while true, it is not in itself evidence.
  - If no one had ever seen ice and therefore never seen ice melt my statement would not be evidence.
  - But seeing ice melt in the 100 degree heat that is evidence.
- So God actually gives us evidence to help us understand this process.
  - "There is no faithfulness, no kindness, no knowledge of God in your land...**My people are being destroyed because they don't know me.** It is all your fault, you priests, for you yourselves refuse to know me... They have exchanged the glory of God for the disgrace of idols." (Hosea 4:1,6,7 – NLT)
  - "He was hated and rejected; his life was filled with sorrow and terrible suffering. No one wanted to look at him. We despised him and said, 'He is a nobody!' He suffered and endured great pain for us, **but we thought his suffering was punishment from God.** He was wounded and crushed because of our sins; by taking our punishment, he made us completely well." (Isaiah 53:1-5 – CEV)
  - **"My anger will flame up like fire** and burn everything on earth. It will reach to the world below and consume the roots of the mountains. I will bring on them endless disasters and use all my arrows against them." (Deuteronomy 32:22,23 – GN)
    - "They fail to see why they were defeated; they cannot understand what happened. Why were

a thousand defeated by one, and ten thousand by only two? **The Lord, their God, had abandoned them; their mighty God had given them up**” (Deuteronomy 32:29,30 – GN)

- “They **angered** him with their heathen places of worship, and with their idols they made him **furious**. **God was angry** when he saw it, so he **rejected** his people completely. He **abandoned** his tent in Shiloh, the home where he had lived among us. He **allowed** our enemies to capture the Covenant Box, the symbol of his power and glory.” (Psalm 78:58-61 – GN)
- “**You will feel my anger when I turn it loose on you like a blazing fire. And I will hand you over** to brutal men, experts at destruction.” (Ezekiel 21:31 – GN)
- “**I will hand you over to other nations** who will rob you and plunder you.” (Ezekiel 25:7 – GN)
- “The king killed the young men of Judah even in the Temple. He had no mercy on anyone, young or old, man or woman, sick or healthy. **God handed them all over to him.**” (2 Chronicles 36:17 – GN)
- Then other evidence, described by Paul, but Paul’s description includes the evidence Romans 1:18-31
- The best evidence, Jesus who came to cure the sin condition, who was made to be sin though He knew no sin, what happened to Him on the Cross? “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me.”

One of the founders of this church wrote:

- “We are not to regard God as waiting to punish the sinner for his sin. The sinner brings the punishment upon himself. His own actions start a train of circumstances that bring the sure result. Every act of transgression reacts upon the sinner, works in him a change of character, and makes it more easy for him to transgress again. By choosing to sin, men separate themselves from God, cut

themselves off from the channel of blessing, and the sure result is ruin and death.” *1SM 235*

- “In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice.” *DA 762*

God is love, His law is love, life is based to operate on the law of love, violations of this law result in death, except for the gracious interventions of God working to heal and restore us back to harmony with His law of love.

Imagine a child who was told by his physician father to never play with the scalpels. The father even said, “in the day you play with the scalpels you will surely die.” The child disobeys and cuts himself severely and is bleeding to death. The circulation has been cut – (analogous to the circle of love being cut). If something isn’t done the child will bleed to death.

The father realizes what has happened and comes to heal the child, but the child not only disobeyed but now believes lies about the father, believes the father must kill him for his disobedience so as the father approaches the child with a needle to numb and sutures to heal, the child believes the father is coming with a lethal injection to kill him so he runs away.

As long as the child believes the lies he will not let the father heal him and thus the child will bleed to death. This is our situation. We are sick, dying, terminal and God wants to heal us, but as long as we believe the lie that He will kill us we won’t let Him heal us.

God doesn’t have to kill the sinners in the end, He only has to stop holding at bay the consequences of sin.

## MONDAY

Read top paragraph – absolutely true, do we believe what Jesus revealed about God? Do we have thing straight about God today or are we still struggling with lies about God?

How has what Jesus revealed been misinterpreted and abused?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? Who do we Christians teach will do the greatest torturing of all? Hitler gassed the Jews before he burned them, Christians teach God burns them alive – some teach God burns them forever and ever torturing them for all eternity – Hitler didn't do that. Some teach God performs a miracle to keep them alive in the flames suffering as long as they deserve. Are Christians actually teaching Hitler was more merciful than God?

Did Jesus reveal a God who would do such a thing?

## TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? What does this mean? Does it mean God is not forgiving? Or might it mean that God forgives but if we don't forgive we close our hearts to God's forgiveness, we refuse God's healing and recreation of our hearts?

Jesus told them to pray, "Father, forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors." Do we believe God forgives? Or do we teach Jesus paid our debt by His blood for our sin? Can you forgive a debt and collect a debt? If someone owes you \$1000 and you collect it from them, do you then turn to them and say "now that I have been paid in full, I forgive you your debt"?

Why do we teach this idea that Jesus paid our debt of sin to the Father but the Father forgives us our debts?



Now, Jesus did pay a high price to save, to heal, to reconcile, but He did not pay a legal debt to the Father. If your child was dying of renal failure and you donated a kidney to save your child, could we say you paid a high price? Does that mean you paid a legal debt to the hospital administration to get them to heal your child?

Read bottom paragraph – thoughts? Who condemned Judas?

But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned." Matthew 12:36,37

What does this mean? That our very condition determines our destiny. We are all born infected with a terminal condition the Bible calls sin. Christ came and procured a remedy that is freely offered to all. Those who accept the remedy have a new heart and right spirit, are changed, renewed, recreated and healed and thus are acquitted, but those who reject the remedy remain terminal and thus their own words, own condition condemns them.

In the case of Judas who executed Judas? He killed himself!

### WEDNESDAY

In the TQ on page 49 is referring to Jesus explanation of the law in which He said “you have heard it said, but I say unto you...” talking about murder and adultery, the lesson states, “Sin moves from the act to thought...”

What does this mean? What is Jesus teaching about sin? It is not a behavioral problem but a heart mind problem and the behaviors are symptoms of a sick heart and mind.

Why is this important? Because if we think sin is a behavioral problem, i.e. doing bad things, then what kind of solution do we seek? Solutions that take care of our bad acts, we seek:

- Someone to pay the penalty of our sins
- Our record books erased of our bad acts
- Our legal debt to be paid that we have incurred from doing bad things
- A lawyer to defend us from the judge

But the truth that Jesus taught is that sins are symptoms of a heart condition and the solution is to heal the heart/mind of mankind. To be recreated, regenerated, renewed.

Consider the analogy of having pneumonia:

THURSDAY

Grace

What is grace?

Often referred to as “unmerited favor” something we don’t earn or deserve. When Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in grace with God and man – did Jesus not deserve that?

Grace - Charis – Charisma – the work of God, God acting, God intervening, God’s intercessions, Grace comes from God and it is the work of God to heal, restore, regenerate, recreate.

FRIDAY

Read question 1 and 2 and discuss