

Agents of Hope God's Great Missionaries Lesson 4 3Q 2008

The Son of God Among Us

SABBATH

Read key thought – thoughts?

Who do you say Christ is?

- Son of God
- Pre-existent
- Fully divine
- Equal with the Father
- Possessor of life original, unborrowed, underived
- Creator
- Who became fully human and the destroyer of sin and death

Read second paragraph “A man who...” Do you agree with the conclusions of C.S Lewis regarding Christ? Why?

Christ said,

- JN 6:35 Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty... ⁴⁰ For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.".. ⁴⁴ "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁴⁵ It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. ⁴⁶ No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. ⁴⁷ I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. ⁴⁸ I am the bread of life. ⁴⁹ Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. ⁵⁰ But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. ⁵¹ I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If

anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

- JN 8:23 But he continued, "You are from below; I am from above. You are of this world; I am not of this world. ²⁴ I told you that you would die in your sins; if you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins."
- JN 8:58 "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"
- JN 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; ²⁶ and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"
- JN 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me. ² In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so, I would have told you. I am going there to prepare a place for you. ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.
- JN 14:6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.
- JN 14:9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? ¹⁰ Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. ¹¹ Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me;

What conclusion would we be forced to draw about Jesus if we deny He is the Son of God? Do you see the problem with some people who claim Jesus was a prophet but not the Son of God?

Read last paragraph – thoughts? What do you think about the attitude expressed? How do you deal with someone who asks how do we know the Bible can be trusted? Is it not a fair question?

SUNDAY

The lesson asks: “If someone were to ask you, Who was Jesus? what would you say, and why?” Then the lesson states:

Read second paragraph “Your answer....” Thoughts?

How do you hear this paragraph? Is there any truth in this paragraph? Is it expressed in ways that make the gospel most clear? How can we express the truth of what Jesus came to do and make it more clear?

How might you change the phrase “died for our sins”?

- Died because of sin?
- Died to cure sin?
- Died as the solution to the sin problem?
- Died as a remedy to sin?

What about the idea that revealing the truth about God’s character “really doesn’t matter if Jesus did not come and die as a Substitute for us...”?

How do you understand Jesus as our Substitute?

Jesus was the Substitute for Adam to finish the work Adam failed to complete – reveal the truth about God. But because of Adam’s sin Jesus had to do more than Adam He had to fix the damage Adam’s sin caused. Jesus had to heal the sin problem, He had to cure sinfulness. In this regard Jesus became our Substitute in taking our terminal condition upon Himself and curing it.

Could we reverse the logic of the quarterly and say, “Jesus as our Substitute is fine, but in the end it really doesn’t matter if He did not come and reveal the truth about the Father”?

Yes, why? Because in order to save mankind, in order to secure the universe, in order to defeat Satan, in order to rid the universe of sin Christ had to accomplish two objectives:

1. Christ had to reveal the truth about God, sin, Satan, man’s unhealed condition, the cause of death etc. without this

revelation mankind could not be saved and the universe could not be secured. Why?

- What did the war in heaven start over?
- Satan is the Father of what? Lies
- Who were Satan's lies about?
- And what do lies do?
- Lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
- Fear and selfishness result in acts of sin
- Acts of sin result in damage and death

- Once lies were believed and trust was broken what is necessary in order to destroy the lies? Truth, about what?

2. Christ had to defeat Satan's principles in humanity, Christ had to take the terminal condition upon Himself and cure it. Christ had to write God's law of love back into the human species. Christ had to develop a human character in perfect harmony with God's law of love. Why?

- What is the basis of life?
- The law of love
- The Law of the Lord is perfect reviving the soul. Psalms 19:7
- Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {Ed 76.3}
- The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all his creatures the service of love,-- homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of his character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all he grants freedom of will, that they may render him voluntary service. {GC88 493.2}

- By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,--God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name,"--"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"--"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the law of self-renouncing love is the law of life for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. {DA 19.2}
- Why does death occur?
- What was necessary for mankind to live?
- Selfishness must be replaced by love
- Christ a unique being in all universal history –
- His humanity was not formed from the dust as Adam or taken from the rib of a perfect human as Eve
- His humanity was not obtained from sinful mother AND father as you and me
- He was unique, born of a woman under law Galatians 4:4 but His Father was God. In Jesus the two antagonistic principles warred it out.
- He was “tempted in every way, just as we are--yet was without sin.” Heb 4:15
- We are “each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed.” James 1:14
- Christ, as our substitute, took our sick condition upon Himself and cured it. He overcame, He purified, He defeated the very elements of Satan’s government.

- In the wilderness and Gethsemane Christ experienced powerful feelings tempting Him to act in self-interest, but at every turn Christ instead of acting to “save self” chose to “give self” and thus destroyed him who holds the power of death that is the devil. Hebrews 2:14.
- This grace was given us in Christ Jesus before the beginning of time, but it has now been revealed through the appearing of our Savior, Christ Jesus, who has destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. 2 Tim 1:9,10

Read last sentence in Sunday’s lesson, “Because without...” Thoughts? Why? Jesus overcame the very elements that bring death and restored the law of life back into the human species and now becomes the source of life for all who trust Him.

Christ overcame alone, when, in Gethsemane, He became sin who knew no sin, He was “abandoned” by God, in other words He was left to face the full weight of human despair, fear, guilt, self-seeking temptation, agony, loneliness without the comfort of holy angels or His Father or the Holy Spirit. Christ overcame alone, with His human mind in our behalf and redeemed Adam’s failure. He demonstrated the truth about God’s character, defeated the principles of selfishness, restored God’s law of love into humanity and elevated the human species back to God’s original high calling for this race!

MONDAY

Read first sentence, “What made Jesus unique in human history?” Thoughts?

How would you describe Jesus as a unique being?

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Why was this so amazing? Does the idea that this is amazing actually expose the paradigm someone has as they consider what Jesus did?

From the paradigm of many religious people what is God looking for? People behaving well, people keeping the rules, obedient people which means following the instructions, while God is offended by those who break the rules, don't follow the instructions, the disobedient.

But from God's paradigm what was Christ looking for? People who were willing to trust Him, people who were willing to be healed by Him, healed in heart and mind. People who longed for a change of heart, mind and character which they themselves could not produce. And God is offended by those who purport to be His followers but whose hearts are closed to healing by His Spirit.

With this paradigm in view is it amazing who Jesus chose to interact with?

Last week Rene' and Stanley told me of their recent trip to San Francisco. They took the subway from the airport right to downtown and when they came up from the subway they realized some big event was going on. As they exited onto the street they realized they were in the middle of a gay pride parade. Now the interesting thing was just 3 feet away from where they were standing was a man on a box with a megaphone shouting God's curses and condemnation and eternal damnation upon the gays, while simultaneously the gay and lesbians walking by hearing these ugly words responded with "we love you."

Which of these people do you think would have been open to spend time with Jesus? Which would have heard Jesus counsel as you do it unto one of the least of these you have done it unto me?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph "Though we..." thoughts? What idea is being put forth from this paragraph? Is it suggesting there were times in which Jesus was something other than loving? Do you think Jesus ever spoke an unloving word? Then how do we understand the times when He spoke very strong and direct words, "you brood of vipers..."?

Many times in sessions with patients and families I find it necessary to speak strong words, in love, in an attempt to break through years of denial and self deceit in order to bring healing.

One couple came to see me, they were in their late twenties and had two children under the age of five. The husband was a kind, gentle, patient Christian man who attended church regularly and was quite devoted to God. The wife struggled with many issues, recently she had taken to going out to bars on a weekly basis and picking up men and having relations with them. Her husband was heart broken, but he didn't want to divorce her he wanted to save his marriage. After multiple sessions and attempts to explore the issues within the marriage and the wife's issues, I finally looked the wife in the eye and said, "you are the most selfish person I have ever met." She stopped, stunned, paused for a few seconds, then laughed and said, "you're right I am, but I don't want to be." And from there a change occurred. She rededicated herself to Christ, was rebaptized, stopped going to bars and began to fulfill her responsibilities as wife and mother.

Sometimes, in love, it is necessary to speak clear, strong and plain language in an attempt to break through denial, distortion and self-deception.

Read last paragraph – thoughts? Do you think in the church there is hypocrisy? Do you think there are people pretending? Are there people pretending to be happy when they are sad? Pretending to be healthy when sick, content when lonely, courageous when fearful, knowledgeable when confused? Are there people pretending to be righteous when wicked?

Why do people do this? What is the motivation? Fear? Fear of rejection, fear of what others think, fear of not be accepted, of humiliation, condemnation?

Does this occur because of a lack of love? Lack of love on the part of the person who is more concerned with self than with God and others, but also lack of love in the church that people

would get hurt, attacked, put down, demeaned if others knew our weakness, struggles and sins.

We need to bring the love of Christ to bear, the imputation of righteousness –

When Adam sinned how did God approach him in the garden? When the woman was caught in adultery how did Christ treat her? What did He say? He asked Adam, “who told you...” and the woman “Where are your accusers?” What is implied by the questions? “I am not the one who is accusing you.”

Christ said He did not come into the world to condemn the world but to save it. Christ doesn't condemn, we condemn. We condemn ourselves in our own minds, think of ourselves as too ugly, too sinful, too twisted, too bad, too evil for God or others to love so we begin to create facades to hide behind and judge God and others with aspects of our own self-condemnation.

We need to love others, to see all of us are in the same boat, suffering from the same sickness, struggling for the same healing and impute to others goodness, see them as the people they will be when healed by Christ!

THURSDAY

Read Romans 5:8 top of lesson – what does this mean to you?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

Then why do some say that God gets angry and wrathful at those who reject Him? Is the lesson saying we are called to a higher level of maturity than God? Or is the idea of God getting angry and wrathful at the people who reject Him if flawed?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Jesus turned away from the leaders of the church in His day to find others who would receive the message and take it forward. Would Jesus do this in the church today? Would Jesus turn

away from the professional clergy to the lay people, the fishermen, tax collectors, doctors to take the message forward?

Do we as the laity need to stop waiting for the professional clergy to take the message forward, to stop waiting for the professional clergy to tell us what the gospel is and instead receive the good news of salvation directly from Jesus and take it forward ourselves?

Read question 3 – thoughts? Did the Pharisees actually possess the present truth? What does “present truth” mean? What is present truth today? Are we taking forward the present truth or are we taking forward truths from the past that were for a different time and generation?