

Jesus Wept The Bible and Human Emotions Lesson 6 1Q 2011

Good Thinking

SABBATH

Read Memory Text:

Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Philippians 4:8

Does it matter upon what we think? What difference does it make?

Read first paragraph, “As one of...” thoughts

Are there any Bible passages that describe or support this concept?

If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. John 8:31,32

What do you think it means to hold to the teaching?

As a people we are to make an entire surrender of ourselves to God. God calls upon every church member to enter His service. **Truth that is not lived, that is not imparted to others, loses its life-giving power, its healing virtue.**" 7MS 353.

Can we “know” the truth if we don’t apply the truth?

- Can we know what it is like to swim if we never get in the water?
- Can we know how refreshing a slice of watermelon on a hot summer day is if we never eat a slice?
- Can we know the truth and be set free by it if we never apply it and live it out?

Is there a difference between knowing about swimming and knowing how to swim? Is there a difference between knowing about the truth and actually knowing the truth?

- Does it make a difference to your brain to read about swimming or to actually swim?
 - First initiate the movement in your prefrontal cortex which activates the motor cortex and the motor cortex activate
 - Corticospinal track which goes to the muscles to make them move while simultaneously activating the
 - Corticoponticocerebellar track which informs the cerebellum of the intended movement
 - Then the cerebellum gets information back from the extremities through the spinalcerebellar track of where the extremity actually moved and compares this actual movement with the intended movement and
 - Then cerebellum sends information back to the motor cortex to refine what will be the next movement
 - The cerebellum, which coordinates motor movements also, via the vermix, helps coordinate thinking
 - When one actually swims the activations of these tracks results in gene expression change, production of neurotrophic factors and vascular factors which make new neurons and recruit new neurons to improve these movements.
 - Additionally, the brain produces endorphins and enkephalins with exercise which boost mood and increase hope and optimism
 - And the muscles when exercised produce anti-inflammatory interleukins which decrease inflammation and muscles, tendons, ligaments and bone all strengthen

- Progression, not stagnation, is the law of heaven. Progression is the law of every faculty of mind and body. The things of nature obey this law. In the field there is seen first the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear. In the spiritual life, as in the physical life, there is to be growth. Step by step we

are to advance, ever receiving and imparting, ever gaining a more complete knowledge of Christ, daily approaching more closely the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ. {HP 183.4}

- **The world today is full of pain and suffering and agony. But is it the will of God that such a condition shall exist? - No. God, the Creator of our bodies, has arranged every fiber and nerve, and sinew and muscle, and has pledged himself to keep the machinery in order, if the human agent will cooperate with him, and refuse to work contrary to the laws which govern the physical system. {SpM 40.5} God's law is written by His own finger upon every nerve, every muscle, every faculty which has been entrusted to man.** These gifts were bestowed upon him, not to be abused, corrupted and abased, but to be used to His honor and glory. Every misuse of any part of our organism is a violation of the law which God designs shall govern us in these matters, and by violating this law human beings corrupt themselves; sickness and disease of every kind, ruined constitutions, premature decay, untimely deaths, these are the results of a violation of nature's laws. {SpM 40.6}
- As the foundation principle of all education in these lines, the youth should be taught that the **laws of nature are the laws of God-- as truly divine as are the precepts of the Decalogue.** The laws that govern our physical organism, God has written upon every nerve, muscle, and fiber of the body. **Every careless and willful violation of these laws is a sin against our Creator.** How necessary, then, that a thorough knowledge of these laws should be imparted! {CG 363.1}

What do these passages mean in regard to our spiritual life? Is there a different law at work on our physical and spiritual lives? Or is it the same law? What is that law?

- Does the brain respond differently to knowing the truth about God's kingdom of love and applying it?

- When we choose to live God’s law of love we are honest, kind, patient, gentle, loyal, faithful – this avoids conflict, results in healthy relationships, and less activation of the fear circuits of the brain – whenever we violate God’s law of love our ventromedial prefrontal cortex and orbital prefrontal cortex convict us of wrong, they increase activity, this causes decreased activity in the dorsolateral prefrontal cortex and we cannot think as clearly, this also results in increased activity of the amygdale and we experience more fear and anxiety but problem solve less efficiently. The activated fear circuits cause a cascade of inflammatory factors in our body increasing disease and within the brain suppressing growth factors and endorphins/enkaphalins resulting in increased dysphoria.

Can a person know the right doctrinal “truth” and still not “know” the truth, not know what it really means, what it is like to embrace it and apply it, how the truth transforms the life? What about those that put Christ on the cross – did they know the truth about the Sabbath? Which day of the week? Yes, did they know the truth of it? No.

Why do people have problems in thinking?

- Physical defects of the brain
 - Alzheimer’s
 - Brain injuries
 - Certain chromosomal and genetic abnormalities
 - Toxins and poisons which damage the brain
 - Drugs and alcohol
- Childhood experiences
 - Who chose to learn English? Our primary language is deeply ingrained before we make a conscious choice about it. Likewise certain patterns of thinking and processing are learned early on without our knowing it.
 - What of a child who is molested by a parent?
 - What of a child who is nurtured in a healthy way?
 - What of a child indulged?

- Learned distortions
 - Taught in school we evolved from apes
 - That survival of the fittest is normal and healthy
 - That blacks or Jews are subhuman
 - That women are subordinate and less valuable than men
- Self deception
 - In a relationship in which spouse is cheating, or beating, don't want to know because it would be emotionally painful to deal with so make excuses and lie to self
 - Addicts tell themselves they can handle it, deny they have a problem because accepting the truth hurts ego
- Trusting others
 - Allowing others to examine the evidence and tell you what to think – we don't need to examine questions that prior generations of church leaders and theologians have already thought through and answered. How does that idea work? What about in science?
- Value feelings over evidence and reason
 - If it feels right it must be right – it must be love...

Other ways?

Read bottom paragraph, “This week...” thoughts?

What do you think? Is Christ seeking to take “charge of our minds”?
In what way yes and in what way no?

Is Christ seeking to take charge of the healing, recovery, restoration, rebuilding process to lead, guide, teach and restore?

Is Christ seeking to do our thinking for us or to program us?

SUNDAY

Read Mark 7:21-23:

For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, ²² greed, malice,

deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. ²³ All these evils come from inside and make a man ‘unclean.’ ”

Thoughts? How did this evil get into the heart? Where did it originate?

What is the primary problem – the evil in the heart or the sinful behavior?

Where is God’s solution focused on the behavior or on renewing the heart? If the heart is renewed then the behavior takes care of itself:

Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean. Matt 23:25,26

Notice what Christ says happens to the outside when the inside is cleansed? Do you notice how much of Christianity is focused on dealing with the outside? Getting sins pardoned, or paid for, or punished in Christ, or erased from record books, or having our record covered by the blood or ourselves covered by a robe, when all of these metaphors are actually about cleansing the inside of the cup.

- God not remembering our sins means cleansing our hearts so sin is no longer in us and thus when God looks at us He doesn’t “see” or “think” about our sins, because we aren’t filled with sin anymore:
 - This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. **I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts.** I will be their God, and they will be my people. ¹¹ No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. ¹² For I will forgive their wickedness and will **remember their sins no more.** Heb 8:10-12

- Covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness means to be cleansed in heart and mind to be like Him
 - When we submit ourselves to Christ, **the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then** as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}
- Cleansed by the blood means to internalize Christ and have His character reproduced within
 - Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. ⁵⁵ For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. ⁵⁶ Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. ⁵⁷ Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. John 6:54-57
- Erasing sins means erasing sinfulness from our character
 - Remember, your character is being daguerreotyped [photographed] by the great Master Artist in the record books of heaven, as minutely as the face is reproduced upon the polished plate of the artist. What do the books of heaven say in your case? Are you conforming your character to the Pattern, Jesus Christ? Are you washing your robes of character and making them white in the blood of the Lamb? "Behold, I come quickly; and My reward is with Me, to give every man according as his work shall be" [Revelation 22:12]. . . . {TSB 62.1}
 - Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin... Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow. Ps 51:2,7
- Pardon or forgiveness means to have the heart cleansed and renewed.
 - God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness for sin but reclaiming from sin. It is the outflow of

redeeming love that transforms the heart. David had the true conception of forgiveness when he prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Ps. 51:10. {FLB 129.2}

Did Christ's mission to earth have anything to do with transforming hearts or did He come simply to deal with penalties for bad behaviors?

Do our thoughts about God, on this issue matter?

How do we experience change in the inner man? How can we experience change in our thoughts? Do our choices make a difference?

Brain Derived Neurotrophic Factor – explain how this comes off the DNA and how our decisions impact whether a circuit grows or withers, and how our imagination plays a role.

With this in mind what happens when we watch theatrical television programming? What happens if that programming is unhealthy programming? What happens when we read unwholesome books, or play violent video games?

What happens if one continues to think of God in certain ways?

Can a person struggling with a terrible infection, high fever, sepsis, get well if they rub manure into their wound daily? What if they are taking high dose antibiotics every day but rubbing manure in the wound?

Can a person who is struggling with anxiety, fear, irritability, confused thinking, self doubt, moodiness, restlessness find God's peace if they are filling their minds with worldly material? What if they are filling their minds with worldly material but are praying at least once or twice a day and spending 15 minutes reading something inspirational?

Read second paragraph, “Indeed, sinful acts...” thoughts? It is true that a sinful thought can lead us into wrong acts – but what typically comes first?

When tempted, no one should say, “God is tempting me.” For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; ¹⁴ but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed. ¹⁵ Then, after desire has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and sin, when it is full-grown, gives birth to death. James 1:13-15

More commonly it is our feelings or desires that lead us into temptation and the desires or feelings will react on the thoughts and the thoughts will reinforce the feelings. However, it is also true that thoughts can originate feelings which will reinforce the thoughts and it is generally when the feelings, desires get to a certain intensity that we act on those desires.

MONDAY

Read top dark section, “What are the things...” thoughts?

Is the question that needs answering in order to bring us peace whether God has power? What is the source of insecurity and uncertainty? Is it that God is not powerful or is it whether God can be trusted, whether God is good, whether God cares, whether God has time, whether God is interested? Isn't the question that we need answered about God's character and motives not His power?

Second paragraph is the story of a woman who died because she believed a fortune teller who said she would die on her 23rd birthday – thoughts about this? The mind is powerful and what we believe can change us physically including stop the heart.

What do you think Ananias and Sapphira believed about God? Could their belief about God have had anything to do with their deaths? Are only witch doctors and fortune tellers able to cause someone's mind to be so fearful that they die? Could a person's

distorted beliefs about God also cause death? What do the wicked in the end cry for when Christ returns? Why?

Next paragraph, “Also, just as important...” thoughts? Does it matter what we say and how we treat people? What about children and how they are spoken to by their parents?

Are there times when it is loving to speak very cutting words?

²⁵ “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶ Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

²⁷ “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of dead men’s bones and everything unclean. ²⁸ In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness. Mt 23:25-28.

How are Christ’s words loving? Are there some people so deeply rooted into self deception that their only hope is if someone speaks directly and intensely their condition?

- Patient who kept cheating on husband over and over and left him with kids at home – how confrontation of her selfishness brought her to repentance.

TUESDAY

First sentence of the first paragraph states, “Remembering, repeating, thinking about, and meditating on the words of the Bible is one of the greatest spiritual blessings available to us, and it is a sure way to cultivate what Peter called “wholesome thinking.”

How can you do this so it is a blessing? Is there any way this can be a cursing?

Healthy Bible Reading:

- Don't just read, but stop and ask "what does it mean?" and "how does it apply today and to my life?"
- Use Christ as a lens to filter all Bible stories
- Ask the question, "What does this story/passage tell me about God?"
- Read with the Great Controversy in mind
- Require Scripture to harmonize with itself and with testable laws and nature

Unhealthy Bible Reading:

- Proof text approach
- Here a little there a little patchwork approach
- Taking the Bible as it reads without asking what it means or understanding the context of when it was written and to whom
- Thinking concretely rather than abstractly
- Failing to recognize the primary purpose of Scripture is to reveal God to man and thus using Scripture to as a code of how to live to be saved
- Failing to harmonize Scripture with science and testable laws

Next paragraph last sentence states, "The Word of God is the only true fortification we have against the mental onslaught of unspiritual distractions that come from the world." Thoughts?

How many young people who are raised in the church, memory verses each week, church schools, end up leaving the church in adolescents? Why? If all that was necessary was to have them read and memorize scripture why do so many leave?

Is there a way to teach the Bible that can increase the likelihood our children will stay loyal to God?

Analogy, if we teach our children the only reason to brush teeth is because the Bible says so, I say so, the Church says so and no other reason is ever discovered – what is the likelihood they will continue?

What if they are taught the reasons for brushing teeth?

What about when we teach the Bible if we teach the reasons as because God said it, the Bible says it, the Church says it, or if you don't God will have to punish?

What if someone falls in love with Jesus and then comes into religious group who begin to monitor behavior and tell them you can't do this, you can't do that, you can't wear this and can't wear that – what will happen over time? Can love exist in an atmosphere without freedom?

What is the balance between freedom and parental authority and directing the actions of the child? Are there times that parents when dealing with children must restrict their freedom? Why? How is this loving? For what purposes are freedoms being restricted? Is it not to help the child gain self mastery and ultimately their freedom from self?

Read bottom paragraph, "Pray is another way..." Thoughts?

Is prayer important – absolutely! We need to pray for in prayer we open ourselves up to God, we share our thoughts and feeling with Him, not to inform Him but to connect with Him in relationship and allow Him to lead us in healthy ways.

So prayer is important, but does it matter to whom one prays? Isn't it true that those who flew planes into buildings on 9/11 prayed five times per day? What if one prays five times per day but cherishes faulty God concepts?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

Why would it make you nervous for God to know the secrets of your heart?

If you are guilty of a crime and go before a judge who, if found guilty, will be forced by law to execute you, would you be nervous if he could see the secrets of your heart?

If you were dying of a terminal condition and you went before a doctor who specializes in curing your condition would you be nervous about him seeing the secrets of your condition? How about if your condition was due to some behavior in which you were engaged, say you had been injecting IV drugs and now have an infection of your heart – if you go to the ER with heart failure, stroke like symptoms are you afraid for the doctor to find out you have been injecting drugs or do you want him to know?

If there is a policeman in the ER do you want him to know?
 If we consider God as the great policeman in the sky will we open ourselves to Him? Does it matter what God concept we hold?
 If you were planning on doing a crime and came before a police officer would you be nervous about him seeing the secrets of your heart?

If you were having symptoms occurring, your blood pressure rising, temperature rising etc, would you be nervous about the doctor discovering these symptoms?

Which way do you see God? Do you see Him as the police officer or judge waiting to dole out punishment? Or do you see Him as your friend and savior longing for you to trust Him enough that He can heal you?

Read third paragraph, “Likewise, Satan...” Are you comforted to know Satan cannot read your thoughts? But does that mean he doesn’t have a pretty good idea of what you’re thinking?

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “This passage takes us...” thoughts? Is avoiding sin a matter of choice? Do we have a say in it? What about

someone who refuses to make choices to improve self but blames past experiences? It isn't my fault I was born this way? Or it isn't my fault I was abused as a child?

Do we still have choice to align ourselves with God or not?

What choices can we make to experience healing of mind here and now?

- With whom we associate
- Whether we are honest with others or deceitful
- What we watch
- What we speak
- Whether we harbor resentment or forgive
- Whether we keep our word or break it
- Whether we spend time with Christ or not
- Whether we trust God with how things turn out or continue to try to make life turn out the way we think it should?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, "More precious..." thoughts?

Read questions 2,3,5 and discuss