

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 9 4Q 2011

Paul's Pastoral Appeal

Read first paragraph – “As we’ve...” thoughts?

Does it matter what we believe? Why?

We have power over what we believe but what we believe has power over us:

Consider you believe your spouse is cheating on you but they are not, would this belief change you? How?

The Comforter is called "the Spirit of truth." His work is to define and maintain the truth. He first dwells in the heart as the Spirit of truth, and thus He becomes the Comforter. There is comfort and peace in the truth, but no real peace or comfort can be found in falsehood. It is through false theories and traditions that Satan gains his power over the mind. By directing men to false standards, he misshapes the character. Through the Scriptures the Holy Spirit speaks to the mind, and impresses truth upon the heart. Thus He exposes error, and expels it from the soul. It is by the Spirit of truth, working through the word of God, that Christ subdues His chosen people to Himself. {DA 671.1}

Thoughts? Satan is the father of lies, as he gets us to believe lies he can change us.

- When we believe lies we experience activation of the fear circuits of the brain, which cause activation of the immune system release of inflammatory factors which damage the body and brain and lead to physical and mental health problems.
- Further, fear causes us to act in self interest which causes us relationship problems.

As our physical life is sustained by food, so our spiritual life is sustained by the word of God. And every soul is to receive life from God's word for himself. As we must eat for ourselves in order to receive nourishment, so we must receive the word for ourselves. We are not to obtain it merely through the medium of another's mind. We should carefully study the Bible, asking God for the aid of the Holy Spirit, that we may understand His word. We should take one verse, and concentrate the mind on the task of ascertaining the thought which God has put in that verse for us. We should dwell upon the thought until it becomes our own, and we know "what saith the Lord."
 {DA 390.4}

Do our beliefs matter?

What beliefs or doctrines are important?

- God as creator?
- The nature of man?
- The Sabbath?
- The Sanctuary?
- Tithing?
- Healthful living?

Those who crucified Christ held and taught all of these doctrines – what went wrong?

What is the primary purpose of all Bible doctrine?

Bible doctrine is ONLY relevant as it is connected to, and informs us about, God! When we separate doctrine from God's character, from the Great Controversy over God's character, we actually create a distorted religion in which doctrines become a barrier to salvation!

Let's review some of our doctrines and ask, what do they tell us about God?

- Trinity –
 - God is love, love cannot exist in isolation, thus denying the trinity denies the character of God as love.
 - If Jesus isn't fully God then we learn God is willing to sacrifice someone else in His place, but He is not willing to sacrifice Himself. God without the Trinity is a selfish God!
- Creator –
 - God is love and gives of Himself to create – theories of theistic evolution deny God's character of love and instead teach a God who uses pain, suffering and death to create, all of which are Satan's principles
- God's Law
 - Natural law of love He built His universe to run upon or,
 - Imposed law He enforces upon His creatures – if we teach the law is imposed then we create a god construct who is imperialistic, imposes law, monitors behavior, imposes penalties, must have payments for justice to be served etc.
- Nature of mankind
 - Mankind is mortal, God has foreknowledge and would never create a situation in which His children would suffer for eternity
 - Mankind possess immortality - God is ignorant, foolish, capricious, callous, or sadistic as He either didn't know what was going to happen and foolishly gave immortality to beings before He knew what they would do, or He knew they would disobey and created them to suffer eternally.
- Sabbath
 - Evidence of God's character of love and the principles of freedom or,
 - An arbitrary test of obedience
- Sanctuary
 - A little theater designed to teach God's plan to heal the Spirit Temple back to God's original intent

revealing God as a gracious, patient, loving being who reaches down to meet us where we are and teach as we are able to learn

- A sacrificial system of appeasement to pay a blood payment to atone for the broken law revealing a god who is like Baal, requiring payment in order to give to his creatures
- Final End of Sin
 - God unveils the fullness of His life giving glory and those whose minds are solidified with lies and selfishness are tormented when they come face to face with themselves, in the presence of unveiled truth and love and die as a result of unremedied sin. Reveals a God who is love and has done everything in His power to save and heal His children, patiently waiting until there was no one left who would respond, and sadly grants each person the results of their free choice.
 - God uses His power to inflict pain and suffering on His children torturing them and then killing them, makes God out to be a vengeful and brutal tyrant, a sadistic monster.
 - God reveals Himself and everyone who looks is healed and transformed and saved, including Satan and no one is lost in the end. Reveals a God who minimizes the freewill choice of beings, which undermines genuine love and minimizes the malignity of sin and operating out of harmony from God's design, makes the entire history of sin a brutal charade.

SUNDAY

Second paragraph states, "Paul's concern was not simply about theological ideas and doctrinal points of view. His heart was bound up with the lives of the people who were brought to Christ through his ministry." – thoughts?

Why was Paul concerned about the lives of the people?

Paul understood God's law is a living law and must exist in the living being. Paul understood God's law is the natural law upon which He built His universe and thus teaching people the truth about God and His law, would necessarily have a real time impact on their lives, relationships and health. Thus Paul, was interested in the lives, rather than just the doctrines, because he understood God's law is a living law, not a dead set of rules, and as such has transforming power in the lives of believers.

Examples:

Pharisees saw the Sabbath as a rule to obey, Jesus understood the Sabbath as evidence of God's character of love, and thus gave of Himself to enrich and heal on the Sabbath. The Pharisees, saw the healing as breaking the rule and wanted to crucify Jesus as a law breaker.

Church school teacher is being physically abused by her deacon husband. She goes to the pastor for help. The pastor counsels the husband but he continues to beat her. So she divorces him. He goes to the church conference and complains that she divorced him without Biblical grounds because he had not committed adultery, so the conference fired her from her job. Now she is single and unemployed.

The conference and her husband saw the law as an imposed law, a set of rules to keep, rather than the Biblical truth that the law is the law of love, the design for life. Neither the conference nor her husband operated in harmony with the law of love. The Bible teaches that breaking the law in one point is breaking it in all points. The husband who beats his wife is committing adultery, because adultery is betrayal of love!

Last paragraph, "To be a follower of Christ is more than just the profession of faith; it involves a radical transformation into the likeness of Christ."

Thoughts?

What does that look like today?

January 10, 2011 13 y/o Jordan Rice, and little brother Blake were riding in the car with their mother Donna, when Donna drove the car into a flooded street in Toowoomba, Australia. The car stalled, and water began flooding into the car. The three of them climbed out onto the roof of the car and Donna called for help. Jordan was terrified of the water and couldn't swim, but when a rescuer came to rescue him he said, "save my brother first." The rescuer took Blake to safety but before he could return the car was swept away and Jordan and his mother drowned.

What does a follower of Christ look like, "Greater love has no man than he give his life for a friend." "This is how we know what love is Christ gave his life for us and we ought to give our lives for our brother."

Is this what a follower of Christ looks like? I actually don't know whether Jordan was a Christian or not – but was he revealing Christ? Can you reveal Christ without being a Christian? How? If a person loves others more than self, are they revealing Christ even if not a Christian?

Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things

that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God. {DA 638.2}

How can this be? Because God's law is not a written law, it was only written on stone at Sinai, before that it was not written. It is the natural law of love! It is to be written on the heart. Any Biblical support for this idea?

All who sin apart from the law will also perish apart from the law, and all who sin under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³ For it is not those who hear the law who are righteous in God's sight, but it is those who obey the law who will be declared righteous. ¹⁴ (Indeed, when Gentiles, who do not have the law, do by nature things required by the law, they are a law for themselves, even though they do not have the law, ¹⁵ since they show that the requirements of the law are written on their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts now accusing, now even defending them.) ¹⁶ This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares. Romans 2:12-16

Thoughts?

MONDAY

First paragraph states, "Paul offers himself as an example of how the believers in Thessalonica should work to earn their own living and not be a burden to others." Thoughts?

Why do church leaders take so literally Paul's views on leadership of women in the church, but reject his view on leaders being self-supporting?

Should the leaders in the church have to provide their own income? What advantage would it be? What would be the disadvantage?

- Advantage –
 - it would undermine the division between laity and clergy, bringing the membership closer to leadership, and opening the door for more member led ministry
 - it would provide huge amounts of monies for ministry and spreading the gospel
 - it would change the landscape of who becomes clergy, increasing the number of people who have a heart for ministry and removing the career theologians and church politicians
 - could it result in less organizational infighting and more gospel promotion?
- Disadvantage
 - Potentially a less educated clergy
 - More work for the laity (is this really a disadvantage?)

Read last paragraph, “Although Paul...” thoughts?

- What makes a religion a law centered religion?
- Does Christianity today struggle with a law centered religion?

TUESDAY

The lesson speaks of putting the gospel into the context of the audience so they can connect with and understand it, read fourth paragraph, “Paul’s own...” thoughts?

What does this mean to you?

How might you contextualize the gospel today?

What would it mean to live lawless lives?

- Would it mean going to church on the “wrong” day?
- Would it mean eating cheese?
- Would it mean not loving others – like maybe firing a school teacher who divorced her husband for beating her?

In the story of the good Samaritan, Christ illustrates the nature of true religion. He shows that it consists not in systems, creeds, or rites, but in the performance of loving deeds, in bringing the greatest good to others, in genuine goodness. {DA 497.1}

How do we contextualize the gospel? We must first know the gospel – and what is the gospel? Love, what is love? The principle of beneficence or giving – and how do we put this into a language anyone can understand?

If a person doesn't believe in God how can you contextualize the gospel for that person?

WEDNESDAY

In the middle of the lesson it asks, "What might have been God's reasons for allowing Paul to suffer?" thoughts?

Why does God allow suffering of any kind?

What are the sources of suffering?

- Sin – self inflicted deviations from God's design for life
 - Poking a pencil in your eye brings suffering
 - Smoking – suffering
 - Jumping off a building - suffering
 - Not loving others brings suffering
 - Valuing rules over people brings suffering
 - Adultery brings suffering
 - Abusing yourself with alcohol and drugs brings suffering – and not just the suffering of an imposed penalty by local law enforcement - but how do parents who use drugs treat their children?
 - When we deviate from God's design suffering is unavoidable

- Selfish/evil intentional infliction of harm on another, to injure or exploit another. Joseph's brothers sold him into slavery. The innocent suffer at the hands of the selfish.
- Treatment of the problem
 - Once brokenness cannot heal without pain
 - Setting a bone
 - Overcoming an addiction
 - Resolving traumatic memories
 - Overcoming selfishness in the character
- Discipline – to protect and teach
- Warfare – we are in a war zone since Adam fell Satan and his agencies work to inflict pain and suffering
 - Job and his family and estate
 - Jesus in the wilderness and crucifixion
- Accidents – randomness, flaws, since this planet no longer operates in harmony with God's design
 - A ladder breaks and someone falls
 - A tire goes flat and a car wrecks
 - A genetic defect happens and a child is stillborn (who sinned that this man was born blind him or his parents? Neither!)

Why does God allow any of this?

- What are His options?
- Does God have the power to stop all pain and suffering and evil and sin?
- Yes, what would He have to do to achieve this?
- One method is to remove freedom and make everyone a robot, which would bring an end to all suffering, evil and sin, but would also destroy what? Love!
- Will God do this?
- The fact there is suffering in the world is evidence that God is truly love – that He will not, despite the cost of suffering, including the suffering of Himself and His own Son, use His power to restrict the liberty and freedom of His intelligent creatures! What does this say about God?
- Another method to remove all pain and suffering and evil and sin, is to demonstrate the truth in order to destroy

lies and win us to trust, take our terminal condition upon Himself and achieve remedy, send His Spirit to administer His remedy into our hearts and minds, thus winning people freely to trust Him and then letting each person freely experience what they have chosen. "Let him who is righteous be righteous still. Let him who is wicked be wicked still."

So why does God allow suffering? Why doesn't He use His power to stop it right now?

THURSDAY

The lesson states, "Who hasn't experienced personally just how painful it can be to have to chastise someone, or in plain terms speak truths to them that – for whatever reason – they don't want to hear?"

When is it appropriate to chastise someone?

I saw that many have taken advantage of what God has shown in regard to the sins and wrongs of others. They have taken the extreme meaning of what has been shown in vision, and then have pressed it until it has had a tendency to weaken the faith of many in what God has shown, and also to discourage and dishearten the church. With tender compassion should brother deal with brother. Delicately should he deal with feelings. It is the nicest and most important work that ever yet was done to touch the wrongs of another. With the deepest humility should a brother do this, considering his own weakness, lest he also should be tempted. {1T 166.1}

I have seen the great sacrifice which Jesus made to sacrifice. Said Jesus: "Love one another, as I have loved you." Do you feel, when a brother errs, that you could give your life to save him? If you feel thus, you can approach him and affect his heart; you are just the one to visit that brother. But it is a lamentable fact that many who profess to be brethren, are not willing to sacrifice

any of their opinions or their judgment to save a brother. There is but little love for one another. A selfish spirit is manifested. {1T 166.2}

FRIDAY

Discuss questions 1 and 2