



## Major Lessons From Minor Prophets Lesson 2 2Q 2013

### Love and Judgment: God's Dilemma (Hosea)

Before we turn to the lesson I wanted to share something I read in a devotional book this week. As you know, our view is that Christ achieved remedy for our sinful condition. We have taught that, as Jesus said, the Holy Spirit takes what Christ achieved and makes it known to us, or reproduces His victory, His character in us. I read the following this week in a book called *That I May Know Him* p. 94:

The Holy Spirit reveals Christ to the mind, and faith takes hold of Him. If you accept Christ as your personal Saviour, you will know by experience the value of the great sacrifice made in your behalf upon the cross of Calvary. **The Spirit of Christ working upon the heart conforms it to His image, for Christ is the model upon which the Spirit works.** By the ministry of His Word, by His providences, by His inward working, **God stamps the likeness of Christ upon the soul.** {TMK 94.4}

**To possess Christ is your first work, and to reveal Him as One who is able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him is your next work.** To serve the Lord with full purpose of heart is to honor and glorify His name by dwelling upon holy things, by having a mind filled with the vital truths revealed in His Holy Word.... {TMK 94.5}

Goodness, meekness, gentleness, patience, and love are the attributes of Christ's character. **If you have the spirit of Christ, your character will be molded after His character.** {TMK 94.6}

### SABBATH

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What do you think about the title to this week's lesson?

Read memory text: "But you must return to your God; maintain love and justice, and wait for your God always" (Hosea 12:6)

What do you think about the idea of maintaining love and justice?

What do you understand love to be?

What is justice? The following is based on an excerpt from my new book, *The God-Shaped Brain: How Changing Your View of God Transforms Your Life*

On September 20, 2011, just nine days after terrorists attacked the United States in four hijacked passenger jets, President George W. Bush addressed a joint session of Congress. In that speech, President Bush stated, "Whether we bring our enemies to justice or bring justice to our enemies, justice will be done." (p. 186)



What is President Bush suggesting justice is? Hunting down and killing those who were behind the attacks.

Do you think the president's words reflected God's attitude toward wayward humanity? Does the "justice" of a vengeful nation accurately represent the justice of God? (p. 186)

Is it right to conclude God runs his universe like sinful beings run earthly governments? Or do we misrepresent God and obstruct his healing love when we construe God's justice to be like our own? (p. 187)

Was Jesus suggesting God's government is different from ours when he said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (Jn 18:36)? Is there a reason the Bible uses ferocious beasts to represent earthly governments but a lamb to represent Jesus? Could this suggest something different about how the two systems operate? Could human justice and God's justice be different? (p. 187)

What is the basis of justice? How do we determine what is just and what is unjust?

Justice in any system is based on the law of that organization. Punching someone in the face is just in boxing but unjust in baseball. The rules of the various sports governing bodies determine what a just or unjust action is. Driving at 160 miles per hour on the autobahn in Germany is just (or right), but not so in the United States because the United States has a different set of laws. (p. 188)

What is the basis of justice in the US? The constitution and the laws passed by the government.

What is the basis of justice in God's government? The law of love!

Is God's government like human governments? Is God's law like human laws?

How would you describe the difference to someone you met in the airport?

Notice what how the Bible describes justice:

- Wash yourselves clean. Stop all this evil that I see you doing. Yes, stop doing evil and learn to do right. See that justice is done—help those who are oppressed, give orphans their rights, and defend widows. (Is 1:16-17 GNT)
  - What is justice here?
- The Lord longs to be gracious to you; he rises to show you compassion. The Lord is a God of justice. (Is 30:18 NIV)
  - How is this justice?



- This is what the Lord says to the dynasty of David: ‘Give justice each morning to the people you judge! Help those who have been robbed; rescue them from their oppressors.’ (Jer 21:12 NLT)
  - What is justice here?

What is Biblical justice? **Saving the oppressed NOT punishing the oppressor.** Why? Because when we remember God’s law is the law upon which life is built infliction of punishment is never needed. We don’t have to punish the person who jumps off a bridge, or hangs themselves, breaking God’s law always results in pain, suffering and death, unless the Designer intervenes to heal and restore.

And what stops God from healing and restoring one of us? We do!

Read last paragraph WEDNESDAYs lesson, “Hosea 11 teaches...” thoughts?

What underpins the misunderstanding so many have regarding the difference between loving discipline and angry vengeance? Misunderstanding God’s law and projecting human imposed law constructs upon God and His divine government.

Listen to this quote from a book, *Prophets and Kings* p. 311:

In Isaiah's day the spiritual understanding of mankind was dark through **misapprehension of God.** Long had **Satan sought to lead men to look upon their Creator as the author of sin and suffering and death.** Those whom he had thus deceived, imagined that God was hard and exacting. They regarded Him as watching to denounce and condemn, unwilling to receive the sinner so long as there was a **legal excuse** for not helping him. The **law of love by which heaven is ruled** had been misrepresented by the archdeceiver as a restriction upon men's happiness, a burdensome yoke from which they should be glad to escape. **He declared that its precepts could not be obeyed and that the penalties of transgression were bestowed arbitrarily.**

Thoughts? Do we have such problems today with God’s law being misunderstood and people conceiving of God as the author of death? Even in an online forum of people who share our views this is a problem.

What do you understand death to be? Are first death and second death the same? If we construe them as the same do we have a problem?

Is death, which God told would result from unremedied sin, sleep in the grave until resurrection? Or is death from sin an eternal eradication of the person, both body and individuality?

Is the wages of sin death or sleep until resurrection?

MT 10:28 says that death is destruction of body and “soul” which the Greek for soul is psyche, mind, individuality, identity.



The death in which individuality is destroyed is called the second death. But when Jesus went to the funeral of a little girl what did He say? She's not dead but asleep. And how did they respond? They laughed, why? From a human perspective she was dead, but Jesus said she was asleep. Was Jesus lying? Was He trying to confuse? No, Satan is the author of confusion. Then what was Jesus doing? Was he being the light which lightens all men?

How did Jesus describe Lazarus' condition to the disciples? Lazarus is asleep and I need to go wake him. Both of these two people were asleep and both were raised and their identities were intact. What does this mean?

Has anyone considered the possibility that the second death is actual death, it is non-existence, it is when the individuality, character, identity is permanently erased and is the result of sin and thus is from Satan. But the first death does not destroy the individual, does not erase identity or destroy character, but merely suspends the person in time. Therefore the first death is not the outgrowth of unremedied sin, but only occurs because God has been "interfering" with the natural results of what sin would otherwise do in order to heal and save.

If God did not step in (in multiple ways) when man fell into sin, eternal extinction of the species would have already happened, because that is what sin does. But it hasn't happened because God has been holding in check the full consequences of sin. Thus, the first death, sleep, is a mercy, an artificial state caused by God's grace to allow for the delivery and saving of the race, the minimizing of suffering and pain, and the elimination of sin.

Satan would love for us to lump God's mercy and his evil into the same camp and attribute both to the same cause, but then we miss the reality of what is transpiring.

It is true if there were no sin there would have been no sleep in the grave, but sleep in the grave is not the natural result of sin, but an artificial state, a mercy, held by God's power, for the purpose of salvation.

Back to SABBATH, read first paragraph, "A common way..." thoughts?

What are some metaphors used in Scripture to teach us truths about God, His relationship with us, the plan of salvation etc.?

- Husband/wife (church bride of Christ)
- Parent/child (prodigal son)
- Ransom
- Purchase
- Legal payment
- Legal judgment
- Robe of righteousness
- Cleansed by blood
- Washed in blood
- Record books in heaven
- Sanctuary
- Sheep/goats
- Wheat/tares
- War
- Sword
- Crowns
- Name (give a new name)



What about “healing”? Is the healing model a metaphor or is it the actual reality to which all the others point?

A few years ago when we discussed with local leaders what we teach, we were criticized because it was claimed we present only one metaphor when the Scripture is rich with many metaphors.

Their criticism would have some merit, IF, and only IF, we conclude healing is not real, but healing is only a metaphor, not a reality. So, is healing, recreation, renewal, regeneration, restoration – are these metaphor or are these the reality all the other metaphors are trying to lead us to understand?

It is my belief that healing, restoration, recreation, renewal is a reality of God’s plan. That we will be recreated, healed, restored to perfection. This is NOT a metaphor. Therefore, healing of God’s creation is the reality all other metaphors are trying to enlighten us about.

So, be on guard, because one of the latest strategies of those who cling to metaphor, cling to symbolism, refuse to step from the shadows into the light of reality... In other words, for those who prefer the legal model, one of their latest strategies is to suggest that, “of course there is healing” but it is only part of a larger reality that includes the legal aspects as well. They suggest that God heals, but only after He legally pardons and accepts the blood of Christ as a legal payment. What they are trying to suggest is that the healing view is a small subset of a larger landscape of multiple metaphors, and only those who accept all the metaphors are balanced.

The problem is they have taken the reality that God is trying to teach through metaphor and denied it is real and instead made it symbolic, which destroys the power of truth and actually undermines healing!

So don’t fall into that trap when they say there are multiple metaphors. Say, “Absolutely, there are multiple metaphors. But we are moving past metaphor to understand the eternal reality to which all the metaphors point. And that reality is that God is love. He built His universe to operate upon the protocols of love. And Christ came to restore His creation back into harmony with His design protocols for life. This is healing and restoration – a reality, not a metaphor!”

## **SUNDAY**

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Read first paragraph, “Ephraim was the name...” thoughts?

Why did Ephraim turn to other nations? What was the motive? Was it fear and a desire for “self-preservation”?

Where does the fear motive originate in human history?

As soon as Adam and Eve sinned they ran and hid because they were afraid...



While God built us with the ability to experience fear, like we have the ability to experience pain, was it His plan that we should experience either?

In fact, fear is a kind of emotional pain. It occurs when something is not as God designed it to be.

When you come face to face with a lion, bear, tiger, etc. would you experience fear? The naturalists would say this is normal, survival-of-the-fittest, but was it God's design we experience fear when we are near such animals?

Why do we experience fear? Because all nature groans under the weight of sin. Because nature is not operating as God designed. Fear happens, like pain, when things are not working as God designed.

What examples can you give from Scripture of actions taken based on fear?

- Aaron making the golden calf under pressure from the people
- Saul trying to kill David
- Saul going to the witch of Endor
- Saul's suicide
- Israel's turning to Egypt for help from the Assyrians
- It is better for one man to die than the entire nation – what is the principle? Fear based survival of self.

Any examples in Scripture of love and trust in God overcoming fear?

- Moses in Pharaoh's court
- Gideon
- Daniel and the 3 worthies
- Jehoshaphat
- Jesus
- Stephen
- Paul

Any examples in human history of actions based on fear?

- The inquisition
- The cooperation with Nazi's during WWII
- A high school chemistry teacher late on her car payments....
- Racism, sexism, bigotry, family violence
- Expelling people from fellowship in your church?

Any examples in history of love overcoming fear?

- Corrie Ten Boone
- Marian and Barbie Fisher
- Martin Luther King Jr.
- Gandhi



What do you see as the difference? Do you see the two antagonist motives or principles involved in each?

Do you see that we are infected with fear, and fear drives us toward selfishness and a willingness to hurt others to protect self? But love casts out fear, causes us to sacrifice self to protect others. It is love that is the basis of life and fear and selfishness are the basis of death.

Satan will work to inflame our fears in order to get us to choose to act selfishly, which will injure us further. Any examples of how this happens in our lives?

- Fear of rejection causes persons to go along with others when they believe it is wrong
  - which result in guilt, shame and loss of effectiveness in revealing the truth about God until the guilt and shame are resolved
- Fear of financial failure causes people to worry about the future
  - lose sleep, have increased stress, inflammatory cascades and more physical and mental health problems, become more pessimistic, negativistic and ultimately lose effectiveness in spreading love.
- Fear of financial failure causing one to put their trust in retirement plans, savings accounts, stocks, bonds, etc.
  - which results in preoccupation with the world, constant monitoring of financial markets, calculating to protect self-interest and reduced trust in God for how things will turn out.
    - David was scolded for taking a census – why? Because when he knew how many soldiers, chariots, archers, spearmen, cavalry he had he would be tempted to but his sense of security and trust in the might of arms and not God. We do the same with our money...
- Fear of financial loss causing one not to take a mission trip...
- Fear of abandonment causes people to stay in abusive relationships, which destroys all parties and undermines fitness for God's cause

How do we overcome fear?

Do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. (Isa 41:10)

- Do you get the picture of a father walking with his child holding his hand? Are children afraid when holding the hand of the parent?
- What happens when a child is separated from its parent? What emotion do they experience?
- Do we walk through life holding God's hand? Why not, He has His hand outstretched to us!



**Doubts and fears grow by indulgence, and the more they are indulged, the harder are they to overcome.** It is safe to let go every earthly support and **take the hand of Him** who lifted up and saved the sinking disciple on the stormy sea. {4T 558.1}

**Only the sense of God's presence can banish the fear** that, for the timid child, would make life a burden. Let him fix in his memory the promise, "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them." Psalm 34:7. Ed 255

Thoughts? What protects us from fear? Does that mean we are not to experience fear, or not to be controlled by fear?

It is **not the will of God that His people should be weighed down with care.** But our Lord does not deceive us. He **does not say to us, "Do not fear; there are no dangers in your path."** He knows there are trials and dangers, and He deals with us plainly. He does not propose to take His people out of a world of sin and evil, but He points them to a never-failing refuge. SC 122

So, in this world of sin will we experience fear? When we do what are we to do? Are we to react like the world, go into self-protection mode and let fear control us?

This is extremely hard, this is a battle with self; we are so wired to do this. It feels so good to take action to make the fear go away. But, what other option do we have?

We have Jesus. We can go to him with our fear. We can say, "Lord, I don't want to make fear based decisions, I want to make love based decisions. Pour your love into my heart. Help me see past my fear, past my insecurity to you and give me love for others." Then choose to act in accordance with what you know God's will is, in harmony with His methods and trust Him with outcomes.

One of the traps that inflame fear is when we forecast the future and try to make decisions which will make the future unfold the way we want.

- Recently, I have been tempted along these lines. I have been invited to take a three-week trip to Singapore and Australia to speak at three different cities. I know God is opening the way, yet fears arise: How will the class do without me for three weeks? Will people stop coming? What about my office, making payroll for my staff, paying my bills?
- We have made the decision to take this trip, planning as best we can with forethought, but trusting God with taking care of our needs.

## MONDAY

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Read second paragraph, "In Bible times..." thoughts?

What does it mean to be yoked to Christ? Is being yoked to Christ the same as losing one's freedom? Or is being yoked to Christ the means of achieving one's freedom? If so how?



Are we saved by our own effort?

While God saved the human species, in the person of Jesus, can God save any individual without the participation of that individual?

So, what does it mean to yoke with Christ? Consider these quotations, do you agree or disagree? What are the implications?

While God was working in Daniel and his companions "to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Phil. 2:13), they were working out their own salvation. Herein is revealed the outworking of the **divine principle of cooperation, without which no true success can be attained. Human effort avails nothing without divine power; and without human endeavor, divine effort is with many of no avail. To make God's grace our own, we must act our part.** His grace is given to work in us to will and to do, but never as a substitute for our effort. {LHU 193.4}

We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}

**There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies--** divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . . .** Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

Agree or disagree? So how do you explain the balance in our salvation so that we don't fall into the ditch of salvation by our works? Earlier we read a quote that our first work is to possess Christ – is that salvation by works?

So the balance is as follows:

- The Remedy to sin was fully achieved by Christ and no one else.
- We can do nothing to add to what Christ has done to save mankind, but, each person now must choose to open their heart in trust to receive from the Holy Spirit the benefit of Christ's victory in their life.
- When we do this a supernatural transformation of character, desire, motive, and attitude takes place.



- In this process there is a daily, ongoing, and constant cooperative work of the individual with the Divine in which the person chooses to continue to follow the direction of the Heavenly Physician until they are one day fully healed and set free to be self-controlled beings operating on the law of love, which has been fully restored into the heart. (Heb 8:10).

Thoughts?

## TUESDAY

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Read top Bible verses and then first paragraph, "In these verses..." thoughts?

Do you like to see God portrayed as tender and compassionate? Absolutely, this view is correct.

What do you understand "His anger can be terrifying..." to mean?

Why is there fear of God?

When the people heard the thunder and the trumpet blast and saw the lightning and the smoking mountain, they trembled with fear and stood a long way off. They said to Moses, "If you speak to us, we will listen; but we are afraid that if God speaks to us, we will die." Moses replied, "Don't be afraid; God has only come to test you and make you keep on obeying him, so that you will not sin." But the people continued to stand a long way off, and only Moses went near the dark cloud where God was. Exodus 20:18-21

Thoughts? Why were the people afraid but Moses was not? Was God showing one thing to the people and something different to Moses? Were the people hearing thunder and Moses hearing the tympany section of the heavenly orchestra?

Listen to this commentary on those verses:

During that long time spent in communion with God, the face of Moses had reflected the glory of the divine Presence; unknown to himself his face shone with a dazzling light when he descended from the mountain. Such a light illumined the countenance of Stephen when brought before his judges; "and all that sat in the council, looking steadfastly on him, saw his face as it had been the face of an angel." Acts 6:15. Aaron as well as the people shrank away from Moses, and "**they were afraid to come nigh him.**" Seeing their confusion and terror, but ignorant of the cause, he urged them to come near. **He held out to them the pledge of God's reconciliation, and assured them of His restored favor. They perceived in his voice nothing but love and entreaty, and at last one ventured to approach him.** Too awed to speak, he silently pointed to the countenance of Moses, and then toward heaven. The great leader understood his meaning. **In their conscious guilt, feeling themselves still under the divine displeasure, they could not endure the heavenly light,** which, had they been obedient to God, would have filled them with joy. **There is fear in guilt. The soul that is free from sin will not wish to hide from the light of heaven.** {PP 329.5}



Where does fear of God originate? In our guilt, in our misunderstanding of Him, on our self-condemnation we project our own self-dissatisfaction onto God and believe Him to be of the same selfish character as we are.

In other words, unremedied sin is the source of fear. God is love!

Read next paragraph, “Through Moses...” thoughts?

What were the special privileges afforded to Israel? Did they get a special pass into heaven? Did they get an avenue to salvation not available to any other human being? What is their privilege?

- To be the conduit for the Messiah
- To be his helpers to teach the plan of salvation
- To be the repository of His teaching tools on earth – the Scripture, the Sanctuary, the Feast days, the principles of beneficence incorporated into their government (Jubilees, cities of refuge, system of justice)
- The health laws
- To be a kingdom of priests

Read next paragraph, “All who in this world...” thoughts?

What does it mean to go through the school of sorrows?

Does it mean God inflicts suffering and pain? No!

It means this – Once there is brokenness there is no path that is pain free.

- If you have a broken leg, no option is pain free – do nothing continued pain and worsening disability, go to surgery and PT, pain, but recovery and healing.
- We are in a broken, sick, sinful condition, there is no path forward without pain, do nothing, continued pain and worsening of our condition. Surrender to Christ and the path to overcome our defects can be painful, sorrow will often be part of the process as we must cut ties to unhealthy things and people to which we have become attached. But the outcome is healing, restoration, and one day an eternity without pain or sorrow.

It also means, in this world of sin it is impossible to avoid pain, but misery is optional.

Consider again the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm – when we follow our Shepherd he leads us into the valley of the shadow of death, not the valley of death, for the purpose of dying to self in order to restore our soul and lead us in the path of righteousness for His name sake!



## THURSDAY

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Read top section, “Some ancient scholars...”

Is it only ancient scholars that viewed God this way? Do we have people who still struggle with this concept today?

Who was the member of the Godhead that acted in OT times? It was Jesus. In both Old and New Testaments we see Jesus as the active agent working and revealing God.

For I do not want you to be ignorant of the fact, brothers, that our forefathers were all under the cloud and that they all passed through the sea. <sup>2</sup>They were all baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea. <sup>3</sup>They all ate the same spiritual food <sup>4</sup>and drank the same spiritual drink; for they drank from the spiritual rock that accompanied them, and that rock was Christ. 1Cor 10:1-4

Do you see any differences in God of the OT and God as revealed in Jesus in the NT? What differences do you see? How do you explain those differences?

What is transpiring on earth? Is there a conflict involving more than human beings?

Could mankind be saved without Jesus becoming human? Does that have any bearing on what we see in the OT? Was Satan trying to obstruct Jesus from coming to earth, to close the avenue for the Messiah? Was Christ working to keep that avenue open?

Once Christ came and completed his mission, was there any need to continue working in that way?

Do we see all through the OT the grace, love, compassion, mercy, patience of God? Yet, do we see the condition of humanity so degraded that at times God needed to intervene to keep open the avenue for the Messiah?

## FRIDAY

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Read and discuss questions 1-3