



Major Lessons From Minor Prophets Lesson 5 2Q 2013

Seek the Lord and Live! (Amos)

SABBATH

Read memory text, “Seek good and not evil, that you may live: and thus may the Lord God of hosts be with you, just as you have said!” (Amos 5:14 NASB)

Thoughts?

What is the relationship between seeking good, not evil, and living?

What are the options?

- Is it speaking of temporal life or eternal life, or both?
- Is it speaking of natural consequences, live healthy and live longer?
- Is it speaking of imposed penalties, do right or else government will execute you?
- Is it speaking of the law of love and its protocols upon which life is built?

What does seeking good and subsequent life have to do with God being with them? Is there a connection that ties goodness, life and God together?

Read last paragraph, “This week, as we continue...” do you agree God is the only true Source of life? Then, what is connection between good, life and being together with God?

What is the reason for death? If death results from being separated from God, from being evil, deviant from God and his design, from failing to be reconciled to Him, then is what Jesus and the Bible writers called “sleep” in the grave, i.e. first death, awaiting resurrection a result of separation from God?

When Jesus surrendered his spirit into the Father’s care – was Jesus spirit separated from God, or safe and secure with God?

Remember this quote from one of the founders of our church?

Our personal identity is preserved in the resurrection, though not the same particles of matter or material substance as went into the grave. The wondrous works of God are a mystery to man. **The spirit, the character of man, is returned to God, there to be preserved. In the resurrection every man will have his own character.** {6BC 1093.2}

Does this sound like one is separated from God in the “first” death or the “sleep” death?



There would be no death of any kind if there were no sin, however, it seems the first death it is an artificial state permitted by God's grace to allow for salvation. Death, that is the full consequence of unremedied sin, happens after the "judgment" and is the condition in which body, psyche, mind, character, soul, spirit etc. are all eternally destroyed, and from which no one ever rises again.

Thoughts?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, "The purpose of the funeral song..." thoughts?

Return to the Lord and they would live – thoughts? For how long would they live if they return to the Lord? Of those who returned to the Lord, and there were a faithful remnant, how many of them lived – are alive today?

Did those who rejected the Lord and those who remained faithful all go into the grave? So, what does it mean return to the Lord and live if they all in fact died?

Could it be talking about death that is the wages of sin, and not temporary sleep in the grave?

Jesus said: "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" (Jn 11:25,26)

Thoughts? How do you understand this text? How is it if we believe in Jesus we never die? Did the Apostles believe in Jesus?

What is death? What causes it, first death, second death etc. and most importantly what is God's involvement in death?

To review - If there were no sin there would be no death of any kind!

First point – all death is a result of sin.

But, are the first death and second death the same? First death is sleep, a state in which our identity and individuality is safe with Christ in heaven, awaiting resurrection, and second death is the complete separation from God, the total destruction of body, individuality, mind, character, spirit and soul – nothing left for all eternity and no resurrection.

If the wages of sin is second death, then why is there a first death?

Keeping those two states in mind, what do you make of these texts:



- As for you, **you were dead in your transgressions and sins**, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air... Eph 2:1,2
 - What does this mean?
 - Condemned by a supreme dictator to be executed, under an imposed death sentence
 - Or, your condition was terminal, like a person who was exposed to toxic doses of radiation – dead, but not quite yet?
- You, however, are controlled not by the sinful nature but by the Spirit, if the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Christ. But if Christ is in you, **your body is dead because of sin, yet your spirit is alive because of righteousness**. Rom 8:9,10
 - What does this sound like, an imposed death sentence, or a terminal condition?
- When you were **dead in your sins** and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross. Col 2:13,14
 - What does this mean? How do you hear it?
 - Here is my paraphrase of this text:
When your condition was terminal and selfishness reigned unchecked in your mind and your heart was tied to the destructive cravings and practices of the world, God intervened and brought you the life giving remedy – Jesus Christ. He reclaimed you from your terminal condition, nullifying the pathology report which certified you as dead in sin; he made it clear the written code, with its regulations, was only a diagnostic instrument designed to expose our terminal state and teach us the need for a true cure; he nailed it to the cross.
- **But the widow who lives for pleasure is dead even while she lives**. 1Tim 5:6
 - What does this mean?
 - Dead and alive at the same time?
 - Does the Bible have difficulty because of the limitation of the human language?
 - So in this case, she remains terminal, in a condition which will die eternally, even though she has not yet died eternally.
- Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life, but whoever rejects the Son will not see life... John 3:36
 - What does this mean?
 - Are they not alive?

Here are some quotes, do they have any insight we can use?

- **God is the fountain of life, and we can have life only as we are in communion with Him. Separated from God, existence may be ours for a little time, but we do not possess life.**



"She that liveth in pleasure is dead while she liveth." 1 Timothy 5:6. Only through the surrender of our will to God is it possible for Him to impart life to us... {MB 61.2}

If you cling to self, refusing to yield your will to God, you are choosing death. **To sin, wherever found, God is a consuming fire. If you choose sin, and refuse to separate from it, the presence of God, which consumes sin, must consume you.** {MB 62.1}

- What do you understand this to mean?
 - What is the cause of death?
 - Is sleep in the grave the death of sin?
 - What is God's role in death?
- **Adam could not transmit to his posterity that which he did not possess; and there could have been no hope for the fallen race had not God, by the sacrifice of His Son, brought immortality within their reach.** While "death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned," Christ "hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel." Romans 5:12; 2 Timothy 1:10. **And only through Christ can immortality be obtained.** {Darkness before Dawn 14.3}
 - What does this sound like?
 - Does death here sound like an imposed penalty by God who must execute the disobedient, or a terminal condition which Christ came to cure?
 - The Saviour saw that man has vast powers and capabilities for good, which can be used in the upbuilding of God's kingdom. **He came to restore to life those dead in sin.** His voice is to be heard saying, "Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead." "As the Father hath life in himself; so hath He given to the Son to have life in himself."

To arouse those spiritually dead, to create new tastes, new motives, requires as great an outlay of power as to raise one from physical death. It is indeed giving life to the dead to convert the sinner from the error of his ways; but our Deliverer is able to do this; for He came to destroy the works of the enemy. And will He not accomplish that which He has pledged himself to perform? {RH, March 12, 1901}

 - What is death?
 - Is death a punishment inflicted by God or a result of sin, being deviant from God's design?
 - What is God doing in regard to death? Seeking to heal and restore!
 - **Man is dead, without God, and without hope in the world.** But over the rent sepulcher of Joseph, Christ proclaimed, "I am the resurrection and the life." Not only will all who are in the graves hear His voice and come forth, **He is today the Restorer of those dead in sin. Today Jesus is working His miracles.** The great Physician stands by the side of the faithful worker, saying to the repentant, discouraged soul, "Son, thy sins be forgiven thee." {ST, June 6, 1900 par. 12}
 - What does it mean we are dead without God?
 - What is the cause of death?
 - **Selfishness brings spiritual death.** {8T 135.3}
 - What is spiritual death?



- Having a character and mind that is out of harmony with God
- Being in a terminal condition, dead in trespass and sin
- What does spiritual death result in if unremedied?
 - Eternal death and destruction of body, mind, spirit etc.
- The polluted stream represents the soul that is separate from God. **Sin not only shuts away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. Through sin, the whole human organism is deranged, the mind is perverted, the imagination corrupted; the faculties of the soul are degraded.** {PK 233.1}
 - What is the cause of death?
- **God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression;** but he leaves the rejecters of his mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown, which yields its unfailing harvest. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. {GC88 36.2}
 - What is God's role in the death of the wicked?
 - Why does God NOT have to execute sinners?
 - Is this really that hard to understand?
 - Why is it then that so many teach God inflicts torture and death as punishment?
 - Because they have accepted Rome's view of God's law that it is imposed and therefore justice requires imposed penalties.
 - Do you notice all of these texts and quotes make sense when we realize the truth that God's law is the protocol upon which life is built, the living expression of love.

The lesson points out in the third paragraph that God calls the people to hate evil and love good, "In other words, a change in the people's attitudes will lead to a change in their actions."

Thoughts? This is well said – a change in the attitudes – how do we experience that?

- A revival and a reformation must take place under the ministration of the Holy Spirit. Revival and reformation are two different things. **Revival signifies a renewal of spiritual life, a quickening of the powers of mind and heart, a resurrection from the spiritual death.** Reformation signifies a reorganization, a change in ideas and theories, habits and practices. Reformation will not bring forth the good fruit of righteousness unless it is connected with the revival of the Spirit. Revival and reformation are to do their appointed work, and in doing this work they must blend.-- Review and Herald, Feb. 25, 1902. {ChS 42.2}

Revival – to revive – to bring back to life – to resurrect – to renew... and from where does such new life come?



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}

We become partakers of the divine nature as we surrender to Christ and the Holy Spirit takes what Christ has achieved and recreates us in His image!

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “More than most other...” thoughts?

What are some examples of empty rituals and dead formalism that Israel practiced?

- Sacrifices
- Ceremonial washing (they criticized Christ’s disciples for eating without washing their hands)
- Sabbath observance
- Prayers
- Offerings
- Feast days

Was there anything wrong with the actual action? What was the problem?

They did it without meaning, their hearts and minds were not changed, they acted without thought, without intention, without understanding, without love. Doing it from fear, from mystical and magical thinking, from the idea that it was a requirement.

Do we have any of these problems in Christianity today? Examples?

- Dress
- Church attendance
- Diet
- Prayer
- Offerings
- Communion
- Baptism
- Sinner’s prayer

Is there anything inherently wrong with any of these actions? Where would the problem be? In the heart motive.



Is there a central root lie that, if believed, would contaminate all of our behaviors and spiritual exercises? Yes, the lie about God's character, government, methods and law.

If we believe God imposes law and therefore God imposes punishment, then what is the reason we do what we do? And then we fall into dead formalism and empty ritual.

WEDNESDAY

Read first chapter, "In Amos 8, the prophet..." thoughts?

How do you understand what is happening between God and Israel at this time in history?

First – the famine of the land, not the famine for God's Word – what are the possible reasons?

- Nature falling apart, just random forces
- God withdrawing protection and Satan acting to cause famine
- God acting to cause the famine by holding back rain
 - God inflicting punishment upon them for not doing what He said?
 - God therapeutically intervening to reveal the impotence of their false God's and shake them out of their false beliefs?

Second – what about the famine for God's Word – why? What are the possible reasons?

- God is withholding the truth about Himself
- The truth is revealed, but the hearts of people are hard and reject it
- Consider the parable of the sower and the seed falling on the path and stony ground.

Why do people insist on depicting God as one who inflicts pain and suffering on His children?

Do loving parents ever give their children vaccines? Or discipline? What if such acts were never understood as loving interventions to protect and teach, but instead were always cast as evidences of inflictions of punishment?

Bottom pink asks, "In what ways is it possible to silence the voice of God in our lives?" Thoughts?

- Rejection of truth
- Preference for lies
- Continued, willful, persistent, unrepentant sinfulness – damages the faculties that recognize and respond to truth
- Alcohol, drugs – damage the mind
- Certain entertainments, fill mind with distorted ideas, activate unhealthy brain circuits
- Refusal to help others



FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “Our standing before God...” thoughts?

What does this mean? That we are saved by knowledge? Or that we are saved by having a healed character, by having the law of love restored in us so that we love God and others more than self?

Then, what is the point of evangelism?

What breaks the circle of love and trust and incites fear and selfishness? Lies, and lies about God are most destructive.

So, what sets free? Truth, therefore, evangelism is to spread the truth about God, and His kingdom, to provide greater opportunity for people to embrace the truth and experience healing of heart and mind.

It is true that the Holy Spirit works to enlighten everyone, through whatever truth is available to each person. If someone doesn't have Scripture, God uses science and nature, or personal experiences, or people, or circumstances.

But, while each avenue of evidence, Scripture, Science, Experience, can be used by God to bring people to a saving relationship with Him, it is easier for Satan to confound and confuse the evidence if the three threads are separated from each other.

How many times have well meaning people, come to a group who didn't have Scripture, but who had been following the Holy Spirit with the light they had, and then used the Scripture, separated from science and experience to lead them away from God?

When the Jews came to the Gentiles and demanded circumcision, and other formalism, they had the Scripture – but were they using it to lead people closer to God? Are we ever in danger of doing this?

- 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}

Read question 1 – thoughts? What things that were considered shameful and taboo and are now practiced and deemed good?



- Scripture being read and studied by lay persons in their own language?
- Women's ordination?
- People deciding where to give their tithes and offerings to support the gospel rather than allow church hierarchy to decide?
- Homosexuals being treated with compassion rather than stoning?

Read and discuss question 2

TUESDAY

The second paragraph states, "Among those who did not like Amos' preaching was Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, who accused Amos of conspiracy against Israel's king."

Why would the priest oppose the message from God? Shouldn't we expect the priest to support messages from God?

If the person was a priest, doesn't that mean they are anointed of God, or as some might say, "God's anointed"? So shouldn't people defer to the priest?

Are there any lessons for us today? If someone is ordained, pastor or priest does that mean they, necessarily, will be on God's side and support truth from God's messengers?

So how do we handle a situation when a pastor or priest opposes truth as we understand it?

How did David treat king Saul? Did David cooperate with king Saul's agenda? Did David seek to harm king Saul? Did David follow God's will for his life despite the anointed of the Lord opposing him?

Is there a lesson here?

Read last paragraph, "However, speaking the truth..." thoughts?

When this happens in the church today what is it called? Those speaking the uncomfortable truth are often accused of teaching heresy.

As the light and life of men was rejected by the ecclesiastical authorities in the days of Christ, so it has been rejected in every succeeding generation. Again and again the history of Christ's withdrawal from Judea has been repeated. When the Reformers preached the word of God, they had no thought of separating themselves from the established church; **but the religious leaders would not tolerate the light**, and those that bore it were **forced to seek another class, who were longing for the truth.** In our day few of the professed followers of the Reformers are actuated by their spirit. Few are listening for the voice of God, and ready to accept truth in whatever guise it may be presented. **Often those who follow in the steps of the**



Reformers are forced to turn away from the churches they love, in order to declare the plain teaching of the word of God. And many times those who are seeking for light are by the same teaching obliged to leave the church of their fathers, that they may render obedience. {DA 232.2}

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph, “The prophet turns...” thoughts?

Any confusion?

What is the “punishment” for sin? Eternal death – so if God is inflicting the punishment for sin, which is eternal death, then how can he, after inflicting this, turn and save?

So, what is the problem? Describing the punishment from sin as coming from God, and failing to describes God’s actions as interventions to heal and save.

Read Amos 9:11,12:

“In that day I will restore David’s fallen tent. I will repair its broken places,
restore its ruins, and build it as it used to be, so that they may possess the remnant of Edom
and all the nations that bear my name,”
declares the LORD, who will do these things.

Read fourth and fifth paragraphs, “Many Jewish teachers...” thoughts?

Do you agree? The Messiah was coming to save all people, not just Jews! If so, then what was the purpose of the Jewish nation?