



The Teachings of Jesus Lesson 5 3rd Q 2014

Lesson 5: How To Be Saved

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Come and Reason FREE APP is now available for iPhones and Droid. The app allows access to our materials on your smart phones and tablets. Please download the app!

Prayer: Please pray for those sharing this message. I receive emails from around the world of people being ostracized, barred from churches, banning on teaching and speaking for sharing this message about God. Pray they won't get discouraged and pray God to open opportunities for them to share.

Update: Last week I was at the *Rethinking Hell Conference The Legacy of Edward Fudge and the Future of Conditionalism*, in Houston, TX. There were people from all over the world, Australia, New Zealand, England, France, Lithuania and around the US. Members of a wide variety of Christian groups. I didn't find out all the various groups, but Church of Christ, Baptist, Anglican and many were theologians, pastors, priests etc. I presented our view and gave away our materials. An incredibly positive response. Many individuals came up to me and commented that our view was the most reasonable view they had ever heard and fit with the evidence most consistently.

Edward Fudge and his wife were there and were so nice. They had one portion when people shared their appreciation and thanks to him for his research etc. For those not familiar with Edward Fudge I recommend the movie *Hell and Mr. Fudge*, produced by an SDA producer. Mr. Fudge is a member of the Church of Christ and was a son of a Church of Christ pastor, himself a graduate from theological training and was hired by Robert Brinsmead to research the question of hell. Mr. Fudge, after long research, concluded the Bible does not teach eternal torment but annihilation of the wicked. He was ostracized, fired from his job as pastor, had falsehoods told and printed about him, had public tribunals to oppose him and generally treated horribly by his church and evangelical Christianity. Yet, the truth is the truth and his conclusions about hell continue to grow in evangelical circles.

What impressed me about the conference was the focus on God's character. So many of the presenters hold to the view that God is love and that the traditional views must be opposed because they distort God's character.

Aug 22/23: Dr. Jennings will be doing a spiritual emphasis weekend at Laurelbrook Academy.

Oct 2-4: Dr. Jennings will be at the American Association of Christian Counselors National Convention in Branson, MO. He and Dr. Curt Thomson, Christian Psychiatrist and author of *Anatomy of the Soul*, will be conducting an 8-hour workshop entitled, **Neurobiology and the Treatment of Mood and Anxiety Disorders**. Dr. Jennings will also be a plenary speaker and Come and Reason Ministries will have a booth to give away our materials.

Oct 24/25: Dr. Jennings will be at Loma Linda University presenting a Spiritual Emphasis Weekend for the psychiatry residents and students. The Friday evening meeting will be open to the public.

Nov 16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the First Baptist Church in Frisco Texas. Speaking for the three church services Sunday morning and then a seminar Sunday afternoon.

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NOTE: WARNING: There is another ministry with a similar name called "Come Reason Ministries" and they are located in California. Please be sure and select **Come AND Reason Ministries Located in Collegedale TN**.

I received the following email this week:

I've received the cases of books and have already begun to give them to friends. I can't begin to express how much this message has helped me. There's one word that keeps coming to mind



when I think of it. Liberation. And then my mind goes to Jesus' mission as stated in Isaiah 61:1-3.

I've been reading the book Education for devotion. It eloquently illustrates that the message being presented by C&R. Here's a quote from it that I'm sure you've read before but I just had to share it. It's basically a summary of this message. It talks about how men came to have false conceptions of God--His character, and the nature of His law; why Jesus came, and how the principles of His kingdom are to be established through the integrative, evidence-based approach!!!:-) This made my morning. Hope it brightens yours as well!

"As the evil passions and purposes of men banished God from their thoughts, so forgetfulness of Him inclined them more strongly to evil. The heart in love with sin clothed Him with its own attributes, and this conception strengthened the power of sin. Bent on self-pleasing, men came to regard God as such a one as themselves—a Being whose aim was self-glory, whose requirements were suited to His own pleasure; a Being by whom men were lifted up or cast down according as they helped or hindered His selfish purpose. The lower classes regarded the Supreme Being as one scarcely differing from their oppressors, save by exceeding them in power. By these ideas every form of religion was molded. **Each was a system of exaction. By gifts and ceremonies, the worshipers sought to propitiate the Deity in order to secure His favor for their own ends. Such religion, having no power upon the heart or the conscience,** could be but a round of forms, of which men wearied, and from which, except for such gain as it might offer, they longed to be free. So evil, unrestrained, grew stronger, while the appreciation and desire for good diminished. Men lost the image of God and received the impress of the demoniacal power by which they were controlled. The whole world was becoming a sink of corruption. – {Ed 75.2}

There was but one hope for the human race—that into this mass of discordant and corrupting elements might be cast a new **leaven**; that there might be brought to mankind the **power** of a new life; **that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world.** – {Ed 76.1}

Christ came to restore this knowledge. He came to set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. **He came to manifest the nature of His law, to reveal in His own character the beauty of holiness.** – {Ed 76.2}

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} **[why? Because happiness is a by-product of healthiness, and health results from living in harmony with the way life is designed to work]**

So far from making arbitrary requirements, God's law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. **Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil.** Fidelity to God involves fidelity to



man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. **It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience.** [notice the focus – the law of love, written in the heart, restrains the superior from oppression and the subordinate from disobedience – because they will be damaged by such action] It ensures man’s well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. **To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever.** – {Ed 76.4}

Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the regeneration of humanity. [wait – haven’t we been taught that the regenerating is in the blood? That we accept a legal payment and then at the second coming a magic of sorts happens and we are regenerated? What is this about divine principles having power to regenerate?] He came to teach how these principles **are to be developed and applied.** – {Ed 77.1}

With the people of that age the value of all things was determined by outward show. As religion had declined in power, it had increased in pomp. The educators of the time sought to command respect by display and ostentation. To all this the life of Jesus presented a marked contrast. His life demonstrated the worthlessness of those things that men regarded as life’s great essentials. Born amidst surroundings the rudest, sharing a peasant’s home, a peasant’s fare, a craftsman’s occupation, living a life of obscurity, identifying Himself with the world’s unknown toilers,—amidst these conditions and surroundings,—**Jesus followed the divine plan of education.** The schools of His time, with their magnifying of things small and their belittling of things great, He did not seek. **His education was gained directly from the Heaven-appointed sources; from useful work, from the study of the Scriptures and of nature, and from the experiences of life—God’s lesson books,** full of instruction to all who bring to them the willing hand, the seeing eye, and the understanding heart. – {Ed 77.2}

May God bless you each day and may this message go to all the world!
Thank you so much for bringing this message to my life. NC

Isn’t that quote from Education fantastic? This is the perspective on God and His law that we are to take to the world. Instead Christianity, including our church, has been infected with a distortion of God’s character that resembles humanity’s sinful, selfish character. And such presentations have no power to heal the mind or bring peace to the soul.

First – what does it mean to be saved? It simply and only means to be healed, or restored, or renewed, or recreated. It means to be taken from this defective state in which we currently exist and be rebuilt, regenerated back into God’s original ideal for humanity in every aspect – physical, mental, moral, spiritual, relational, intellectual – restored to perfection.

If you were bitten by a rattlesnake and went to the ER and said to the doctor, “Please save me.” What are you asking for? Forgiveness? Legal pardon? Of course not! You are asking to be cured, to be healed. That is EXACTLY what it means in Scripture.



Every metaphor of Scripture points to this reality. Some of our critics have taken the position that regarding the atonement, which is God's plan to put us back into harmony with Him, i.e. heal us to His original design, that there are many metaphors in Scripture and that we only emphasize one thus they claim we are restrictive of the Scripture and their view is a larger view. However, what they fail to realize is that **behind all metaphor is a reality, and without that reality the metaphor has no meaning.** And the reality, to which all metaphor of atonement point, is healing. So if you are dealing with people stuck in a legal metaphor and they try to suggest that our healing view is a metaphor, challenge them with the idea that healing and restoration is not metaphor. Ask them if they believe when the Bible speaks of a new heaven and earth if it is real or just metaphor? Then ask them, what words describe the process of taking something that is defective, diseased and broken and restoring it to perfection? Healing – it is not metaphor we teach, but reality.

SABBATH

Memory text: “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.” (John 3:14,15)

What does it mean to believe?

We have power over what we believe but what we believe holds power over us.

We are changed to become like that we admire and worship? Our beliefs change us.

What changed Adam and Eve in the garden? Was it taking the fruit or believing a lie, which resulted in taking the fruit?

It was believing a lie that changed them and thus their behavior changed.

What is the difference in believing in Christ as our Savior and believing what the demons said when they confronted Christ – “we know who you are the holy one of God?”

They believed WHO Jesus was, but did they believe in Jesus? What is the difference?

To believe in Jesus is not merely to believe He exists, or to believe He has power, but to actually believe He is trustworthy in every way and thereby surrender yourself in trust to Him and intelligently appreciate and agree with His design and methods. The devils believe in His existence, in His power, but not in His goodness. This is the thing that frankly many Christians also doubt about God.

Many Christians believe in God's existence and power but also believe He isn't good – He needs to be persuaded, just as the book *Education* said, they conceive of God as being like themselves. Thus they really don't believe because true belief is believing He is good, trustworthy and believing in His methods and principles.



This is why the Jewish nation was often called an unbelieving nation, or a faithless people – not because they were agnostics or atheists, but because they didn't believe in the goodness of God. They saw God as a being, who was in character like Satan, and that is baal worship. This, sadly is the state of many Christians.

And this is why the church is so powerless to change lives and prepare the world for Christ's return. There is no power in false god concepts. They only damage. Thus, in every denominational church, including our own, the rates of pornography, spouse abuse, child abuse is no different than in the world at large. Why? Because as Paul said, they have a form of godliness but deny its power and the power is the truth about God!

Read second paragraph, "The Lord wanted..." What do you think of the idea that Christ became the bearer of our sins? In what way is this true and how is can this be misconstrued?

What did Jesus bear?

First he bore up under our sinful abuse of Him. Listen to this commentary from the book *Desire of Ages*:

Jesus did not contend for His rights. Often His work was made unnecessarily severe because He was willing and uncomplaining. Yet He did not fail nor become discouraged. He lived above these difficulties, as if in the light of God's countenance. **He did not retaliate when roughly used, but bore insult patiently.** {DA 89.4}

The angels of heaven witnessed every movement made against their loved Commander. They longed to deliver Christ. Under God the angels are all-powerful. On one occasion, in obedience to the command of Christ, they slew of the Assyrian army in one night one hundred and eighty-five thousand men. How easily could the angels, beholding the shameful scene of the trial of Christ, have testified their indignation by consuming the adversaries of God! But they were not commanded to do this. **He who could have doomed His enemies to death bore with their cruelty.** His love for His Father, and His pledge, made from the foundation of the world, **to become the Sin Bearer, led Him to endure uncomplainingly the coarse treatment of those He came to save. It was a part of His mission to bear, in His humanity, all the taunts and abuse that men could heap upon Him. The only hope of humanity was in this submission of Christ to all that He could endure from the hands and hearts of men.** {DA 700.5}

What did Jesus bear according to this commentary? He bore our sin in the form our sinful abuse of Him, our taunts, our violence, our cruelty. He bore it in His humanity! Why? To develop a perfect human character and eradicate fear and selfishness from the humanity He assumed.

Secondly, He bore our infirmities our sickness the defects that sin brings and carried them away:



Isa 53:4 **Surely our griefs He himself bore, and our sorrows He carried;** yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.(NAS)

Notice how the New Testament writers apply the prophecy:

Matt 8:16-17: And when evening had come, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word, and **healed all who were ill in order that what was spoken through Isaiah the prophet might be fulfilled, saying, "He Himself took our infirmities, and carried away our diseases."** (NAS)

Bearing our griefs and carrying our sorrows does not mean that Christ “paid the penalty” for our sins, but instead means that he took away from us our griefs and sorrows (ie took away our sicknesses). Yet, we would misunderstand and think that God was killing or punishing Him.

Third – He took our sinful condition and destroyed it, healing humanity back to God’s design:

Isa 53:5 But He was pierced through for our transgressions, He was crushed for our iniquities; the chastening for our well-being {fell} upon Him, and **by His scourging we are healed.** (NAS)

1 Pet 2:24-25 and He Himself bore our sins [sinfulness] in His body on the cross, **that we might die to sin and live to righteousness; for by His wounds you were healed.** For you were continually straying like sheep, but now you have returned to the Shepherd and Guardian of your souls. (NAS)

By His scourging we are healed does not represent a “legal” transaction in heaven where God’s attitude toward us is “healed”, but instead represents Christ’s victory over the infection of selfishness and fear and restoring the human condition back to God’s ideal, and through faith or trust in Him we can participate in His victory and be changed in our heart, where we die to sin and live to righteousness, returning to God instead of straying from Him.

How can the idea of Christ bearing our sin be misconstrued to teach false ideas?

- Every behavior, misdeed, act of sin is placed upon Jesus and He experiences the pain and guilt of each and every act of sin
- Every behavior, misdeed, act of sin is legally credited to His account and He is punished by the Father for every act of sin, past present and future
- God killed Jesus at the cross as an act of divine justice

SUNDAY

The lesson rightly points out that the first step to experience salvation is to recognize our need. What is our actual need and how has the devil replaced it with a false need?



Actual need: we are in need of new hearts and right spirit.

- The law of God exposes our true condition, it diagnoses us as being in a terminal condition, as being out of harmony with how God constructed life to operate and thus we need a remedy, a rebirth, a renewal of heart, the law written on the heart and mind etc.

False need: a legal payment.

- Satan as duped many to believe our need is a legal solution, that our problem is a legal one, that we have broken rules, are in legal trouble with God, and thus need to have a penalty paid, the wrath of God appeased, records erased, etc. Thus many, misdiagnose the problem and seek a false solution.

You see this distortion in last weeks lesson, Thursday first paragraph, “Because of our sins, we deserve to die. But Christ took our place on the cross and paid the death penalty that, otherwise, rested on us. He, being innocent, took our guilt and received our punishment so that we, being sinful, could be declared innocent.”

This is false in so many ways.

- It misdiagnoses the problem as a legal problem rather than a condition we are in, a state of being that is out of harmony with God and His design
- It makes our behavior and our shortcomings the problem rather than the condition with which we were born and had no choice in
- It makes Christ mission one of paying legal penalties to God
- It represents God as the source of inflicted pain and death
- It suggest God lies by declaring innocent those who are not

When in universal history will it be true that Adam and Eve are innocent? Or for that matter us? God will not declare any of us innocent – He will however, declare all those who trust Him and partake of Jesus – righteous, healed, renewed, at-one with Him. (Consider the Bible character – Job was not declared innocent. He was declared righteous. David didn’t get a new history, a new record, he got a new heart and right spirit. Paul himself declared himself to be the worst of sinners – not innocent, yet saved, because Paul was healed, reborn, renewed in righteousness).

What is so offensive about this penal substitutionary thinking is that it obstructs people from actually experiencing victory in Christ. It is a false theology based on Satan’s view of God’s law namely that God’s law is imposed and sin must be punished.

People who believe this lie then seek to appease God, gets sins paid, record books erased, coverings for themselves either robes or blood, or something to hide them from God so He won’t see their sinfulness. They long to be declared innocent, and then they languish in false security of eternal life, while living in fear and selfishness with no real victory over sin in their lives.



God wants so much more for us. He wants our actual transformation of character to be like Jesus, here and now!

Oswald Chambers understood this:

The Bible does not say that God punished the human race for one man's sin, but that the nature of sin, namely, my claim to my right to myself, entered into the human race through one man. But it also says that another **Man took upon Himself the sin of the human race and put it away** — an infinitely more profound revelation... **Sin is something I am born with** and cannot touch— only God touches sin through redemption. It is through the Cross of Christ that God redeemed the entire human race. from the possibility of damnation through the heredity of sin. **God nowhere holds a person responsible for having the heredity of sin, and does not condemn anyone because of it.** Condemnation comes when I realize that Jesus Christ came to deliver me from this heredity of sin, and **yet I refuse to let Him do so.** From that moment I begin to get the seal of damnation. **“This is the condemnation [and the critical moment], that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light . . . ”** (John 3:19) Oswald Chambers, *My Utmost for His Highest*, <http://utmost.org>

This is quite right. We are born in sin conceived in iniquity, born with a condition we didn't choose. Thus God doesn't declare us legally innocent, because we are not in legal trouble. He cures us and declares us whole, healed, well!

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, “Recognizing our sins...” thoughts?

The lesson focuses on “sins” rather than sinfulness which results in sins. True repentance is not merely taking responsibility for bad acts, it is a sorrow for the *condition of heart* which led to the bad acts and experiencing a change in heart motive.

Judas:

- Acknowledged his sin
- Expressed sorry for his sin
- Didn't want to do that act again

But, Judas wasn't sorry for the selfishness in his character which led him to do it. He was sorry his plans did not work out. He didn't want Christ to die; he wanted Christ to use His power to take the throne.

When we focus on legal problems and sinful acts merely, we lead people to be like Judas and acknowledge the sinful act, express sorry for the sinful act, and change in desire to never do that specific act again. But the heart isn't changed because we mislead people into believing sin is



behavioral rather than the truth it is characterological. Then they seek to do the same sin, but slightly modified, so it isn't the exact same act they did before. Thus they can falsely believe they are in a state of repentance, when they are not.

Read second paragraph, "We can see the importance..." From what was it they were to repent?

John the Baptist was to be the forerunner of Christ – to do what? Was it not to prepare the minds of the people to accept Jesus? Was it merely to turn the people from sinful behavior, or primarily from false concepts of God?

What about today? Do we have a work to do as John did 2000 years ago to prepare the way for the Lord's second advent? And is not our work to lead the people to repentance? Not the mere repentance from bad deeds but repentance from the false ideas about God with which so many live in fear?

We must turn away from the lies about God that infect our thinking and contaminate our evangelism. We can only fulfill the purpose God has for us in proclaiming a message to prepare the world for the Lord's return when we tell the truth about God. This requires we expel:

- the false law concept with which Rome infected the church, and
- the false atonement models based on the false law concept, and
- the false judgment models and
- the false imposed punishment and torture models.

Until we do this we present a lie that has no power to heal and restore but instead, we like the Jews 2000 years ago, we search the world for a convert and make him twice the son of hell. How and why? Because before we converted him he just didn't know God but now we have filled his mind with a false god, so now he still must learn the truth about God, but he also must UNLEARN all the distortions we have taught him.

These people are describe by Paul to Timothy as those who have a form of godliness but deny the power because they deny the truth about God.

Here is what our church used to think about this:

John was called to do a special work; he was to prepare the way of the Lord, to make straight His paths. The Lord did not send him to the school of the prophets and rabbis. He took him away from the assemblies of men to the desert, that he might learn of nature and nature's God. God did not desire him to have the mold of the priests and rulers. [Why? Why didn't he go to the schools which were established by God? Why not to Bible school, "Christian education"? Because it had been corrupted with lies about God. What about our schools today?] He was called to do a special work. The Lord gave him his message. Did he go to the priests and rulers and ask if he might proclaim this message?--No, [Should John have asked for endorsement from church authority? What about today? Should we seek



church authority to proclaim the truth about God? Do you know the church authorities of John's day came and asked him on what authority he was preaching, as he didn't seek theirs. What about today?] **God put him away from them that he might not be influenced by their spirit and teaching.** He was the voice of one crying in the wilderness, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low: and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough places plain; and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it" (Isaiah 40:3-5). **This is the very message that must be given to our people;** we are near the end of time, and the message is, Clear the King's highway; gather out the stones; raise up a standard for the people. The people must be awakened. It is no time now to cry peace and safety. We are exhorted to "cry aloud, spare not, lift up thy voice like a trumpet, and shew my people their transgression, and the house of Jacob their sins" (Isaiah 5:1). {1SM 410.1}

What is the message we are to take?

- The eternal good news about God and His character and methods of love
- The law of love as the design template for life
- Our natural, from birth, condition of being out of harmony with this design
- Christ is our Savior and Remedy to cure the defects of fear and selfishness in us
- To embrace God's methods of love and give Him glory by revealing His character in us
- To call people to see God for who He truly is as Designer not Dictator so people may make a right judgment about God and choose to trust Him
- That the religious systems of the world are infected with imposed law constructs and are a confused mess
- That those who embrace this false legal system of imposed penalties with a god who will inflict torture and torment will, by worshipping such a god, be conformed to the image of that god and thus suffer the very torment they desperately want to avoid. They become marked in character to be beastly just like the beastly god they worship.

I believe when the call to repentance is to repent of the lies we believe AND tell about God and begin telling the truth about Him and living in harmony with His methods of love, then the latter rain power of the Holy Spirit will fall and we will be enabled to lighten the world and Christ will return.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, "According to Jesus..." There is much to be commended in this paragraph, such as faith being more than a feeling, or mental exercise, and that it is faith or trust in the person Jesus Christ. But what of this idea that faith is "trusting in Jesus and His death for us."

What does that mean? Why do they say it this way?



Why not say, “trusting in Jesus and His victorious life for us” or “trusting in Jesus and His victory over death for us”?

It is because of accepting Satan’s lie about God’s law being imposed, and that sin must be punished, thus the death represents the paid penalty and we must trust that our penalty is paid by that death.

This again obstructs God’s true plan of salvation. Jesus died to cure the condition, to restore in us His character not pay a legal penalty. Thus the Bible says, “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” (2Cor 5:21)

Notice the purpose, not to pay a penalty but to make us righteous, to cure us.

Or in the text from Peter we read earlier:

He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed. 1Pet 2:24

Again notice the reason – to heal us, NOT to pay a legal penalty.

Or other Scripture:

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.** 2tim 1:10

“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. ¹⁷ **For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him.** John 3:16,17

The mission of Christ was for the healing and regeneration of this world, the destruction of sin and death.

Read third paragraph, “God so loved...” What does it mean to be covered by His righteousness?

I agree with this description in a book called *Christ’s Object Lessons*:

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}



So how does believing in Jesus result in us having righteousness? Because when we believe, or trust, we open the heart and the Holy Spirit comes in and we actually are change. We actually desire holiness, truth, love, freedom, purity, we establish new pathways in our brain and the old fades away. We actually, literally, come to love God and others more than self and the fear and selfishness which dominates us loses its power over us.

This happens by daily partaking of Jesus, spending time with Him, meditating upon Him, considering and contemplating His methods, His ways, His designs. And as we appreciate it and long to be like Him and choose His ways we are changed.

But this is why our conception of God is so critical, if we have distorted concepts then we are not changed to be like God, but will be changed to be like the false god we worship.

Read bottom green section, “Why must...”

- Do we allow for outcomes beyond our understanding?
- Could God know that we are so settled into the truth about Him that we won't be shaken, so healing isn't necessary for our eternal salvation. But a nurse at a hospital hasn't seen God's love and God knows that our witness to them will be able to break through and reach them, so He doesn't heal us. Do we trust Him enough to trust Him with outcomes we don't like because we know He has a vision of reality that is greater than our own.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson speaks of the wedding garment, the parable Jesus taught about the wedding feast and guests being inspected to see if they were wearing the garment given by the king.

It then asks, “Why did the king want to be sure that every guest had a wedding garment for the feast?”

What would happen without the garment?

Why does NASA want to ensure every astronaut has a space suit and a sun shield visor before they go out into space?

We cannot exist in the presence of God without a character like His. It would be torment to us to be there. And thus God wants us to have the wedding garment, the mind, heart, character renewed to be in harmony with Him so we will love His presence and not flee from Him in pain.

Examples:

- Moses coming down from the mountain reflecting God's glory causes suffering in the people.
- The priests unable to enter Solomon's temple on the day of dedication – why? Was God unhappy with them? Why couldn't they enter? Because they were not fully restored to harmony with God and couldn't tolerate the presence of God.



- The wicked destroyed by His brightness because they were not transformed to be like Him.

THURSDAY

First sentence says, "When in faith we recognize our need, repent, confess our sins, and claim Christ's righteousness for ourselves, we become His disciples."

Could a person do all of this, have faith, repent, confess, claim the righteousness of Christ, but have such a wrong concept of God that their faith is misplaced and they trust in Satan's version of God and trust in legal payments, trust that their god will punish and destroy, trust that their enemies will pay for what has been done to them etc. etc. etc. and still not be saved?

Listen to this commentary:

When we speak of unbelief, we do not mean that a person believes nothing. The mind must rest upon something; and when it does not grasp truth, it lays hold of error. All men in one sense believe, and the effect produced upon the heart and character is according to the things believed. Eve believed the words of Satan, and the belief of that falsehood in regard to God's character, changed the condition and character of both herself and husband. They were changed from good and obedient children into transgressors, and it was only by repentance toward God and faith in the promised Messiah that they could hope ever to regain the lost image of God. Paul had faith before his conversion; but it was not a correct faith. His self-righteousness strengthened his faith that he was doing God's service in rejecting Christ, and he enjoyed a restful satisfaction. False faith as well as true faith will give peacefulness for a time. Paul verily thought that he was doing God service when he was persecuting the followers of Christ and putting them to death. He was sincere in his belief; but sincerity will not make error truth, nor truth error. "When the commandment came," says Paul, "sin revived, and I died." He then received the truth as it is in Jesus, and experienced its transforming power upon his soul. The truth was so firmly planted in his heart that he could say, "Neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." {RH, January 5, 1886 par. 8}

A genuine faith in the true God as Jesus revealed results in transformation of the believer to be like Jesus in character. Those who have a false faith will:

- have religion but will not love,
- they will have creeds but will not sacrifice self,
- they will have worship services but will not have the transforming power of worshipping the true character of God,
- they will have rituals but no unity with God,
- they will have their legal claim but they will not have a renewed heart,



- And when Satan appears, arguing that sin must be punished they will say, “This is our god we have waited for him.”

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 1, “Many try to drown...” Why do these methods not work? Because they treat symptoms not problems. They act to alter the mood, the feeling, the emotions, but don’t resolve the dysfunction which causes the dysphoria. It would be like taking pain meds for a cavity, but not filling the cavity. Eastern Meditation does the same thing, alters the feeling without actually changing the character.

How do you help people like this? By the truth, the truth of their condition, the truth of how their interventions only injure, the truth that real healing is possible, but many refuse because they are not willing to endure the pain of transformation.

Read and discuss question 3.