



The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 9 3Q 2016 Jesus Ministered to Their Needs

I received this email this week:

Dear Team,

My mother and I are working in China sharing with all who will listen the God Who is Love. Those who hear love this. It answers the deep longings of the human heart. We are currently home for the summer holiday but will be returning there August 22. I would like to have this set of videos before we go.

In China you are my Sabbath School that I join every week. I am a teacher in a university and my job is to get my students to talk. I teach them the integrative evidence-based approach to truth and the 7 levels of moral development. They love my classes. This is the grace of God for which I am deeply grateful. Thank you for making these materials free as I also share the website with them.

I was so sorry that The Remedy was not available in hard cover... Those I have shared this with have loved it and it quickly becomes their favorite version. We did a whirlwind tour during Spring Festival of Daniel and Revelation and it helped them so see Jesus as the center of all prophecy and time.

I want to thank all those who make it possible for those of us with limited or no incomes to have these materials. I, too, believe this is the final message to go to the world. I need constant reminders that God is not what His enemies have made Him out to be, arbitrary, unforgiving and severe which my natural, fearful, selfish heart gravitates toward, but that He is a Good Father who loves and wants me above all. And this is what I want to share in word and life to hasten the day.

So, thank you, thank you, thank you!!! And God bless the work you are doing.

SABBATH

Read memory text, “Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness.”

The lesson title is Jesus Ministered to Their Needs, what needs do you hear from this text that Jesus was meeting?

- teaching
- proclaiming the good news of the kingdom—what kingdom?



- healing

What is the greatest need of humanity today?

- Health care?
- Tax relief?
- Food, shelter, clothing?
- Political freedom?
- Social justice and equality?

From the book *Education*:

Christ is the "Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." John 1:9. As through Christ every human being has life, so also through Him every soul receives some ray of divine light. Not only intellectual but spiritual power, a perception of right, a desire for goodness, exists in every heart. But against these principles there is struggling an antagonistic power. The result of the eating of the tree of knowledge of good and evil is manifest in every man's experience. There is in his nature a bent to evil, a force which, unaided, he cannot resist. To withstand this force, to attain that ideal which in his inmost soul he accepts as alone worthy, he can find help in but one power. **That power is Christ. Co-operation with that power is man's greatest need. In all educational effort should not this co-operation be the highest aim?** {Ed 29.1}

Does anyone disagree that the greatest need of every human being is cooperation and unity with Christ? Why is this the greatest of all needs?

But, how do we help people realize this need and connect with Christ? From the book *Christ's Object Lessons*:

Sin is the greatest of all evils, and it is ours to pity and help the sinner. But not all can be reached in the same way. **There are many who hide their soul hunger. These would be greatly helped by a tender word or a kind remembrance. There are others who are in the greatest need, yet they know it not. They do not realize the terrible destitution of the soul.** Multitudes are so sunken in sin that they have lost the sense of eternal realities, lost the similitude of God, and they hardly know whether they have souls to be saved or not. They have neither faith in God nor confidence in man. **Many of these can be reached only through acts of disinterested kindness. Their physical wants must first be cared for. They must be fed, cleansed, and decently clothed. As they see the evidence of your unselfish love, it will be easier for them to believe in the love of Christ.** {COL 387.1}

Did you hear two different groups described?



- One who know their need but hide it, these are people who live behind masks, walking around fearful of someone discovering their true selves, not believing anyone could really like them if they new them. The woman caught in adultery and dragged before Christ would be such a person. The woman at the well would be another. And how did Christ reach them? Just as was said above, by speaking tender words to them.
- But there is another class, those who don't even realize they have souls needing saving, so burdened with life and ignorant of God and distrusting human beings. They are reached by acts of *disinterested* kindness, meeting their physical needs.

For an example of this class of people Read Sabbath's lesson, "A retired..." What was happening in this story? What is drawing the people? Was it a way of living that put them in harmony with nature and resulted in real improvement in their wellbeing?

Why did it result in real improvement in their wellbeing? Because they were working with the laws of nature, teaching how to live in harmony with those laws, and who created those laws? This is God's law, His design for life.

The last sentence said a "powerful and practical example." Is there any form of truth that is not practical, that doesn't actually apply, and work in our lives for our healing and restoration?

How many things done in religion are impractical, or become impractical? Why, what causes something to be impractical?

What does practical mean? Useful, something that actually works.

And impractical means not useful, not helpful. So, what things done in religion are impractical and why?

And this brings us to a third class of people not spoken of in the quote above, can anyone think of that class?

- The Laodiceans? Those who believe they are righteous, they realize they have souls to save, but think they are already saved—already spiritual healthy and well when they are not.

Do such religious people do things that are impractical? Examples?

- All superstitions
- How about vegans who become so strict that they die of malnutrition?
- How about persons who refuse antibiotics for their children and their children die of curable diseases?
- How about people with mental health problems who refuse treatment because they believe if they had more faith they wouldn't need treatment?



This type of impractical belief system is perhaps the saddest of all because these are typically good-hearted people, who truly want to do what is right, but who have been deceived into believing something that is actually harmful.

And, does anyone have an insight what one of the common underlying beliefs are that contributes to most of these impractical beliefs? Misconstruing God's law as imposed, which results in viewing God as a cosmic judge who must punish sin, and sin is doing bad things which deserve to be punished. This leads to a fear based religion, so people focus on self, they don't want to eat the wrong things, they don't want to be accountable before God for giving their children medicine and not having enough faith, etc. This is all fear based religion, which results when we accept the lie about God's law.

What is the solution? Jesus—who is God's law made visible and accessible to us. What do we see in Jesus? Did He ever punish anyone? What did He do to Judas? How did He treat His enemies trying to kill Him? Jesus is God made visible to us—yet we constantly deny the testimony of Jesus.

Remember Revelation says the Remnant who are saved at the end of time, hold to the testimony of Jesus—are we? Are we holding to the testimony Jesus gave about His Father?

SUNDAY

The lesson references the story of Jesus on his way to heal Jairus' daughter when the woman with the history of bleeding touched his garment and was healed. The lesson describes this as Jesus being interrupted and then asks some questions, read second through fourth paragraph, "Let's face it..."

The lesson is making some good points about the struggles we often have with interruptions, no doubt. Yet, I am not certain the example chosen is the best for depicting someone interrupting Jesus.

Did the woman interrupt what Jesus was doing, or did she act unobtrusively such that no one noticed her, except Jesus perceived healing energy leave Him? And who stopped what Jesus was doing? Jesus did, why? Why did Jesus stop, because this was an interruption and He needed to make it clear people should not interrupt Him? Was this an interruption?

I don't think so. What was Jesus mission? Jesus was on earth to reveal and restore God's true character into all people and strengthen their confidence in God by living and revealing God's true methods. Did stopping to expose this healing to all the people and to commend the woman's faith, interrupt His mission, or did it provide an opportunity to magnify and emphasize His mission?

Even when He was teaching and the paralytic was lowered down from the roof above in the middle of His discourse, Jesus didn't take this as an interruption, but as a grand opportunity. Consider the high drama that must have occurred at that moment. If anyone in the crowd was dozing off don't you think they came alert at this point? And Jesus used this to magnify and emphasize His mission of revealing God's character! So, even this was not an interruption to His mission!



But there were interruptions, any examples? All the traps and tricks set for Him by the religious leaders, these were designed to derail Him, divert His attention, distract Him, trick Him, trap Him... How did Jesus handle such interruptions?

What about the interruption when Peter pulled out his sword or when Peter said no way Lord, you aren't going to go and die—was Peter seeking to interrupt the Jesus' mission? And how did Jesus respond to these interruptions?

Peter in those two places, and the religious leaders however, were interruptions. And notice how Jesus handled those?

What is the lesson for us in dealing with interruptions? To first know what our mission is, what our goals are. Are we on task for God, is our primary goal to reveal God in all we do, or do we get distracted on the things of the world and miss our true mission and purpose—which is how we handle things, not the things themselves?

This gives us a good example of how the Bible can be *interpreted* to mean different things to different people, depending on their viewpoint, how they are understanding what they are reading. To me the lesson misses the true mission of Jesus and thus interprets the woman touching Jesus' hem as an interruption that Jesus doesn't consider an interruption but an opportunity and part of His mission. Such misinterpretations can lead people to draw the wrong lesson from Jesus' actions.

If you find yourself being irritated by interruptions, perhaps rather than getting down on yourself for being irritated, it might be time to step back and ask, *What is my mission and is this really interfering with my mission, or an opportunity to magnify God and His kingdom of love?*

MONDAY

The lesson points us to blind Bartimaeus and the paralytic of 38 years and points out that Jesus asked them both questions, and the lesson asks “Why would He do that?”

Why would Jesus ask them questions, like “What do you want” or “Do you want to get well?”

As a doctor, I always ask my patients, during their initial evaluation, what their goal is in coming to see me, what they want—why? Because not every person actually wants to get well. Some, in fact, do not want to get well, some have habituated their lives in the sick role and use their symptoms as tools to control the people in their lives. If these individuals didn't have their symptoms they would have to get a job, do chores, care for themselves, lose their disability check and some people have become secure, comfortable in their sickness and it frightens them to get well. They are afraid if they were not sick their spouse might leave them, or they fear they would fail, so it is easier to stay sick and be cared for by others.



Jesus is asking what they want because God doesn't violate freewill. God does not force people to be well who don't want it. In fact, doctors really can't heal people against their will. I have patients that I know a certain treatment is extremely likely to benefit them, but if they have been biased against the treatment, and have a strong enough belief that it will cause them terrible side effects, I don't even try it, why? Because their strong belief will almost certainly cause those side effects, which would negate the benefit of the treatment, but further undermine their confidence in me and damage our therapeutic relationship as they would feel like I don't listen to them.

Does God ever take actions with us that He knows is not the most likely to help, but He is limited in what He can do for us by our biases and strongly held beliefs, doubts, fears, preconceived ideas? Remember when Jesus was on earth there were entire villages where He could do very little because their minds were so closed to Him.

Further, Jesus wanted to engage them in relationship with Him. He wanted them to realize they were seeking something from Him and open their hearts and minds to something more than just the physical healing.

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Jesus, as the Lord, knew more..." The lesson rightly points out that Jesus did know things about people, what was in their hearts, what they were planning, like the fact that Judas was going to betray Him, and in other situations before they disclosed their intentions. So this is a fact of history. Do we all agree Jesus did have these insights into people?

But the question is how the lesson used the phrase, "as the Lord" and what they mean by it? Are they suggesting that Jesus, because He was fully God, was using His own divine abilities and power to access knowledge that other humans could not access?

Would it be an issue if Jesus did do this? Why or why not?

Are there evidences in Scripture that Jesus did NOT perform any miracle, which would include the miracle of knowledge, by using His own divine power?

- Mark 1:35 "Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed."
- Luke 5:16 "But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed."
- Luke 6:12 "One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God."
- Gethsemane—Jesus praying for strength

Why does Jesus pray if He has access to His own divine abilities?



John 5:30, Jesus says by Himself he can do nothing, what does this mean? Isn't He fully God? Then why can He do nothing by Himself? Because, at that time He had divested Himself from accessing His divine abilities, and everything He did, He did by trust in His Father. In other words:

- Jesus raised the dead like Elijah raised the dead
- Jesus walked on water like Elisha raised an axe head
- Jesus healed the sick like the Apostles healed the sick
- Jesus had foreknowledge like Daniel had foreknowledge
- Jesus face radiate like the sun like Elijah's and Moses' face next to him

Why is it important to realize this? What is implied if we suggest Jesus was using His own powers? - That Jesus didn't have to trust His Father—and what would be the problem if Jesus didn't have to trust His Father? That Jesus didn't overcome as a human, which would mean Jesus didn't exercise His human brain to develop a perfect human character. The remedy for sin would not have been achieved. Also, it would not have been demonstrated that there was no manufacturer's defect in the creation of man. Jesus, living a perfect sinless life—as a human—accessing only the powers available to all humans who trust God as Jesus did, not only developed a perfect human character, but demonstrated that there was no defect in humankind as God created him.

Thus Jesus not only reveals the Father perfectly, reveals His own character perfectly, while simultaneously exposing Satan as a liar and fraud, but also develops a perfect human character in the damaged machinery of weakened humanity, thus demonstrating God's creation was not flawed, another evidence vindicating God and His design for life!

The next two paragraphs are about the paralytic man lowered through the roof in front of Jesus, and before Jesus healed him Jesus said, "your sins are forgiven you."

Several questions to consider:

- In that culture would it have been hard for people to realize the man's sins had been forgiven prior to the events of this day? Why? What made that hard to realize?
- Was the man truly forgiven of his sin?
- When was the man forgiven? When did God forgive the man?
- What caused God to forgive the man?
 - For God so loved the world...
 - While we were yet sinners Christ died for us...
- Was God the problem that needed a solution? In other words, was God unforgiving and something needed to be done to God to get God to forgive?
- So, when was this man forgiven?
- What did the man believe about his standing before God?
- Why did the paralytic believe he was in a condemned state before God?
- Did the man's belief about God's attitude toward him, that God had not forgiven him, accurately reflect God's attitude?
- So, was God forgiving toward this man BEFORE the man knew it?



- What prevented the man from experiencing God’s forgiveness?
- His false beliefs about God and sin, and where did those false beliefs originate—did the man make those ideas up? No! Those false beliefs came from his church—thus he was made twice the son of hell, because he was indoctrinated into a false system about God that kept him trapped in despair, guilt and hopelessness.
- So, what did Jesus do? He overturned their theories about God. He demonstrated God forgives freely, without payment, without legal adjustment, without being pled with, without sacrifices being offered. And to prove it, Jesus healed the man, taking away that culture’s evidence of condemnation and providing evidence of good standing before God.
- How did the religious leaders react?
- Why?
- Because they had their legal system of appeasement and payments based on a false law construct, and refused the truth.

This is exactly what happens in many places today when we take the truth about God’s character and methods of love. Those stuck in penal substitution theology reject the truth and cling to the false law construct.

WEDNESDAY

The lesson is about Dorcas, who ministered to those in need in her community.

Read second paragraph, “The ‘believers’...” This would be excellent, to have people say such things. Would it be less excellent if they instead said, “See how those Christians love and care for others?”

Are we trying to get people to see the SDA church or Jesus Christ? Is there a difference?

What are we promoting when we promote the kingdom of God? How does one enter God’s kingdom? How does one become a member of God’s kingdom?

Is membership in God’s kingdom the same as joining a denomination?

Can we sometimes miss the mark, miss the mission Christ has sent us on by focusing on the institution?

THURSDAY

Read memory text, “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and he will establish your plans.” (Prov. 16:3)

What does this mean? How do you understand it?



Does it mean:

- Commit to the Lord the plans *you make* and He will establish and ensure *your plans* work out?
- Commit to the Lord your activities and *He will make the plans* that will ensure the venture works out?
- Commit yourself to the Lord and plan to follow Him and then having experienced a renewed heart, and following in your mind, heart, methods the leading of the Holy Spirit your plans will be His plans and He will ensure they succeed?
- Or, something else?

Here is this verse from several versions. The lesson states they quoted the NIV, they actually quoted Today's NIV which is an updated version of the NIV, but this is the original NIV:

- Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed. NIV
- Ask the LORD to bless your plans, and you will be successful in carrying them out. GNT
- Put GOD in charge of your work, then what you've planned will take place. The Message
- Commit your work to the LORD, and your plans will be established. NRSV
- Commit your works to the LORD, And your thoughts will be established. NKJV

What does it mean? If you commit your work to God, then God will make it happen?

The last paragraph references Luke 14:34,35: ““Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? ³⁵ It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out.”

Then the lesson states, “The flavor of the salt in Luke 14:34 represents devotion. Without this, our service, our discipleship, is useless and meaningless.”

Do you agree that the flavor of the salt represents devotion? Or does it represent the actual *savor of heaven*, which is truth, love and freedom?

Can you be devoted to things without the savor of heaven? So, can people be zealously devoted to religions that violate God's character of love, truth and freedom? And if so, do they have the heavenly salt because they are devoted? No! The salt, in my view doesn't represent devotion, but the proper savor of heaven, which is a character like Jesus!

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

September 15-17: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC National Conference in Dallas, TX. For more info, see AACC.net

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Cape Town, South Africa

November 4: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Fall Summit at the Calvary Chapel in Naperville, IL.