



The Book of Romans Lesson 3 4Q 2017 The Human Condition

SABBATH

Memory verse: “All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God.” Rom 3:23

What does this mean?

Does it mean all have broken a rule? Or does it mean all have a condition of heart that contaminates all their decision-making?

Read first paragraph: “Early on in the book...” I think this is very well said, but before we explore the meaning, let’s read the first paragraph in **FRIDAY**’s lesson:

“Thus the biblical terminology...” Do you hear these two paragraphs saying the same thing, or do you hear them differently? If differently, what do you hear differently about how they describe sin?

How do you understand sin? Is it merely behavior, or is it the heart condition that leads to the behavior?

And at its root, what is sin? It is untruthfulness and selfishness. As the Scripture says,

“The heart is deceitful above all things, And desperately wicked; Who can know it?” Jer 17:9
NKJV

So, what is the human condition?

Ephesians 2:1 “As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins” NIV84

What condition is this? It is a terminal condition—how did we get this condition?

Ps 51:5: “Surely I was sinful at birth, sinful from the time my mother conceived me.” NIV84

Do we need to feel guilty about having this condition? Why or why not?

What does this condition cause—unless treated? Sins, which are what? Actions that are selfish and ultimately lead to the sacrifice of others to advance self.

So, the sins, the bad deeds we have all done, are they the problem, or are they the symptoms of the problem?

What did Jesus say in Matthew 5? That the bad deeds are symptoms of the sick heart condition.



So, what is needed to deal with this human condition—a legal solution or a healing solution?

From Oswald Chambers:

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) <http://utmost.org/the-nature-of-degeneration/>

Remember the analogy of an HIV infected couple having an baby born HIV infected? What did the baby do wrong? This is all humans since Adam and Eve.

Now two quotations from Ellen White, one of the founders of the SDA church:

All sin is selfishness. Satan's first sin was a manifestation of selfishness. He sought to grasp power, to exalt self... **The sowing of seeds of selfishness in the human heart was the first result of the entrance of sin into the world.** God desires every one to understand the evil of selfishness, and to co operate with Him in guarding the human family against its terrible, deceptive powers. The design of the gospel is to confront this evil by means of remedial missionary work, and to destroy its destructive power by establishing enterprises of benevolence. {Worker's Bulletin, September 9, 1902 par. 3}

There is a great work to be done for many of us. Our minds and characters must become as the mind and character of Christ. **Selfishness is inwrought in our very being. It has come to us as an inheritance, and has been cherished by many as a precious treasure.** No special work for God can be accomplished until self and selfishness are overcome. To many everything connected with themselves is of great importance. Self is a center, around which everything seems to revolve. {Historical Sketches 138.7}

So, what do Oswald Chambers and EGW say regarding sin? It is a condition of being, with which we were born and did not choose, but we have the option of choosing Jesus who can heal us from this condition.

SUNDAY

Romans 1:16,17:



For I am not ashamed of the gospel; it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. **17** For in it the righteousness of God is revealed through faith for faith; as it is written, “The one who is righteous will live by faith.” NRSV

The Lesson asks what these verses mean to you?

What is the gospel? Good news? About what?

Well I did a web search asking the question “What is the gospel?”

Here are some of the top answers:

What exactly do Christians mean when they talk about the “gospel of Jesus Christ”? Since the word “gospel” means “good news,” when Christians talk about the gospel, they’re simply telling the good news about Jesus! It’s a message from God saying, “**Good news! Here is how you can be saved from my judgment!**” <https://www.crossway.org/articles/what-is-the-gospel-2/>

Is this the gospel? This is like the cartoon I have shown in some of my lectures of Jesus standing at a door knocking and the captions read:

“Let me in”
“For what?”
“So I can save you”
“From what?”
“From what I will do to you if you don’t let me in!”

Is this really good news?

Here is another online description from an article in *Christianity Today*:

“Therefore, the gospel is the truth that we are all sinners or **criminals before God, and under the sentence of eternal death** or separation from God and all that is good. In his love for us, God the Father sent God the Son to earth to become a man. Jesus was born without a sin nature, and lived a sinless life. He allowed himself to be crucified, and as he hung on the cross, **God the Father took all of my sins, put them on Jesus and punished him in my place.**

“**Jesus took the wrath of God for me**, and he died. His body was placed in a tomb, and on the third day he came back from the dead, never to die again. God in his love and grace has overcome our two enemies of sin and death, and those who acknowledge to Jesus that they are sinners, and trust him to save them from eternal condemnation are forgiven their sins and given the gift of life eternal with God.” <http://www.christianitytoday.com/edstetzer/2015/june/what-is-gospel.html>

Is this good news?



In this description, from where does death originate? Who is the source of pain, punishment and death?

God—this is the false gospel—the lie—the bad news that God is the source of inflicted pain and death and thus we need to create theologies that protect us from God.

We teach God requires human sacrifice to assuage His wrath, for if God was presented with the sinless blood of His Son He would lash out against us and destroy us all—or worse torture us all in hell for eternity. Is such a depiction of God really good news?

This distorted gospel is all based in the lie that God's law functions like human law—imposed rules requiring judicial oversight. But we are called to take the message to the world that we are to worship Him who made the heavens, earth, sea and all that is in them—we are to worship this Designer whose laws are the protocols upon which life is built and any break in those laws results in ruin and death unless remedied by the Designer.

So what is the good news? God is not like Satan has portrayed Him to be.

What lie did Satan tell in heaven? What is the truth that Satan obscured to angels and then to Adam and Eve? Is it not the good news about God?

- Must God hide Himself from sin, lest if God sees our sin God will have no self-control and lash out in anger and wrath and destroy us? Or did God become sin in order to save us?
- Is the problem with sin that God is offended, or angry, or must inflict punishment? If God would restrain Himself and refuse to lash out and destroy sinners, could sinners live forever in sin?
- Is the real problem of sin from God's behavior toward sinners, or what sin does to sinners?

So what is the gospel? It is the good news about God—that God is good, truth, love—always and never deviates to anything else in any way.

How is this good news the power of God for salvation?

Remember the cascade of destruction—if you believe your spouse is having an affair but they are not—what happens?

- lies believed break the circle of love and trust
- broken love and trust results in fear and selfishness
- fear and selfishness results in acts of sin
- acts of sin damage—a terminal condition

Healing Cascade:



- Truth believed destroys lies and wins to trust
- In trust open the heart and God pours His love in (character renewal)
- In love and trust we engage in acts of love, service, altruism
- Acts of service, love, altruism witness the kingdom of love and we grow in godliness

But the entire healing cascade starts with the truth about God—thus Jesus said, “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free.” Jn 8:32

The truth about what? God.

This is why life eternal is knowing God—Jn 17:3 and that by his death Christ destroyed him who holds the power of death that is the devil Heb 2:14. Satan’s power is to get us to believe lies about God that prevent us from knowing and therefore trusting God.

How does the evil one do this?

Therefore, what is Satan’s strategy? To prevent people from knowing the truth about God.

How? By presenting false gospels that misrepresent God as a being we need protection from—which is the predominate view in Christianity—and the reason for this is that Christians have accepted the lie about God’s law, which was prophesied in Daniel 7:25—that God’s law is like human law.

This is what Paul warned about in Thessalonians that the man of sin would set himself up in God’s temple proclaiming himself to be god. How? By getting Christians to teach that God is like Satan in character, a being who is the source of inflicted pain and suffering, an arbitrary being who makes up rules and then uses coercive power to enforce his rules.

This is why the sanctuary (Spirit temple) needs cleansing—it needs cleansing from the lies about God which have so deeply infected Christianity.

This is what I expose in my latest book *The God-Shaped Heart*

What does it mean the righteous, or just, shall live by faith?

That the righteous or just, are those who choose to do what they know is in harmony with God’s design (i.e. what is right or just) and then trust God with the outcomes.

So these verses from *The Remedy*:

I am not ashamed of spreading the good news about God and his character, methods and principles, as this is God’s power which heals everyone who believes and trusts in him: firstly to the Jews—those initially called to assist in spreading the Remedy, and then to the Gentiles—those most recently called to help spread the Remedy.¹⁷ For the good news is a revelation of



God's true righteousness—character, methods and principles—that restores trust in God and results in re-creation of a righteous and Christlike character in humans, just as it is written: "The Christlike will live by choosing what is right in governance of themselves, and by trusting God with how things turn out."

In the lesson a common misconception is promoted in point 1, in which they define the gospel. It is absolutely true that the Messiah has come and because of what He achieved we can, by placing our trust in Him, experience healing from sin and everlasting life. Absolutely true—and it is also true this is very good news for us sinners.

Yet, it is not true that this is *the* gospel, i.e. the good news that heals and sets us free. The good news that we can be saved is the **result of the gospel**, it is not *the* gospel—*the* gospel is the good news about God.

The Bible in Revelation 14:6 says the gospel is the “eternal gospel” that means it is good news eternally—both in eternity past as well as in eternity future—and the only good news that is eternally true, is the good news about God—the only eternal being, and the only genuinely good being.

The salvation of humanity is wonderfully good news that **is *the result*** of accepting and trusting in the eternal gospel—that God is our friend, that God is trustworthy, that God is love, and His methods are always in harmony with love and that God in Christ sacrificed Himself to fix all the problems that sin caused in His universe.

This is critical to recognize—remember that lies believe break the circle of love and trust and incite fear and selfishness. Healing starts with truth that destroys lies and wins to trust. But, if we replace the good news about God, with the good news that Jesus died so we can be saved, then we leave out the healing truth we need in order to have the lies about God removed and truly be won to trust. And instead we create false theologies that function to protect or hide us from God. This is what has corrupted Christianity and which we are called to oppose—the finishing of the Reformation is the elimination from our thinking the lies about God which stem from the false law and the replacement of the true gospel with this subtle distortion.

The bottom pink section states, “Do you ever struggle with assurance?” What are the reasons that cause this struggle with assurance of salvation?

Everything that undermines our true knowledge of God!

Life eternal is knowing God—JN 17:3, thus anything that undermines this true knowledge will undermine assurance.

What theologies do this?

The legal theologies that focus our minds on our sins, our misdeeds and our need for accounting—we must confess, we must get pardon, we must get forgiveness—and oh my, what if I forgot a sin and



never asked for the blood of Jesus to be applied? Is that one still paid for or will it keep me out of heaven?

What if I have a moment in which I lose my temper and curse someone and then get hit by a car and die before I can confess—is that sin pardoned or does it remain on the record books and will I have to die for it?

Such horrible ideas are all based on the lie that God’s law functions like our laws, rules imposed which require imposed punishments, rather than the truth that God’s laws are design laws and we have a condition which needs healing.

The question is not do we have symptoms, the question is are we partaking of Jesus—the Remedy?

MONDAY

The first sentence of the first paragraph states, “Amazingly enough, some people actually challenge the idea of human sinfulness, arguing that people are basically good.”

What do you understand sin to be?

I wrote the second chapter in the book *Servant God*, the chapter title is “What Is Sin?”

When I asked high school students to write down the answer to that question these were some of the answers:

- An act contrary to that for which God stands
- Something that separates us from God
- Doing something morally wrong
- Anything evil or unjust
- Something that brings us down
- The absence of anything good/anything not of God
- Doing anything you know deep inside is wrong
- Bad stuff
- A bad thing that Satan discovered and brought upon us
- The cause of all pain and suffering
- When you do something you feel guilty about
- Anything that makes God unhappy
- Something to be forgiven
- Whatever you do wrong, yet don’t even care what you did

The next two answers were submitted by more than 10% of the students:

- Sin is not following the Ten Commandments



- Sin is going against the will of God

What do you hear in these descriptions? Have they gotten to the root of sin, or are they dancing around it? Are their answers like the following answers to the question: What is disease?

- Something that goes against what health stands for
- Something that requires quarantine
- Something that is unhealthy
- Something that is just bad or sick
- Something that makes you feel bad
- Doing anything you know deep inside is bad for you
- A destructive element Satan discovered and brought upon us

Do these descriptions really tell you what disease is or do they dance around it describe some of the results of disease or actions we take because of disease?

Two students had a different view of what sin is:

- The absence of love
- The opposite of God's character—sin is selfishness

These two would be like saying:

- disease is breaking the laws of health and cutting oneself off from the source of life
- disease is the opposite of God's design for life

So the majority responses were descriptions of some of the consequences, some of the symptoms, some of the behaviors that demonstrate sin—the minority describe the underlying cause for those symptoms.

The Bible describes sin in these two ways:

- Sin is lawlessness or transgression of the law (1Jn 3:4)
- Everything that does not come from faith is sin (Rom 14:23)

Are these describing something different or the same thing? How do you explain these verses?

What law? The law of love, which is design law, the protocols upon which life is built—every breath....

And what is it that causes love to be breached? It is broken trust, which happens when lies are believed.



Thus, when we don't trust God, we don't experience His love in our hearts, this results in fear and selfishness and thus we act to protect self rather than to live in harmony with God's design of love.

TUESDAY

The lesson talks about how there was this hope that with the twentieth century humanity would improve, advance, and move past its brutal past—however it was one of the most destructive and bloody in human history.

What do we learn from this? What were contributing factors to this?

There was a movement in the US in the early twentieth century called Eugenics, which arose from Darwinism, and is the idea that humanity can be improved by selective breeding. If we take the strongest and best amongst us and breed them together we can get subsequent generations stronger and more advanced—this is the idea.

It was started in America and led to forced sterilization of many people who were deemed genetically inferior, this would include those with mental handicaps and one of the primary places the forced sterilizations were carried out was in psychiatric hospitals.

It was the writings of thought leaders in America that influenced the Nazi's and led to the movement in Germany of a pure Arian bloodline and ultimately to killing those deemed to be genetically inferior.

Thus, introducing the philosophy of a godless universe in which the strong survive passing on the better genetic material to improve subsequent generations led to some of the most horrible moments in human history.

Now, does this mean that if people believe in God they don't commit atrocities?

It all depends on the God in which they believe—whenever people reject the truth about the God of love—as revealed in Jesus—and instead worship a god who is the imposer of law and must impose punishments for law-breaking, then those people eventually become abusive of others—consider the Crusades, Inquisition and many other atrocities carried out by those who claim a belief in God. Consider the Muslim extremists today.

The only protection is to come back to the truth about God as Jesus revealed.

The lesson asks us to read Romans 1:22,23 and answer “How do we see this principle being manifested now?”

Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools²³ and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles.

How do we see this manifested today?



- Sports teams?
- Movie stars?
- Cars, houses?
- What about a god who requires the blood of a human sacrifice to pay him for sin so he won't kill you?

Consider this quotation from one of the founders of the SDA church:

Thousands have a false conception of God and His attributes. They are as verily serving a false god as were the servants of Baal. Are we worshiping the true God as He is revealed in His Word, in Christ, in nature, or are we adoring some philosophical idol enshrined in His place? God is a God of truth. Justice and mercy are the attributes of His throne. **He is a God of love, of pity and tender compassion. Thus He is represented in His Son, our Saviour.** He is a God of patience and long-suffering. If such is the being whom we adore and to whose character we are seeking to assimilate, we are worshiping the true God. {FLB 59.8}

Do we have Baal worship in Christianity today? Do you remember who Baal was?

Do we see people today worshipping a false god and thereby being corrupted by it?

Remember what happened in Rwanda? Those who worshipped an authoritarian god participated in genocide while those who worshipped a God of love protected the refugees.

Or, studies that demonstrate that the worship of an authoritarian god increases the likelihood of child and spouse abuse, but the worship of a God of love reduces the risk.

Yes, we become like the God we admire and worship and sadly Christianity has been infected with a distorted view of God, which is based on accepting a lie about His law—namely that it functions like human law.

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, “But he wasn’t...” What does it mean they were “condemned by God’s law”?

Is there a difference in being condemned legally and then sentenced to an imposed death, and being diagnosed as terminal and condemned by the terminal state to die unless remedy is received?

So, how do we hear this? Is God using law books to judge our behavior and condemning us to die at His hand, or is God diagnosing our condition as being out of harmony with how life is construct by Him to exist and that we will die if we refuse to let Him cure us?

Which version leads you to trust God?



What was the problem the Jews had that Paul was working to disabuse them of? That sin was a matter of behavior and therefore righteousness was a matter of behavior—not so, sin is a state of being out of harmony with God and His design in heart and mind that leads to destructive behaviors. Righteousness is being healed, restored or set right in heart and mind and results in healthy, kind, loving, Christlike behaviors.

THURSDAY

Romans 2:4 states that that kindness of God leads to repentance—why?

Read first paragraph, “We should notice...” This is well said—it is God’s kindness that leads us to trust Him and repent, turn to Him for healing.

They are so right that God never uses coercion!

Question: what is coercion?

According to the dictionary coercion is: “use of force or intimidation to obtain compliance.”

Hmmm... then what would it mean if God used His power to inflict punishment upon those who refused to repent?

It would be coercion, which would violate the law of liberty, destroy love, incite rebellion and destroy individuality. Thus, we can only have harmony with Scripture and reality when we reject the imposed law that puts God in the role of inflicting punishment and return to design law which has the punishment coming out from the deviation from design and God in the role of healing and saving.

The lesson states in the last paragraph, “human effort can’t bring salvation...”

Why not?

- Because the payment has to be sinless or God won’t accept it?
- Because the ransom price was a sinless life and we don’t have one to give?
- Because God wouldn’t be satisfied and His wrath would not be propitiated without a sinless offering?
- Because we could never procure the remedy for our condition?

FRIDAY

Read and discuss questions 3 and 4



ANNOUNCEMENTS:

October 12-16, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Garden Grove SDA church in Garden Grove, CA. This will be a multi-speaker event focusing on the atonement. For more information contact:

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October 27, 28, 2017: Dr. Jennings will speaking at the Arlington SDA church in Arlington, TX. For more information contact: <http://www.arlingtonadventist.com/>

November 17,18, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr. SDA church in California.