



## 2023 3Q Ephesians—Lesson 8

### Christ-Shaped Lives and Spirit-Inspired Speech

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

#### SABBATH

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The lesson tells a story of a man named Jose who was living homeless and was unwashed, disheveled when a man gave him a complete makeover, haircut, shave, bath, new clothes and how he didn't even look like the same person and this changed his life for the better. Then, in the last paragraph, the lesson draws this comparison:

- In Ephesians 4:17–32, Paul argues that believers have experienced a complete transformation. They have taken off their old selves and have embraced their new identity. Somewhat like Jose's change, though, this is no mere external transformation. It includes being “renewed in the spirit of your minds” (Eph. 4:23, ESV), bringing into the life “true righteousness and holiness” (Eph. 4:24, ESV). This is the ultimate makeover. (Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2023, Ephesians p. 64).

I am so happy to see that the lesson is teaching that salvation is a complete transformation of the person, being healed, renewed in heart and mind. This is exactly right, salvation is not penal legal it is actual recreation, transformation, restoration to holiness, righteousness, godly perfection through Christ.

Can you think of other places where the Bible uses the metaphor of a change of clothing for salvation?

Turn to MONDAY's lesson and read the second paragraph,

- Paul tells us that the adoption of a Christ-shaped life requires three processes, which he expresses through clothing imagery: (1) to “put off” or turn away from the old way of life (Eph. 4:22); (2) to experience inner renewal (Eph. 4:23); and (3) to “put on” the new, Godlike pattern of life (Eph. 4:24). Paul's metaphor reflects the use of clothing in the Old Testament as a symbol for both sinfulness (e.g., Ps. 73:6; Zech. 3:3, 4; Mal. 2:16) and salvation (e.g., Isa. 61:10; Ezek. 16:8; Zech. 3:4, 5). (Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2023, Ephesians p. 66).

And from the references above:

- Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence (Psalm 73:6 NIV84).
- Now Joshua was dressed in filthy clothes as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those who were standing before him, “Take off his filthy clothes.” Then he said to Joshua, “See, I have taken away your sin, and I will put rich garments on you” (Zechariah 3:3–4 NIV84).



- I delight greatly in the LORD; my soul rejoices in my God. For he has clothed me with garments of salvation and arrayed me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom adorns his head like a priest, and as a bride adorns herself with her jewels (Isaiah 61:10 NIV84).

And we also read in Scripture:

- All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all our righteous acts are like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6 NIV84).
- “But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing wedding clothes. ‘Friend,’ he asked, ‘how did you get in here without wedding clothes?’ The man was speechless (Matthew 22:11-12 NIV84).
- Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads (Revelation 4:4 NIV84).

So the Bible does use the metaphor of clothing, dirty, filthy, torn clothing representing our sinfulness, and fine, clean, white robes representing the righteousness of Jesus that the saved become dressed in.

And the lesson points out that Paul is calling for the believers to exchange their old sinful clothes/lives for new clean clothes or holy/pure/righteous lives.

How does one do that?

Does Jesus take off our old sinful selves for us?

Can Jesus take off our old sinful selves for us or is letting go of our old ways, our old preferences, desires, and priorities, our choice to make?

Do we have to choose to surrender all, to let go of self, to stop trying to make ourselves look good, to be honest with God and ourselves and to disrobe, to be open and truthful about our own sin condition? Do we have to choose to say, “I admit that I am a sinner and I am completely infected with fear and selfishness. That on my own all I do is corrupt and impure. I don’t want to be sick in heart and mind, I surrender my old fear-based survival drive self to Jesus”?

But even if we do surrender, take off the old self, can we prepare, sew, create the new clothing for ourselves—meaning can we create, by our good works, a new righteous character?

In the wedding parable, why was the man who showed up without the wedding garment called out for not wearing the wedding clothes? Was he being called out because he didn’t buy wedding clothes or didn’t make wedding clothes? No, the wedding clothes were provided free of charge by the groom and



the man chose not to wear them. Is there a lesson in this parable about our old sinful selves and our new selves in Christ?

Who creates develops and makes the robe of righteousness? Jesus!

Who decides to put off our old self and put on a new self?

Our lesson this week focuses on Ephesians 4:17-32, lets read these verses and see who Paul says is the one who must act to change these metaphorical clothes:

- **You** were taught, with regard to your former way of life, **to put off your old self**, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and **to put on the new self**, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness.

Therefore **each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully** to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. “In your anger do not sin”: **Do not** let the sun go down while you are still angry, and **do not** give the devil a foothold. **He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work**, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.

**Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths**, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And **do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God**, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. **Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind** and compassionate to one another, **forgiving** each other, just as in Christ God forgave you (Ephesians 4:22–32 NIV84, emphasis mine).

In these verses, who is the one that is being instructed to act, to do? Is the instruction, be still and passively let God put off your old self, and put on a new self, to passively let God take control of your mouth so you become an organic mobile speaker platform that God speaks through?

Is the instruction that we are to have God choose for us what emotions we have and how we deal with them and what words we speak? Is it saying that God is the one who decides for us whether we respond to or reject the Holy Spirit, whether we hold onto bitterness, rage, anger, brawling, slander, and malice or let it go? Whether we are kind and whether we forgive—or is Paul saying in all of these matters and more, that we have to choose, decide, how we will act, what principles we will apply to ourselves in how we live and deal with others?

Who then is deciding, moment by moment, what methods we use? And is it in those decisions of life that we are deciding how we dress ourselves?

Consider this Bible passage, describing the bride of Christ:



- Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! For the wedding of the Lamb has come, and **his bride has made herself ready**. Fine linen, bright and clean, was **given her to wear**.” (Fine linen stands for the righteous acts of the saints.) (Revelation 19:7-8 NIV84).

Does this mean that we, through our choices, good works, and good deeds create our own robe of righteousness, that our works save us?

Think back on the metaphor of old and new clothing, can Jesus choose for you to surrender your fear, hate, resentment, anger, bitterness, malice, jealousy, envy, desire for revenge, sense of injustice, outrage that life is not fair, desire to punish others, unforgiveness, hatred, and selfishness? Can Jesus choose for you to surrender your heart and mind to Him?

Can Jesus make the choice for you to forgive those who have wronged you? When you are mistreated does Jesus choose your response for you? Is Jesus the one who decides whether you lie or tell the truth, whether you spread tales or protect the reputations of others, whether you cheat or are honest, whether you steal or get a job? Who makes these choices for every person?

Then is our salvation up to us, are we saving ourselves?

What law lens are you understanding salvation through?

- If we understand God’s law as imposed law, like human laws, then we falsely conclude that salvation is legal and performance based. Either personal legalism in which the sinner is required, after being legally pardoned based on the legal payment of Jesus and having their past sins forgiven, to then live a behaviorally legally righteous life.
- Or, as others teach, that since they can never live perfectly then all sins for all time for all people have already been legally paid for by Jesus and that we just need to accept the legal payment and live however we want because we are saved by grace, meaning the legal payment of our debt has been made in the courts above.
- And still others believe that it is through the legal application of the blood payment in heaven for every act of sin that we remember to confess and ask forgiveness for that we get legal pardon.

But notice, all of these descriptions are some form of legalism, it is not reality.

What is the reality? Design law, the laws life and health are built by God to operate upon, and the best way to understand that are the laws of health.

Consider having some illness, some terminal condition, whether an infection, or cancer or something else. Whatever the condition is, you have symptoms, you are getting worse, you are dying and there is nothing you can personally do to cure this condition. But, you have a loving father who is a medical doctor and scientist who has sacrificed time, energy, and money to develop a remedy that will perfectly cure you. Your father offers you this remedy free of charge—do you still have to take it in order to get well and live?



And what if the remedy also requires you to stop some of the coping behaviors you were using to deal with your terminal condition—say, you had pain associated with your condition and you had been drinking heavily or smoking marijuana to deal with the pain, and for the remedy to work you must stop adding more injury to yourself which requires that you to stop other activities that diminish you symptoms but at the same time are making you worse?

Who would decide whether you take the remedy and stop the old coping behaviors—you or your physician father?

And if you do choose to daily take the remedy and stop the old coping behaviors are you saving yourself? Did you create the remedy or are you only partaking of and participating in the remedy that was 100 percent developed and provided by another?

This is salvation, this is the Scriptural balance of faith and works. Our works never create the remedy, never cure the sin condition, never save ourselves. Everything necessary for salvation was provided by Jesus, who became a real human being and all by Himself, without any help from any other human being, developed the remedy for our sin condition. And now He offers it to us free of charge. Yet, it is still our choice and responsibility to take what Jesus offers or reject it, to let go of the old and embrace the new, to take off the old coping strategies and apply the healing remedies of Christ.

So, EGW describes it this way in COL:

- This **robe**, woven in the loom of heaven, **has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character**, and this character **He offers to impart to us**. “All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags.” Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God “was manifested **to take away our sins**; and in Him is no sin.” Sin is defined to be “the transgression of the law.” 1 John 3:5, 4. **[What law, imposed rules, or God’s design protocols for life—whatever is not of faith is sin Romans 14:23]** But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, “I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart.” Psalm 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, “I have kept My Father’s commandments.” John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God’s commandments. **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 (Christ’s Object Lessons 311).

She describes it again in the book *The Desire of Ages*:

- **The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. [Why does the law require this? For the same reason the law of respiration requires that we breathe, because God’s laws are the protocols life is built to operate upon. There is no**



**other way to be and live.]** He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, lived a holy life, **and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift** to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men. Thus they have **remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.** More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character**, a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ. God can “be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus.” Romans 3:26. (The Desire of Ages 762).

This is reality, it is the plan of salvation in which Jesus took upon Himself the responsibility of destroying the death causing principle of fear and selfishness and restoring in the human species God's living law of love, God's design law, God's protocols for life, and thereby restoring the species human to unity with God and heaven. In doing this, Jesus became the second Adam, the new head of humanity through whom flows the love, truth, life, power, purity of God that we receive through faith.

Thus the Bible says:

- Although he was a son, he learned obedience from what he suffered and, **once made perfect**, he became the source of eternal salvation for all who obey him (Hebrews 5:8,9 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Jesus as a human, was tempted in all points like we are, but Jesus, as a human, chose only love and loyalty to God and rejected all temptations. Thus, as a human, Jesus learned obedience, learned, developed, grew in wisdom and stature and in favor with God and man. Jesus developed a perfect, sinless, righteous, and holy human character, by the exercise of human abilities in the face of all the weakness and temptation that His humanity was incumbered with.

At the cross Jesus destroyed, from the humanity that He took upon Himself, from the humanity He inherited from Adam, the destructive elements that Adam brought into it that were the avenue for His temptations. When Jesus was in Gethsemane, Jesus anguished in horrible human emotions that tempted Him with the temptation to avoid the cross—to act selfishly, to save self. But Jesus chose love and self-sacrifice instead of survival of the fittest, instead of saving self. And thus, in the humanity of Jesus the living law of God was perfectly restored and the law of sin and death was purged and Jesus became the second Adam, the new head of humanity, our Lord, Savior, King, Redeemer, and Remedy.

When we surrender to Jesus in faith/trust, we take off our old self, and receive a new self, a new identity, with new motives and desires—the mind/character of Jesus, which is the robe of righteousness.

Then, in our daily walk through life, we are faced with choices, do we choose the new desires, to love God and others, to trust Jesus, to put Him at the center of our hearts and motives, to seek to glorify Him because we love Him so much and are so thankful to Him, or do we continue to embrace and practice our long held sinful self-centered coping mechanisms? When we have bills due, do we fulfill all our duties to the best of our ability, to be honest and trust Jesus with the future, with how it turns



out (like Joseph while he was a slave), or do we distrust, allow fear to control our choices and choose to steal, embezzle, or cheat in some way to pay our bills?

When someone says all manner of evil against us falsely, do we choose to put on the robe of Christ's righteousness and bless them and pray for those who persecute us, or do we continue to wear the filthy rags of this world and lash back with hate, anger, name-calling, attacking them in any way we can, seeking to make them pay, to get revenge—even if all of that is only in our hearts and minds?

If we choose to fall on our knees, hurt, frustrated, angry because life is not fair, because we have been wronged, and we cry out to Jesus and tell Him how much it hurts, and tell Him of our anger, our frustration, our desire to go punch someone—but we also say, Jesus this is not who I want to be. I want to love my enemies like you love me. I want to bless those who persecute me, not curse them. But I don't have it in me, please create in me a clean heart O God and renew your right spirit within me, and if then we experience freedom from anger, bitterness, resentment, and the peace that passes understanding—who is doing that? Who is taking off the old and putting on the new? But are you saving yourself, or only choosing to partake of Jesus in real time, in real circumstances, and in so doing Jesus makes a real difference in the inner workings of your heart and mind?

One more thought on the new clothes we are to put on, Jesus counsel to His church in Revelation:

- I counsel you to **buy from me** gold refined in the fire, so you can become rich; and **white clothes to wear, so you can cover your shameful nakedness**; and salve to put on your eyes, so you can see (Revelation 3:18 NIV84).

How are we to buy from Jesus the white robes of His righteous character so that we are not dressed in our own corrupt selfishness but are dressed in the beauty of His righteousness?

It is the barter system—we buy through exchange—we must exchange:

- our sin-sickness for His holiness,
- our guilt for His peace,
- our shame for His purity,
- our fear for His confidence,
- our doubt for His surety,
- our confusion for His clarity,
- our selfishness for His love,
- our dishonesty for His honesty,
- our terminal condition for his holy condition,
- our mortal life for His eternal life.



## SUNDAY

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Read third paragraph,

- Paul is not just concerned about specific sins or behaviors exhibited by Gentiles. He is concerned about a pattern of behavior that they exhibit, a downward trajectory of living in the grip of sin. At the heart of Ephesians 4:17–19 is a portrait of a calloused spirituality: “in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God” (Eph. 4:17, 18, NKJV). This calloused spirituality is the source of the darkened understanding highlighted at the beginning of the passage (“because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart. They have become callous,” Eph. 4:18, 19, ESV) and the depraved sexual practice underlined at its end (“and have given themselves up to sensuality, greedy to practice every kind of impurity,” Eph. 4:19, ESV). Alienated from God, they don’t know how to live, and separated from His saving grace, they continue in a downward spiral of sin and depravity. (Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2023, Ephesians p. 65).

What is being described here? Again, I must commend the lesson for focusing our attention, not on a specific list of sins, but on the underlying spiritual sickness that leads to the sinful behaviors or acts.

Why is it an error, a mistake, to focus only on specific sins, even if it is a comprehensive list of sins?

Sins are the symptoms of the condition—when we forget this, when we have rejected God’s design law and instead advance Romanism, the idea that God’s law functions like human law, then we fail to recognize that the acts of sin are only the symptoms of hearts and minds that are out of harmony with God and His design for life. We think that sin is behavioral, rather than motivational, and false legal solutions are substituted for the true healing remedy that God provides.

Sin absolutely manifests in behaviors, but rightly understood the behaviors are not the problem, they are the symptoms of the problem.

Any Bible texts to support this idea?

- “You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.’ But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment (Matthew 5:21-22 NIV84)
- “You have heard that it was said, ‘Do not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart (Matthew 5:27-28 NIV84).
- “The LORD does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart” (1 Samuel 16:7 NIV84).





- For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, “Do not covet” (Romans 7:7 NIV84).
- This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts (Hebrews 8:10 NIV84).

Do you see that the behaviors are the symptoms of the disease of sin, not the primary problem? It is like how fever, cough, and chills are symptoms of pneumonia—but the symptoms are not the primary problem. And the solution for pneumonia is not merely to treat the symptoms, but to cure the disease.

The penal legal theologies, based upon the lie that God’s law functions like human law, focus on the symptoms, and have a form of godliness with no power. The truth is that through Jesus Christ we get new hearts and right spirits, are reborn, and recreated to live with new lives with new motives that we receive from Jesus and the symptoms resolve as we grow in Christ.

Now with all of this in mind, consider the following description from Jesus, how would you explain this to someone, what is the relationship between our deeds, behaviors, and the judgment?

- “Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned” (Matthew 12:33-37 NIV84).

If the issue is our heart condition, then why is Jesus saying it is by their words that they will be either condemned or acquitted in the judgment? Is Jesus making salvation legal and behavioral?

He is saying that everything in His kingdom is reality based. Those who partake of Him, the Remedy for sin, will experience healing, transformation, renewal, rebirth and have God’s living law of love written upon their hearts and they will live holy lives and their words and deeds will produce the fruit of the Spirit. But those who cling to fear with its legal systems of this world will not have hearts renewed and their words and deeds will be selfish and sinful. Thus, at the judgment those who are goats (lost) are accurately identified as the goats that they actually are and those who are sheep (saved) are accurately identified as the sheep that they actually are; those who **are** righteous are going to be righteous still and those who **are** wicked are going to be wicked still.

God’s judgment does not determine who is righteous and who is wicked, God’s judgment accurately diagnosis, identifies, and separates those who have chosen to accept the free gift of Christ’s righteousness and become righteous from the wicked who have rejected Christ and hardened themselves in unrighteousness—in fear and selfishness.



## TUESDAY

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Read last paragraph,

- Paul then commands, “Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth” (Eph. 4:29, NKJV), which describes a destructive word making its seemingly unstoppable way toward the lips to do its damaging work. Positively, Paul imagines any negative expression not being just stopped, but replaced by a statement that exhibits three criteria: It (1) “is good for building up,” (2) “fits the occasion,” and (3) gives “grace to those who hear” (Eph. 4:29, ESV). If only all our words could be like that! (Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2023, Ephesians p. 67).

What would qualify as “corrupt words”?

Certainly, bearing false witness, words intended to deceive, mislead, and words intended to tempt into sin—all such words would be corrupt.

Any other examples of corrupt words?

What about cursing—when Peter denied Jesus with cursing were his words corrupt?

What if Peter would have said, “Yes, you blankety blank losers, I blankety blank know Him. What are you blankety blank going to do about it?” would those words have been pure and uncorrupted or still corrupt?

If you say corrupt, why? Wouldn’t that statement be a statement of being truthful, of taking a stand for Jesus? Or despite speaking the truth, does saying it with vulgarity and cursing and accusation against one’s enemies reveal the sin infection is still operating in the heart—that there is fear, selfishness, anger and hatred directing the actions rather than love and trust?

Consider James 3:9-11:

- One moment we praise God our Father, and the very next moment we curse the very men and women created in his image. Think about it: Out of the same mouth come both praises and curses. My brothers and sisters, this is wrong, and it must stop. Does a spring bring forth fresh water one moment and sewage the next? (James 3:9-11 REM).

Other examples of corrupt speech?

What about words intended to hurt another person—even if those words are factually true, but the reason for saying them is to wound, hurt, injure, control, manipulate for one’s own ends?

What about saying things that are not true to get along, to avoid conflict, to keep one’s job, something everyone else agrees with, but you do not? Say being put in a situation where you have to deny Jesus



in order to keep your job? What about denying some other aspect of reality, like there is no male or female?

Is there a design law at work in what we say and why we need to be careful in our speech?

Consider this commentary from the book *The Desire of Ages*:

- Closely connected with Christ's warning in regard to the sin against the Holy Spirit is a warning against **idle and evil words**. The words are an indication of that which is in the heart. "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." But **the words are more than an indication of character; they have power to react on the character. Men are influenced by their own words**. Often under a momentary impulse, prompted by Satan, they give utterance to jealousy or evil surmising, **expressing that which they do not really believe; but the expression reacts on the thoughts. They are deceived by their words**, and come to believe that true which was spoken at Satan's instigation. **Having once expressed an opinion or decision, they are often too proud to retract it, and try to prove themselves in the right, until they come to believe that they are**. It is dangerous to utter a word of doubt, dangerous to question and criticize divine light. **The habit of careless and irreverent criticism reacts upon the character**, in fostering irreverence and unbelief. Many a man indulging this habit has gone on unconscious of danger, until he was ready to criticize and reject the work of the Holy Spirit. Jesus said, "Every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned" (The Desire of Ages 323, emphasis mine).

Now consider what is happening in the world today, people are being pressured to speak things that they do not believe, to call a man a woman and a woman a man.

Is there any danger in speaking things **that you believe are false** simply to get along, to avoid conflict, to keep your job?

This is one of the great evils in what is happening in the world today. Evil always seeks to force its way upon others. Righteousness always seeks to win hearts and minds to friendship, to the voluntary service of love, based on understanding and agreement.

Evil is based upon lies and selfishness, righteousness is based upon truth and love. Thus, evil cannot allow honest dialogue, discussion, or leave people free to decide for themselves because the truth will always expose evil as fraudulent and destructive. Thus, evil will always end up using coercive pressure to force its way.

When it comes to personal pronouns notice the evil methods being employed, and the purpose and goal of these evil methods. The method is to use external coercive pressure to force another person to speak and act against their conscience. If one speaks against their own conscience to avoid being ostracized, rejected, being fired from a job, or expelled from school etc. one's mind is damaged, and they become less capable of both discerning truth for themselves and standing for truth.



But, Jesus also said not to cast your pearls before swine lest they turn and rend you asunder, and there were times when Jesus remained silent and didn't speak. To remain silent is not the same as speaking a lie to get along. There will be times when wisdom directs us to remain silent rather than speak the truth boldly, but at other times, we are to speak the truth. We must ask the Holy Spirit to lead us in every circumstance. But, **what the Holy Spirit will not lead us to do is to bear false witness, to deceive, to go against the truth.**

Don't be deceived by what is happening in the world, it is an assault on the hearts, minds, and characters of the righteous.

## WEDNESDAY

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The lesson points out how Paul repeatedly describes how sinful living, refusing to apply to one's life the methods and principles of God, grieves the Holy Spirit. Then the lesson states the following in the third paragraph,

- Paul underlines the full divinity of the Spirit as “the Holy Spirit of God” and highlights the personhood of the Spirit by portraying the Holy Spirit as grieving. (See also Rom. 8:16, 26, 27; 1 Cor. 2:10, 13; 1 Cor. 12:11; Gal. 5:17, 18.) (Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2023, Ephesians p. 68).

Have you heard things going around the circle that attack the full divinity of either Jesus or the Holy Spirit? Things suggesting that there is no Holy Spirit?

There is a reason for this—it is a strategy of Satan to stop people from experiencing salvation. Jesus is God the Son, fully and completely God who is our Savior. Jesus has life original to Himself, unborrowed and underived from another source. Without Jesus' becoming human, living a sinless life, dying selflessly as our substitutionary Savior and rising again no human could be saved from sin.

But what Jesus accomplished for us must be partaken of by us if we are to benefit from it. And the Holy Spirit, who is also fully God, is the one who administers into our hearts the benefits of what Jesus has accomplished in our behalf. Without the work of the Holy Spirit, Christ's victory would not benefit us personally.

Christ's victory would still benefit the loyal angels who would have the truth He revealed. It would still benefit the planet in that Jesus, in His person, successfully restored God's living law back into the species human because Jesus was fully human. And Jesus defeated Satan and reclaimed Earth under human governance—His governance as the second Adam.

But for us to individually participate in what Jesus has accomplished it requires His victory to be made effectual in our hearts and minds. That is the work of the Holy Spirit, first to put a desire for something better than this sinful world of selfishness into our hearts, a longing for God, for love, for our heavenly home. Then the Holy Spirit convicts of sin, brings us to conviction that we are not right,



that something is wrong, and the Holy Spirit enlightens us to the truth, whether we see that truth in nature as Paul says in Romans 1:20 and 2:12, or in Scripture, and then, when we surrender to God, it is the Holy Spirit who takes the righteousness of Christ and reproduces it in us, so that it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me (Galatians 2:20).

- Satan knows that if he can get people to deny the Father and believe in evolutionism, humanism, or some other godless philosophy and live for self that they won't be saved.
- Satan knows that if he can get people to deny Jesus and pursue salvation in some other means or mode without Jesus then they won't be saved.
- And Satan knows that if he can get people to deny the Holy Spirit, to grieve the Holy Spirit, and refuse the work of the Holy Spirit in their lives that they won't be saved.

All these attacks on the Godhead are attacks on the character of God to undermine our faith in God, and to replace the truth of God's character of love with Satan's character of selfishness.

Understand this clearly: **Love does not and cannot exist in a singularity**, in a solitary being with no other living entity. For love to exist and **function** it *requires* an other, someone to love, to sacrifice and give of self for and to. And godly agape love does not exist in a dyad, the fullest form of other centered love requires at a minimum, three.

Two people who constantly adore each other can fall into narcissistic reinforcement. Immature couples sometimes do this, when they love each other completely, and are all into each other, and constantly pay attention to and engage positively with the other. And then, at some point, a child is born and the mother begins to pay appropriate time and attention to the child and is not as available to constantly adore the husband, and the immature husband becomes frustrated, angry, and jealous. Their relationship was not godly love, but narcissistic reinforcement.

The minimum for genuine self-sacrificial godly agape love is three. And in the testimony of Scripture we see this. Jesus constantly seeks, not glory for Himself, but to uplift the Father, the Holy Spirit comes not to speak on His own but to uplift and promote Jesus the Son, and the Father sends the Spirit to do His work.

Satan wants to corrupt our understanding of the character of God to be anything other than love, to create a hierarchical system with a supreme ruler who uses power and authority over others. That is Satan's method and system.

Jesus gave this testimony:

- "If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you **another Counselor** to be with you forever—the **Spirit** of truth. The world cannot accept **him**, because it neither sees **him** nor knows **him**. But you know **him**, for **he** lives with you and will be in you (John 14:15-17, emphasis mine).



Now, if there is no third person of the Godhead that we call the Holy Spirit, Jesus words here are quite strange and misleading. If the Holy Spirit is merely the omnipresence of the Father, as some claim, then Jesus should have said: “I will ask the Father, and **He Himself** will come to you to be with you forever...” If the Holy Spirit were not a person, but a force, then Jesus should have said, “The world cannot accept **it**, because the world neither sees **it** nor knows **it**.”

In the Old Testament we find all three members of the Godhead:

- Then God said, “Let **us** make man in **our** image, in **our** likeness... Genesis 1:26

God did not say, “I will make man in my image.”

But what about “Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God *is* one LORD” (Deuteronomy 6:4)

Notice the passage in English uses both “Lord” and “God.”

The reading of this passage with the Hebrew names for “Lord” and “God” would go like this: “Hear, O Israel: *Yahweh* our *Elohim*, *Yahweh* is One.”

What is interesting is that the word *Elohim* in Hebrew is plural and is the same word used for God in Genesis 1:26. Thus an accurate meaning of this text would go like this: “The One is more than One yet is One”

In Hebrew there are two words for one, *Yacheed* and *Echad*. The first indicates singular unity as in one and only, the second indicates compound unity, as the oneness of two or more. In this text *Echad* is used along with the plural name of God *Elohim* indicating the oneness of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The Old Testament also provides texts in which all members of the Godhead are referenced:

- And now the Sovereign Lord [Father] has sent me [Son], with his Spirit [Holy Spirit]. This is what the Lord says— your Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel: Isaiah 48:16,17
- “Here is my [Father] servant [Son], whom I [Father] uphold, my [Father] chosen one [Son] in whom I [Father] delight; I [Father] will put my Spirit [Holy Spirit] on him [Son] and he [Son] will bring justice to the nations. Isaiah 42:1

Ellen White affirmed the full divinity of the three persons of the Godhead, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:

- In describing to His disciples the office work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus sought to inspire them with the joy and hope that inspired His own heart. He rejoiced because of the abundant help He had provided for His church. The Holy Spirit was the highest of all gifts that He could solicit from His Father for the exaltation of His people. **The Spirit was to be given as a regenerating agent, and without this the sacrifice of Christ would have been of no avail.**



The power of evil had been strengthening for centuries, and the submission of men to this satanic captivity was amazing. **Sin could be resisted and overcome only through the mighty agency of the Third Person of the Godhead, who would come with no modified energy, but in the fullness of divine power. It is the Spirit that makes effectual what has been wrought out by the world's Redeemer.** It is by the Spirit that the heart is made pure. Through the Spirit the believer becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. (The Desire of Ages 671).

- There are **three living persons of the heavenly trio; in the name of these three great powers—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit**—those who receive Christ by living faith are baptized, and these powers will co-operate with the obedient subjects of heaven in their efforts to live the new life in Christ.— (Evangelism, p. 615)

## THURSDAY

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Read the second paragraph,

- In the final exhortation of Ephesians 4:17–32, Paul again provides a negative command, this one identifying six vices that are to “be put away from you” (Eph. 4:31); a positive command to be kind, tenderhearted, and forgiving (Eph. 4:32), and a rationale. Believers are to forgive one another “even as God in Christ forgave you” (Eph. 4:32, NKJV). The list of six vices begins and ends with general, all-encompassing terms, “all bitterness” and “all malice.” In between come four additional terms: “wrath,” “anger,” “clamor,” and “slander” (Eph. 4:31, ESV). (Adult SS Guide 3rd Q 2023, Ephesians p. 69).

Why are we to forgive those who wrong us?

If we forgive them does that mean what they did was okay?

Does it mean we have to trust them? Why not?

If we forgive do we have to treat them as if they did not wrong us? What if they remain untrustworthy?

If we forgive them do they get away with their sin against us?

If God forgives people, like Jesus did on the cross, do they get away with their sin?

Does forgiving someone mean forgetting?

Does forgiving someone mean they become your friend?

Who is changed when we forgive?



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS:**

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### **JOIN DR. JENNINGS TREATMENT TEAM**

Dr. Jennings is now in his new position as Medical Director of Honey Lake Clinic in Greenville, Florida. See their website at <https://www.honeylake.clinic/>

Honey Lake Clinic is the only Christ-centered, residential, psychiatric, treatment program in the country. We have two campuses—adult and female adolescent (Dr. Jennings is Medical Director of the Adult Campus). The program takes a holistic approach to treatment integrating the best of modern neuroscience with biblical principles (design laws) to bring healing to mind, body, soul, and spirit.

As you likely know, the need for such whole-person Christian mental health care is huge and therefore we are expanding our services to be able to treat more people But in order to do that, **we need more staff**—staff who are both professionally competent and licensed but who are also committed Christians who have the vision to integrate Christ and Christian principles into treating the whole person.

If you are interested in becoming part of the treatment team at Honey Lake Clinic and working with Dr. Jennings, see the jobs posted below and contact Honey Lake for more details. (LCSWs should also apply). If you are interested in any of the positions below email [HR@honeylakeclinic.com](mailto:HR@honeylakeclinic.com)

#### **Psychiatry Mental Health Nurse Practitioner- Advance Practice Nurse Practitioner**

- Able to empathically and compassionately interview patients presenting with a MH issue using the organization's comprehensive psychiatric evaluation
- Able to elicit medical histories and assess for medical causes of the MH issues or for comorbid medical issues that are a result of the MH disorder and/or exacerbate the MH disorder
- Utilization of interview, assessment and diagnostics in comprehensive treatment of dual diagnosis patients
- Able to assess for level of detox and use standard CIWA and COWS for withdrawal severity and then initiate detox treatment
- Able to prescribe initial psychiatric and detox medications, monitor and document results and side effects, and perform follow-up medication management within accepted standard of care guidelines.
- Familiarity with ASAM or LOCUS for assignment of levels of care

#### **Adult Program Clinical Director**

- Masters in mental health counseling, psychology or social work required. Other graduate degrees that lead to MHC, MSW or MFT licensure are acceptable.
- Florida Licensure (LMHC, LCSW or LMFT) active and in good standing, is required.
- Experience providing therapy to adults with mental health and substance diagnoses 2 years post-licensure is required.
- Supervisory experience, minimum of 2 years is required, post-licensure is preferred.





- Experience in Clinical Supervision and Program Management, 2 years post-licensure is preferred.

### **Licensed Therapist**

- Masters in mental health counseling, psychology or social work required. Other graduate degrees that lead to MHC, MSW or MFT licensure are acceptable.
- Licensure is required
- EMDR with other trauma modalities is preferred.
- Experience with adults with mental health and/or substance diagnoses is preferred.

### **Individual Therapist- Registered Intern**

- Masters in mental health counseling, psychology or social work required. Other graduate degrees that lead to MHC, MSW or MFT licensure are acceptable.
- EMDR with other trauma modalities is preferred.
- Experience with adults with mental health and/or substance diagnoses is preferred.