



2024 4Q Themes in the Gospel of John Lesson 1 Signs that Point the Way

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SABBATH

When you think about the book of John—does anything about it stand out from the other three gospels? If so, what?

John is called the beloved—the disciple Jesus loved:

- One of them, **the disciple whom Jesus loved**, was reclining next to him. (John 13:23 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- When Jesus saw his mother there, and **the disciple whom he loved** standing nearby, he said to his mother, “Dear woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home. (John 19:26–27 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, **the one Jesus loved**, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” (John 20:2 NIV84, emphasis mine).
- Then **the disciple whom Jesus loved** said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” (John 21:7 NIV84, emphasis mine).

What does this mean? Didn’t Jesus love all the disciples?

This a great example of how a statement or use of words can be easily misconstrued. This description is not talking about Jesus having more love in His heart for John than the others, but about John having a heart that responds to Jesus’ love more deeply than the others, thus Jesus was able to have more of His love flow into John. So love here is not simple affection, it is functional. Jesus was able to functionally love John more because John was more responsive. This is a description of how reality works, design law. And is described very accurately in the commentary from *The Desire of Ages*:

- These disciples had been for some time associated with Jesus in active labor. John and James, Andrew and Peter, with Philip, Nathanael, and Matthew, had been more closely connected with Him than the others, and had witnessed more of His miracles. Peter, James, and **John stood in still nearer relationship to Him**. They were almost constantly with Him, witnessing His miracles, and hearing His words. **John pressed into still closer intimacy with Jesus**, so that he is distinguished as the one whom Jesus loved. **The Saviour loved them all, but John’s was the most receptive spirit**. He was younger than the others, and with more of the child’s confiding trust he opened his heart to Jesus. Thus he came more into sympathy with Christ, and **through him the Saviour’s deepest spiritual teaching was communicated to His people**. (The Desire of Ages 292, emphasis mine).

Do you agree? Do we see the deepest spiritual truths communicated by John? What are some of those?

- John's love caused him to stay by and witness the crucifixion and therefore, John's gospel was written by the only Apostle who saw the supreme evidence lived out in action. Do you think that could have an impact on John's perspective and ability to communicate the eternal truths?
- John makes the case that Jesus is the Word of God and who was and is God yet who also became human
- John contrast light and darkness a metaphor for truth and lies—and John emphasizes that in God, in Jesus, there is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5).
 - This is important because on of Satan's counterfeits is Eastern mysticism—the philosophy of dualism, that light and darkness, good and evil, are required for the universe to function. That there cannot be good without evil, light without darkness. It is Satan's counterfeit and hope. Satan wants a universe in which good and evil exist together for all eternity and he is ruler over the dark. But the biblical understanding of reality is that God is light and there is no darkness and God's creation has been infected with lies, fear, selfishness, sin, darkness. And through Christ God will eliminate from His universe all darkness, all sin, all evil. There will not be an eternal future where good and evil exist together.
 - Sadly, this lie of dualism has entered into Christianity in teachings the suggest there will be eternal evil in God's universe in the eternal burning hell lie where Satan and his angels and all the lost live in torment forever. It is also taught in the penal legal lies when they teach that God is the source of pain, suffering, and death that He inflicts upon the wicked as legal punishment for their sins. Thus life and death exist and originate in God—this is all part of Satan's counterfeit system to get people to believe in him rather than our Creator in whom is no darkness at all.
- John emphasizes Jesus is the truth of God revealed, if we have seen Jesus we have seen the Father
 - But this truth is also denied in many versions of Christianity that teach that Jesus is our merciful Savior who sacrificed Himself to pay our legal penalty and now intercedes with His Father in heaven who is the source of justice and inflicted punishment to plead for mercy from His Father based on His blood sacrifice. Some versions include Mary in the process of interceding in heaven to beg for mercy.
- John documents how Jesus wields power—to serve, heal, uplift; Jesus does not use power to coerce, to inflict punishments, and if we have seen the Father in Jesus we can know the Father will not use power in such a way either. God uses power to create, to save, to heal, it is sin that destroys—and one day, God will surrender all those who don't want Him in their lives to reap what they have chosen, separation from Him and He will STOP using power to protect them from their own choice and then they suffer and die from the result of their insistence on breaking away from life, not because God uses His power on them.
- John confirms that Jesus' mission was to reveal the truth about God to both humans and to angels; The angels in heaven needed the truth revealed also.

- John documents that Jesus did not come to pay a legal penalty to His Father and specifically that Jesus would not go back to heaven to pray or intercede to His Father for us—because the Father Himself loves us (John 16:26).
- John documents that it was because God so loved the world that He sent His Son to accomplish the purpose of the Father and that purpose is to save us from sin and restore us to eternal unity with Him while securing the unfallen universe in loyalty and stopping the rebellion of fear and distrust
- John documents over and over again the methods of God in winning the war, truth, love, and freedom—and not imposed law or law enforcement
- John presents the truth about the sin problem and God’s solution for it. Jesus came to take away the sin of the world—not take our punishment for sin.
- John exposes what the judgment is—it is the judgment of reality, of design law, of each person being confronted with truth and then they decided how they respond to truth, either submitting and being won to love and trust, or rejecting and hardening in selfishness. Thus, every person passes judgment upon themselves—there is never in God’s kingdom an external legal judgment.
- Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.” (John 9:39 NIV84).

Jesus is the light that lightens all men—He came to reveal the truth and thus bring judgment, bring people the evidence they need to make a judgment and choose who/what they love and trust, what methods they prefer, what kind of people they will be.

Notice this sequence,

- Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the **Son of Man to be glorified**. [This is His crucifixion where He will reveal by deed, by action, by accomplishment the truth of God’s character of love and eliminate the cause of death from humanity.] I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. The man who loves his life will lose it, while the man who hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

“Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!” [Jesus does not go through the cross against His will. He is not taken there like the two thieves. He goes voluntarily because He knows it is the only path to eliminate the infection of fear and selfishness from humanity, restore the image of God perfectly into the species, expose Satan as a liar, and reveal the truth about Himself and His Father.]

Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the **time for judgment on this world**; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself.” (John 12:23-32 NIV84, emphasis mine). [Jesus reveals the truth that exposes the lies and thus every person passes a judgment, every intelligent being chooses what they believe. Do they judge God to be trustworthy, or do they judge that Satan is telling the truth? Do they prefer the methods of truth, love, liberty, or the methods of lies, power over, control, coercion and force?]

Jesus confirms this just a few verses later:

- “As for the person who hears my words but does not keep them, **I do not judge him. For I did not come to judge the world**, but to save it. **There is a judge** for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; that **very word which I spoke will condemn him** at the last day. (John 12:47-48 NIV84, emphasis mine).

This is reality—it is how truth impacts hearts and minds. We all, when faced with truth, must respond to it. Our choice in response to truth changes us, either bringing healing, or if we reject it and cling to lies hardens us.

Notice Jesus’ description in John 3:

- “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. For **God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world**, but to save the world through him. Whoever **believes in him is not condemned**, but whoever does not believe **stands condemned already** because he has not believed in the name of God’s one and only Son. **This is the verdict: Light has come** into the world, **but men loved darkness** instead of light because their deeds were evil. Everyone who does evil hates the light, and will not come into the light for fear that his deeds will be exposed. But whoever lives by the truth comes into the light, so that it may be seen plainly that what he has done has been done through God.” (John 3:16-21 NIV84 emphasis mine).

God is love and God’s love compels Him to act to save and heal His creation and thus He and the Son and the Spirit work in perfect unity to carry out their joint plan to eliminate sin and save sinners. Thus Jesus, in harmony with the Father’s will and purpose became incarnate, not to condemn the world but to save it. Why? Because of reality, of how design law works, once Adam sinned all humanity was condemned by the terminal sin condition itself. This condition is out of harmony with life and God doesn’t have to choose to condemn because the problem is not legal, it is lethal. Thus Jesus came to save from this condition, this terminal sin-state. And the verdict, the judgment, is when people see the light of truth as revealed by Jesus and they reject it they pass judgment on themselves.

That is what light and truth does—it requires us to consider it and choose.

That is how reality works. Satan doesn’t want people to worship our Creator, so he seeks to replace in people’s minds the truth of God as Creator and get people to worship a creature, a being who makes

up rules and uses external power to punish rule-breakers. Such a punishing god is the god of this world of sin, the prince of the air and darkness, the source of inflicted punishment for law breaking and the entire world is being prepared to meet him as their savior, all except the elect who have returned to worshiping the Creator and understand how reality actually works because they know God's laws are design laws.

Consider this commentary from one of the founders of the SDA church, and notice how it is a description of design law, how reality works, just as we are teaching, and judgment is what we pass on ourselves as we reject the truth.

- **They thought themselves passing judgment on Christ; but in rejecting Him they were pronouncing sentence upon themselves.** "He that is of God," said Jesus, "heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God."

The lesson is **true for all time**. Many a man who delights to quibble, to criticize, seeking for something to question in the word of God, thinks that he is thereby giving evidence of independence of thought, and mental acuteness. **He supposes that he is sitting in judgment on the Bible, when in truth he is judging himself.** He makes it manifest that he is incapable of appreciating truths that originate in heaven, and that compass eternity. (The Desire of Ages p. 468, emphasis mine).

- The people who beheld the Saviour at His advent were favored with a fuller manifestation of the divine presence than the world had ever enjoyed before. **The knowledge of God was revealed more perfectly. But in this very revelation, judgment was passing upon men. Their character was tested, their destiny determined.** (The Desire of Ages 475).

This is not a legal judgment by a magistrate, it is the judgment of reality—we are truly and actually changed by the choices we make in governance of ourselves.

John is such an incredible book, filled with truth in the most clear and touching ways. When I decided to paraphrase the NT the first book I paraphrased was John.

What do you like most about John?

The lesson asks us: Why John wrote the gospel? What do you think was his goal or purpose?

John tell us in the last verse:

- But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:31 NIV84).

So the reason is that people may believe in Jesus and have eternal life in His name—but what does that mean?

Jesus said that many would come to Him at the end of time claiming to believe in Him, doing ministry in His name, but He tells them go away workers of iniquity He never knew them.

So, what does it actually mean to believe in Jesus and have life in His name?

Wouldn't it mean we believe what He revealed about the Father? That the Father is just like Him? Wouldn't it mean that we believe all He taught through His parables, which are all revelations of how reality functions, how design law works? Wouldn't it mean we rejected the imposed law construct and stop believing God functions no differently than a creature? And wouldn't that mean we actually trust Him and in that trust we open our hearts to Him and die to fear and selfishness and experience a new motivation, a new life, a new spirit of love and we choose to align our lives, our choices, our practices, associations, and actions with what is in harmony with reality, with God's design laws and thus we are transformed by the indwelling Holy Spirit as we choose to say yes to the leading of the Holy Spirit and apply the truth to our lives? Thus we develop the character of Christ and have His name written on our foreheads!

Here is my paraphrase,

- But what has been written is recorded to provide evidence demonstrating that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God — the only cure for the infection of selfishness, the only Remedy for the diseased human mind — and that by trusting him you may experience complete healing of mind, restoration of Christlike character, and life eternal. (John 20:31 REM).

The issue is who do we trust, and does that trust result in surrendering of self and our demands to do it our way, an opening of self to the working of the Holy Spirit in us so that our methods, modes of operating, principles, desires, longings are transformed and we become like Jesus in character because we love what He loves, value what He values, prefer what He prefers and eagerly choose to apply to ourselves His living law of love, truth, and freedom in how we govern ourselves **and treat others**?

There are two antagonistic systems, methods, principles, laws, kingdoms at war on the planet—the kingdom of truth, love and freedom, and the kingdom of lies, fear, selfishness, control and coercion. The governments of this world are all part of the kingdom of sin, of fear, of selfishness, manipulation, exploitation, abuse, coercion, they all function with external means to coerce and control. And so many Christians are deceived into believing it is righteous to use laws to force people to be good, to force good choices on people. But in so doing, they break God's law of love and liberty and spread rebellion and sin.

The truth is that the kingdom of God is within you, it is the kingdom of truth, love and freedom and this kingdom cannot advance through external law and law enforcement.

As events unfold in the world around us, we will all face various increasing conflicts between the methods of God and the methods of this world. Satan will work with every tool he has to divert our minds away from Jesus, we must keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. We must not be drawn to trust in this world, its governments, its politicians, its systems. We must live authentic lives of integrity in

harmony with God’s living laws and stand firm in the face of the pressures that will come upon us to compromise our consciences and collude with the methods and practices of this world.

SUNDAY

The miracle of turning water into wine—what are the lessons we learn from this miracle?

- Jesus is God in human form—He has the power to create
- Jesus endorses and blesses marriage as God designed, the union of two individuals in love to become one
- The water represents the pure waters of the Holy Spirit which brings washing and renewal and when we are washed and renewed we have a new life—which is represented the wine, which is symbolic of Jesus blood, which represents His life. All of this is symbolized by baptism, washed in the waters of the Holy Spirit, dying to our old live, receiving the new life of Jesus. Also, symbolized by the cup given to the disciples at the last supper.
- And all of this symbolizes that individual salvation is a cooperative effort. The workers filled the jars with water and served the water, but it was the virtue, power, recreative holiness of Jesus that turned regular water to wine. Likewise, each individual is saved through the cooperation of that individual and Jesus. Jesus cannot save a person against that person’s will, but no person can be saved without the divine presence and power of Jesus.

MONDAY

The lesson focuses on the second miraculous sign, when Jesus healed the nobleman’s son.

But the lesson makes a very important observation in the fourth paragraph,

- “It is important to recognize that miracles, in and of themselves, did not prove that Jesus was the Messiah. Others have performed miracles. Some were true prophets; others false. Miracles reveal only the existence of the supernatural; they don’t, by themselves, mean that God must be the One doing them. (Satan can perform “miracles,” if by the word “miracle” we mean supernatural acts.) (Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2024, The Book of Mark p. 8).

What should our attitude be toward miracles?

Is it a wise method to build one’s faith or beliefs upon miracles?

What about the lack of miracles? Is it wise to draw conclusions about God’s involvement or our faith if miracles do not occur?

Is there something better to build our faith, beliefs, upon? John 8:32...

If miracles are not the best basis of faith, why did Jesus perform so many?

TUESDAY/WEDNESDAY

The lesson focuses on the miracle of the man who was paralyzed for 38 years, and how after Jesus' heals the man the Jewish leadership respond by seeking to kill Jesus for Sabbath breaking—which takes us to WEDNESDAY's lesson.

The lesson points out the leadership had hard hearts and asks in the last paragraph,

- “How could these religious leaders be so blind? The likely answer is that it was because of their own corrupt hearts, their false belief that the Messiah would deliver them from Rome now, and their love of power and lack of surrender to God.” (Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2024, The Book of Mark p. 10).

Did the lesson actually give the cause or did they describe other consequences of the actual cause?

For instance, it is true they had hard hearts and their hard hearts caused them to respond with cruelty rather than support and joy. But, is acknowledging they had hard hearts identify the cause of their hard hearts?

The lesson suggests that perhaps their hearts were hard because they believed falsely about the mission of the Messiah, that He was coming to free them from Rome—but is that the cause of the hard hearts or is that false belief another result of the true cause?

The lesson suggests it was valuing power and not surrendering to God. No doubt that not surrendering to God causes the hardening one's heart, but did they think that they were not surrendered to God, or would they have believed they were surrendered to God, and in fact were doing God's will in opposing Jesus?

So what is the problem here? They have surrendered to the wrong god, and what is the cause of them following, obeying, worshiping, the wrong god? Did the god they worship have the wrong list of doctrines, the wrong Sabbath, the wrong Bible, the wrong Temple, the wrong ceremonies, rituals, feast days, tithing, sacrificial animals? Or, did the god they serve have the wrong type of law—imposed law that required imposed punishment and therefore they were worshiping a creature instead of the Creator and they prioritized and valued rules, law, and law enforcement over design law—actually restoring people back to harmony to life and health?

Do we see the same thing today?

Last week I was attending the Southern Psychiatric Association meeting and had some lovely conversations with other members. One psychiatrist and his wife are Jewish and she is a cantor, in one

of the sects of Judaism. They told how a few years ago they went to Israel with a group of other cantors and went to the wailing wall, and that as you approach the wailing wall they require separation of men and women, so their group, who was mixed men and women, stayed away from that section and where men and women are allowed to mix. They asked my colleague's wife to sing some of their liturgy, which she began to do in Hebrew. And very shortly thereafter a line of Jewish clergy dressed in their black robes and black hats marched out and surrounded them and began cursing them in Hebrew in the most vile and vulgar ways, escalating to the point that the police came and rather than instructing the clergy to stop their threats, the police instructed the visitors that if they persisted with a female singing the liturgy they couldn't ensure their safety. So, she handed over the cantor to a male who finished it. Why did this happen? What were the Jewish leaders focused upon? What were the visitors focused upon? Do we see the problem when we allow imposed law concepts to replace the truth of God as Creator?

Does the same problem exist within Christianity of legalism, rule and rule enforcement cause religious people to treat others with unChristlike actions?

THURSDAY

The lesson points our attention to John 5:19-47, let's read a portion of that and discuss it:

- Jesus said to them, "My Father is always at his work to this very day, and I, too, am working." For this reason the Jews tried all the harder to kill him; not only was he breaking the Sabbath, but he was even calling God his own Father, making himself equal with God. (John 5:17-18 NIV84).

What lessons do we glean from this?

What about working on Sabbath? Is there a contradiction in what Jesus has said and the Genesis account of God resting on Sabbath?

What kind of rest did God do on the very first Sabbath as recorded in Genesis? Did God cease the disbursement of life-giving energy that emanates from His being that gives life to all things? Did God cease to sustain the operations of all the design laws built into the fabric of the cosmos?

Did God cease working for the good of His creatures?

Then what is meant by God resting on the Sabbath and how is it that God's resting on the Sabbath makes it holy?

God ceased using power to create new things, new planets, new life, new intelligences. God ceased using power to demonstrate and reveal that He is in fact Creator and God rested His case. **He refused to use power to coerce, to punish, to force, to demand obedience, to inflict harm.** God rested and left His intelligent beings free to think for themselves. Thus **the Sabbath became evidence, its**

existence reveals the methods and character of God, not only a memorial to Him as Creator, but testifies to His design laws of love, truth, and freedom—that we are eternally free in God’s government. That God’s government is not the government of made up rules and inflicted punishments.

So, every Sabbath throughout human history God works to restore His creation to harmony with His laws, to eliminate lies, fear, selfishness, sickness, disease, and His does this by the application of His methods of truth, love, and liberty that wins us to love and trust.

- Jesus gave them this answer: “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself; [Does this mean Jesus has no power of His own, that He only has life, power, ability as He receives it from the Father; that Jesus isn’t fully God, but some lesser being? No! Jesus is speaking of His humanity. That as a human, as the second Adam, He came to accomplish what Adam failed to accomplish and as our substitutionary Savior He could only use the powers that Adam could have used in order to win the war as a human. Thus, as a human all He did He did by receiving power, authority, wisdom, ability, direction, enabling from His Father.] he can do only what he sees his Father doing, because whatever the Father does the Son also does. For the Father loves the Son and shows him all he does. Yes, to your amazement he will show him even greater things than these. For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it. [From where does the life of the Son originate? His divine life originates in Himself. Jesus the Son of God, second member of the Godhead has life original, unborrowed, underived. However, His human life came from both Mary and the Holy Spirit. Thus Jesus’ humanity is a blend of the life breathed into Adam in Eden, and the new life that conceived Jesus’ humanity in the womb of Mary. And thus Jesus was able to replace the terminal selfish life with the sinless, fearless, loving eternal life.] Moreover, the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father, who sent him. [What do you understand this to mean? We are revisiting the themes already discussed today—what is the cause of each person’s judgment? How they respond to truth. Jesus is entrusted with all judgment because Jesus is the light which lightens all men, but they preferred darkness. Having had the light presented and then by rejecting it, people pass judgment on themselves. They judge that they prefer lies to the truth. Jesus said He is the way, the truth, and the life. Thus, Jesus brings into judgment all things as He reveals the truth and all people are exposed for who they are as they respond to the truth. This judgment is not legal, it is not arbitrary, it is not invoked by an external authority—it is the operations of reality itself.]

“I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life. [What does this mean? What is the cause of condemnation? What law lens? If we hold the human law view what is the condemnation? It is a legal condemnation by the ruling authority with subsequent infliction of legally authorized artificial/arbitrary punishment. If we embrace the truth of

design law, what is the condemnation? The terminal condition itself. If a person is born HIV positive because both their parents were HIV infected—and the person is offered, at the age of accountability, free antiviral meds, but they refuse them, what is the cause of their condemnation? What condemns them? Is it the judgment of the doctor that condemns them? Or the judgment of a legal authority? Or is it the condition itself? And what if they do take the antiviral meds, but some legal authority condemns them to die of HIV anyway—what happens? They live. Legal declarations do not change reality. The entire system of legal salvation is a lie, it is trap, it tricks people into systems that keep them sick and dying, or so frustrated and discouraged with irrational behaviors and beliefs that they reject God altogether, and still remain terminal and dying.] I tell you the truth, a time is coming and has now come when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God and those who hear will live. [What is Jesus speaking of? Primarily people who are asleep in the grave, or is He speaking of people dead in trespass and sin who hear the truth and are reborn with new hearts and therefore have passed from death to life?] (Jn 5:19–25 NIV84).

The bottom question asks:

- How can we be careful not to fall into the trap of believing in God, even having correct doctrines, but not surrendering fully to Christ? (Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2024, The Book of Mark p. 11).

What keeps people from surrendering to Christ?

- Fear and selfishness
- Another way of saying that is a lack of faith or lack of trust

And what keeps people from experiencing love and trust?

Lies believed break the circle of love and trust, thus the lies about God that we believe that undermine our love and trust prevent us from truly surrendering to Him and what is the number one lie?

It is that God's law functions like human law—when people believe that, then they always believe that God is the source of death, pain, suffering, torture. That God is the one who is required to kill them, and therefore they formulate legal theologies designed to hide and protect them from God.

- A mediator to plead to that punishing god in our behalf
- A legal payment made to that god
- A blood substance used to cleanse us so that god will not see our sin any more
- A robe to hide us from that god
- An application of blood or merit or history to our legal registry in heaven so that punishing god will not find any records of our sins

People who believe the lie about God's law believe multiple lies about God and create theologies or belief systems that function to protect them from that false god. Thus they do NOT have faith in God, they have faith in the mechanics, the payments, the adjustments, the tools employed against that god to keep that god from killing us.

These are the religionists who claim they are followers of Jesus but who are His enemies throughout history. These enemies still exist and operate in our churches today.

They use the methods of this sinful world, coercion, intimidation, authority over, accusations, deceit. They do not use the methods of truth, love, and freedom.

FRIDAY

Read second paragraph a quotation from *The Desire of Ages*:

- Through the same faith we may receive spiritual healing. **By sin we have been severed from the life of God. Our souls are palsied.** Of ourselves we are no more capable of living a holy life than was the impotent man capable of walking. [What type of law is being described here? Why are the individuals cut off from God and are palsied? Is this a legal problem, they broke a rule and God as the magistrate uses power against them to inflict punishment? No, it is the natural result of breaking the bonds of love and trust. And we break those when we believe lies, prefer fear, prefer selfishness.] There are many who realize their helplessness, and who long for that spiritual life which will bring them into harmony with God; **they are vainly striving to obtain it.** [Why are these sincere people's efforts in vain? Because they are not operating in harmony with reality, they are operating upon a fantasy, a penal legal theology in which they are claiming legal payments to registries in heaven to pay their sin debt, instead of crying out to Jesus to heal the brokenness in them.] In despair they cry, "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Romans 7:24, margin. Let these desponding, struggling ones look up. The Saviour is bending over **the purchase of His blood,** [What does this expression mean? What law lens do you understand the words through? If we believe God's law functions like human law, then we falsely believe justice is punishing wrongdoing and someone has to be punished for our sins, someone has to "pay." So we falsely conclude Jesus paid our legal price. But if we return to design law, we understand that Adam's sin changed him, causing his condition to become terminal. Without divine intervention all human beings will die of this condition. Jesus came to eradicate the death causing principle and restore the life causing principle. Thus Jesus paid a high price to fix the problem, but the price is not a legal problem, it is reality. Like a parent who donates a kidney to save the life of their dying child. The parent pays a price, but it is not a legal price.] saying with inexpressible tenderness and pity, "Wilt thou be made whole?" He bids you arise in health and peace. **Do not wait to feel that you are made whole. Believe His word, and it will be fulfilled.** Put your will on the side of Christ. **Will to serve Him, and in acting upon His word you will receive strength.** [This is the secret, so many people wait to feel better to choose better. This is a trap. The Bible tells us that it is our feelings that lead us into temptation. We are to choose what we

know is right, healthy, reasonable, because it is right, healthy, reasonable, and ask God for the strength. And we don't get the divine power until we make the choice. But we never win the victory in our strength, we win by our choice and His strength!] Whatever may be the evil practice, the master passion which through long indulgence binds both soul and body, Christ is able and longs to deliver. **He will impart life to the soul that is "dead in trespasses."** Ephesians 2:1. He will set free the captive that is held by weakness and misfortune and the chains of sin. (The Desire of Ages 203, emphasis mine).