



2024 4Q Themes in the Gospel of John Lesson The Testimony of the Samaritans

by Tim Jennings

SABBATH

Read first paragraph,

- Who were the Samaritans? The northern kingdom of Israel had been taken captive by the Assyrians in 722 b.c. To create political stability, the Assyrians dispersed their captives throughout their empire. Likewise, captives from other nations were brought to populate the northern kingdom, and these became the Samaritans, who practiced their own form of Judaism. (Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2024, Themes in the Gospel of John p. 38).

to Wikipedia there persists today a small group of Samaritans numbering less than a couple thousand. They are considered by some in Israel to be Jews, by others they are considered a separate group. They have distinct beliefs from the Jews, some of which are:

- They believe only in the first five books of the Bible written by Moses and a different version of the book of Joshua
- They believe that the high priest Eli was a scammer who was a false high priest and made a counterfeit ark of the covenant and created a false worship center at Shiloh to keep people from worshipping at the true center in Mount Gerizim.
- They believe that the promised messiah does come through Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, but not Judah; that he has not yet been born and will be a descendant of Joseph, this is likely because the Samaritans are thought to be descendants of Joseph's two sons Ephraim and Manasseh.
- They believe that when their messiah, which they call the Taheb, comes he will be a prophet like Moses and prophecy or lead for 40 years; that he will bring all true Israelites back to the promised land, and then the resurrection will happen; that he will find the original tent of meeting constructed by Moses on Mt. Gerizim and then he will die and be buried on that mountain.
- They observe Sabbath from Friday sunset to Saturday sunset and observe all the feast days described in Leviticus.
- They have their own high priest.
- They believe Mt. Gerizim is the most holy site while the Jews believe it is Jerusalem.
- Most importantly, this group, like the Jews, reject Jesus Christ as Messiah.

Most Jewish religious leaders through history, and also in Christ's day, believed the Samaritan religion was a false religion, a counterfeit of what God gave through Moses and His prophets. We would agree with this conclusion.

But how did Jesus treat the Samaritans? Did Jesus condemn them because they were caught up in a system of beliefs that were erroneous in many ways? Did Jesus refuse to present the truth to them because they had a different understanding of the Bible and the instructions contained therein?

What does Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan tell us regarding what Jesus thought about their divergent doctrines? In the story there was the injured person and the Levite, Jewish priest, and Samaritan—who is the one that Jesus intended to be considered the one right with God? The Samaritan—but the Samaritan would hold to a lot of erroneous doctrinal beliefs and fail to do the correct religious instructions, sacrifice in the right way, pay tithe to the right organization etc.—how could he be right with God while holding to erroneous doctrinal beliefs and doing the wrong religious activities?

Conversely, the Levite and priest would both hold to the correct doctrinal beliefs and engage in the correct religious practices, pay tithe to the right organization, sacrifice in the right place and the right way etc., yet they were not right with God. How can it be that believing the right doctrines and doing the right behaviors these men were not right with God?

So what makes one right with God?

What about today? In your church organization, what has been the emphasis on what makes one right with God? Is it on believing the correct beliefs and paying tithe to the right organization, getting baptized in the right way, with the right words, by the right authorized person, doing communion in the right way etc.?

Or is it about a right heart attitude and living lives that love God and others and love truth and thus be willing to be corrected and follow unfolding truth as our infinite God of truth reveals it to us? Didn't the Samaritans embrace Jesus and the truth He revealed and asked Him to stay longer with them? This revealed that their hearts were open to truth, but the Jewish leaders were hardened against truth because they were defending their own doctrinal beliefs, orthodoxy, and practices.

Those who hold to doctrines and ceremonies often reject truth that would change their current beliefs or their religious practices and end up enemies of God and their fellow humans under the guise of being godly.

What does Jesus' attitude toward the Samaritans tell us about the things they and the Jews fought over?

What was it the Samaritans needed? Was the saving message for the Samaritans different than what the Jews needed? What about the rest of the world?

So Jesus' said to his disciples:

- But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” (Acts 1:8 NIV84).

The true gospel message is the exact same message for every human being whether Jew or gentile, black or white, free or slave, man or woman, for we all suffering from the same sin-sickness and all need the same Remedy Jesus Christ!

SUNDAY

The lesson focuses our attention on John 4:1-4 asking us the background of Jesus’ visit with the woman at the well:

- The Pharisees heard that Jesus was gaining and baptizing more disciples than John, although in fact it was not Jesus who baptized, but his disciples. When the Lord learned of this, he left Judea and went back once more to Galilee. Now he had to go through Samaria. (John 4:1-4 NIV84).

What is going on that caused Jesus to leave Judea?

Consider this commentary,

- But the disciples of John looked with **jealousy** upon the growing popularity of Jesus. They stood ready to **criticize** His work, and it was not long before they found occasion. A question arose between them and the Jews as to **whether baptism availed to cleanse the soul from sin**; they maintained that the baptism of Jesus differed essentially from that of John. Soon they were in **dispute** with Christ's disciples in regard to the **form of words proper to use at baptism, and finally as to the right of the latter to baptize at all**. (The Desire of Ages 178, emphasis mine).

What is the problem? Jealousy, which is a manifestation of selfishness, which is driven by fear—fear of insignificance, loss of esteem, power, position, relevance and is not motivated by love for others or advancing God’s kingdom, even though people often deceive themselves that they are only jealous for God’s kingdom like the Pharisees did.

And fear and selfishness, causing jealousy, leads one to attack others seen as a threat in order to defeat the enemy, so people criticize, find fault, devalue others. In the process one highlights differences in action, method, mode, words chosen, and even alleged rights all intended to elevate self and devalue the other. Things like: “They dress differently, speak differently, don’t follow the same script, use lake water for baptism while we use river water; they don’t have the right or authority to baptize, they haven’t been ordained.”

And all of this obscures the reality of God’s kingdom, the focus is on rules, enforcement, legality, who is authorized and who is not, truth by declaration, position, and power rather than evidence, fact,

reality—and that method not only does not change hearts and minds, it obstructs the healing of hearts and minds.

And that is what human politics does—it gets people to argue, to use the methods of claims, proclamations, authority, imposed law, rules, deceit, propaganda, threats, fear, intimidation, manipulation, accusation, using human organizations and rules to cause stress and problems all intended to divert minds away from evidence, facts, truth, incite fear, jealousy, envy, hurt, and thereby get people aligned with one leader or group or another for the purpose of exploiting the people for the power of the political elites. The founding documents of the USA were intentionally designed to limit the ability of the elites to exploit the masses and it is why those principles have been and are under attack, because Satan’s government is the government of the few elites exploiting the masses for the benefit of the elites.

What did Jesus do? Why didn’t Jesus stay and argue? What did leaving the area do? Took the emotional/relational fuel away, no one to argue with, no one to point at, no one to be offended by—and because there wasn’t social media to follow Him everywhere or keep rerunning video in edited and distorted ways, things settled down.

Read John 4:5-9:

- So he came to a town in Samaria called Sychar, near the plot of ground Jacob had given to his son Joseph. Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired as he was from the journey, sat down by the well. It was about the sixth hour. When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) (John 4:5-9 NIV84).

What do you hear happening?

What do you think about Jesus’ actions?

What does the woman’s answer indicate?

Do you think she felt honored? Do you think she felt curious, offended, fearful, confused?

Imagine a black woman during Jim Crow and a white man asking her to drink from her cup. What might she think? Might she think: *What is wrong with this man?* Could she be concerned it was some type of a trick?

This encounter between Jesus and the woman is about cultural biases and discrimination, how human fear and selfishness infect hearts and put up barriers to the gospel and how the true gospel of Jesus Christ breaks through all such artificial barriers. God sees all people as part of the same human family in need of the same healing solution and He wants all to come to salvation. But human beings, infected

with fear and selfishness, are highly vulnerable to experiencing innocuous differences as threats and allowing those differences to cause biases and prejudices.

The Samaritans were treated by the Jews as second-class citizens, seen as dirty, unworthy, evil heretics and discriminated against. So in our culture today that same unchristlike attitude is seen in all forms of racism, sexism, and all the various biases and bigotries that cause people to devalue and exploit, abuse, and discriminate against other people based on innocuous differences.

True Christianity recognizes all people are made in the image of God, are descended from Adam and all have infinite worth and value; that Jesus died for them as well as for you and me.

The cause racism and all forms of exploitation is sin, fear and selfishness in the heart. And the solution for sin in all its forms, including racism, is Jesus in the hearts of people, removing fear and selfishness from the hearts and restoring God's living law of love into hearts and minds, so that we love others as our self.

The only righteous basis for us to discriminate—meaning to set up barriers of association, intimacy, trust, marriage, business, and fellowship is one of character: honesty versus dishonest, loyalty versus disloyalty, accepting Jesus as Savior versus rejecting Jesus and elevating another false god as the lord of their life. It is right to discriminate on the basis of godliness versus ungodliness of heart, mind, method, motive, and character in regard to who we trust, form alliances with, marry, enter into business etc. But while it is necessary for health to set healthy boundaries, we still love those individuals, our hearts ache for them knowing that without Jesus they are suffering and slowly dying and we actively seek to reach them with the saving gospel of Jesus Christ. This is the only biblical basis for discrimination and separation and one taught all throughout the Scripture.

This is the application of love which always rejoices with the truth 1 Corinthians 13. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth AND love. When the Spirit of God is present both truth and love are being advanced and in that atmosphere we have freedom:

- Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. (2 Corinthians 3:17 NIV84).

Let me expose a trap of Satan, how Satan gets people to advance his cause under the lie that they are fighting for God, or advancing the gospel, or fighting against evil, or fighting against racism. He does this by separating truth and love in a variety of ways, and when this happens freedom is lost and people become mental and emotional slaves controlled by emotionalism, feelings, or false beliefs.

I want to say to anyone listening, if you have experienced discrimination, mistreatment, rejection, vilification in this world because of some aspect of your being like race, national origin, sex—I want you to know that you are loved. You are loved with a supreme love by our supreme Creator God who came to this earth to provide you with everything necessary for your health, healing, wellbeing, happiness and eternal life. And the only path for health, happiness, healing, and eternal life is the path of truth and love working in your heart and mind.

- Love without truth is not kind—it's cruel; Truth without love is not healing—it's destructive.

Understand, though, that neither our love or God's love for a person changes objective reality nor prevents the damage of breaking away from God's design laws for life. We can love a person who believes they can fly and in their false belief jumps off the Empire State Building—but their sincere belief that they can fly doesn't change the design law of gravity, and our love for them doesn't protect them from the truth of what their choice will do to them.

Sin breaks the design laws of life, the protocols built into the fabric of reality that our hearts, minds, spirits, and souls operate upon. God's love never changes, but if we do not respond to His love by following and internalizing the truth, then we will still suffer and die while God continues to love us.

Yes, every single person is loved by God, but He wants more for everyone of us than simply to let us know that He loves us—He wants us well, healthy, restored to perfection, freed from fear, guilt, shame, and sin. He wants to restore His design laws for life within us. **He will love us no matter what we do—but we will not experience healing, restoration, wellbeing no matter what we do.** Our choices actually matter, our choices in what we believe, who we trust, and what methods we apply to our lives determines what happens to us.

And the devil works very hard to separate truth and love. He does this by getting people to apply some truth without love, without concern, without the welfare for others in their heart and the truth is then used to discourage, to bring guilt and shame, and to cause despair. Imagine if we only had the truth of our own mistakes, sins, and sinfulness without the truth of God's love, grace, and healing remedy provided in Jesus? Such truth without the love and grace of God would only discourage and destroy. Thus the devil works to separate truth from love.

But love, in the form of sympathy and empathy, can be separated from the truth, where people feel the pain, suffering, and hurt that innocents have experienced at the expense of abusers and rather than bringing truth united with love to heal the wounded, they instead get tricked by the wicked, through their empathy, to take actions that are outside of God's design, take actions that use Satan's methods as the intervention, the solution, the treatment to fix the wrong and this only causes more harm.

This is what wokeism and critical theories do. They rely on a two-step deceit process to create a reinforcing loop of evil that destroys all involved, but tricks people involved into thinking they are doing good while in fact they are causing more harm.

Satan's first step is to deceive in order to incite acts of injustice, and the second step is to advance a good cause (e.g., racial justice) but by the application of his, not God's, methods. Let's unpack this two-step trap in detail.

Step One: Satan's first step is to deceive by replacing God's standard with a false standard. The ungodly forces do this by replacing the godly division of human society, which is the divide between moral good and evil (i.e., honesty versus dishonesty, kindness versus cruelty,

loyalty versus disloyalty, etc.—what the Bible describes as the sheep and goats, wheat and tares, righteous and wicked, saved and lost) with some other innocuous difference occurring among people groups (race, gender, language, ethnicity, national origin, etc.) and then attribute moral value, privilege, and/or superiority/inferiority to these innocuous differences, thereby inflaming fear, selfishness, jealousy, envy, hate, violence, and subsequent acts of injustice against those deemed inferior.

In step one, some people believe the lie that skin color or gender or national origin actually makes some people inferior or less valuable or worthy. Their own insecurity causes them to fear losing what they have to others more capable or qualified. Thus, rather than making decisions upon objective reality, hiring the most qualified, people who are driven by fear and selfishness rather than love and trust, will hire people who are more like them to make them feel more secure—they will discriminate against people they see divergent from them, whether it is racially different, or ethnically different, or socially different.

Healthy discrimination is based on God's separation. We assertively want to discriminate against hiring people who will lie, cheat, and exploit. If we are hiring for a daycare, we definitely want to keep out pedophiles. But we also want to keep out incompetence. If we are hiring an airline pilot, we want to discriminate against those without a pilot's license. But objective ability is not always documented with some official licensure. If we are hiring a person as our receptionist, some people are objectively better in their interpersonal skills, deportment, the way they present themselves, mood regulation, impulse control than others—and this is not determined by the ungodly divisions, it is NOT determined by skin color or gender, but by character and maturity.

However, the lie of Satan is that character differences don't matter, it is the superficial divisions that matter. Thus the selfish sword of injustice cuts on both sides. The insecure will not hire the most competent who are of a different race or background because of their fear. They will project out threats that do not exist and vilify those of a different background without reason and not see the problem is in their own character, projecting out their own pathology and thus discriminate unjustly.

They will form lies that some races or groups are actually better than others based on these superficial innocuous differences. This lie leads to the creation of various caste systems (including the historic divine right of rulers and the lie that there is an actual difference between people of the royal class and commoners). And these arbitrary divisions cause people to inflict real injustice upon the innocent—slavery, Jim Crow, aristocracy versus commoner, and many other forms of exploitation, abuse, and restrictions of human freedom.

This step-one deception has been used to divide society for millennia—and people still fight over this lie today. But as evil as this step-one deception is, the step-two trap is even more diabolical.

Step Two: Satan’s second step is designed to ensnare good people, those who recognize and reject the step-one lie and are outraged at the injustice they see and experience. Satan entraps them by tricking them into pursuing justice, “social justice,” by *using satanic methods*.

Those who are tricked into adopting the step-two deception, rather than pursuing justice by advancing the gospel and placing Jesus and God’s methods of doing right at the center, instead place the various injustices of the wicked at the center—the center of their attention, movement, media, and emotions. Racism, sexism, and various other wrongs are focused upon in order to inflame anger, outrage, and stir up a sense of injustice and, thereby, seduce these compassionate souls to accept the solution that Satan offers—“social justice” **by the application of imposed human law, coercion, and external power to force behavior change**, rather than by winning people to love and trust. But this only perpetuates new injustices and keeps the system of conflict and division going and actively keeps Jesus out of hearts and minds, thereby obstructing the only real solution to racism and all other forms of human injustice.

This methodology is central to [Critical Race Theory](#) and the other Critical Theories, which all function along this two-step deceit process: Identify objective racial or other injustices, label Christianity and its values as racist—thereby turning minds away from Jesus—and then introduce the solution of “social justice” through so-called “Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion,” which are all antagonistic to both individual and societal health.

What makes this process so diabolical is that this method of seeking “social justice” causes people to feel good, to feel like they are doing right, to even believe they are advancing God’s kingdom—after all, they are opposing racism or some other evil—yet they fail to recognize that these very policies and practices are a violation of God’s principles, violations that only incite more division and cause more harm.

MONDAY

Read John 4:7-15:

- When a Samaritan woman came to draw water, Jesus said to her, “Will you give me a drink?” (His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.) The Samaritan woman said to him, “You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan woman. How can you ask me for a drink?” (For Jews do not associate with Samaritans.) Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”

“Sir,” the woman said, “you have nothing to draw with and the well is deep. Where can you get this living water? Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did also his sons and his flocks and herds?”

Jesus answered, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give him will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water so that I won’t get thirsty and have to keep coming here to draw water.” (John 4:7-15 NIV84).

What lessons do you take from this story?

What method does Jesus use to engage the woman? Why do you think the woman was intrigued rather than offended? In other words, why didn’t she take offense and say, “I am not beneath you. You have no right to tell me to draw you water; I am not your slave”?

I think it is because of what the Bible is incapable of communicating to us—the Bible does not give us the tone of Christ’s voice, the look in His eye, the gentleness and compassion of His attitude toward her. All we have are the words of Christ.

Her response of engagement and inquiry informs us that she did not take offense but instead was shocked that a Jew would even speak to her. And I suggest, she was shocked because she discerned in Him actual kindness and respect to her as a person and that He was not demeaning to her.

So Christ’s first action is to see her as a person, as a child of God, as a soul who is loved, valued, cherished, but one who is also wounded, hurting, and in need of healing, of saving, of redeeming.

Knowing the biases and bigotry between the two peoples, Jesus doesn’t attempt to lecture, to instruct, to direct, such an action would likely be seen as demeaning, devaluing, judgmental, as ridiculing; instead He puts Himself in the position of the one who needs something from her. In doing so He demonstrates several things: that He is not repulsed by her; that He doesn’t devalue her; that He finds her worthy to engage and interact with and would appreciate her help in drawing water.

But once she engaged with Him, He immediately speaks to the longing of her soul, a water that quenches her deepest thirst and need. And she asks for this water.

What does the symbolism of water teach us about what Jesus is offering?

Consider what water does and how it has object lesson application to the plan of salvation:

- Water composes the largest portion of our physical being and is required for life
 - Genesis chapter one tells us that water covered the face of the deep and the spirit hovered over the water
 - We are made of water and the life animating energy, the breath of life, comes from God
 - Without water we will die and without the animating life energy, the Spirit of God, we will die
- We must drink water regularly or we dehydrate and die

- We do not have life in ourselves, we must stay connected to God or we will decay and die
- Water refreshes
 - The Holy Spirit brings life to our bodies, minds, and spirits and refreshes us
- Water washes away dirt or cleanses
 - The Holy Spirit cleanses our hearts and minds from sin, fear, selfishness, guilt, and shame
- Water cools a fever
 - The Holy Spirit cools our tempers, irritability, jealousies, and rage changing our demeanor from pushing to get our own way to trusting Jesus with our lives and how things turn out
- Water puts out fire
 - The water of life, the cleansing presence of the Holy Spirit, increases our faith and extinguishes all the fiery darts of Satan, the fiery darts of fear, hurt, resentment, and various temptations
- Water has three states, solid, liquid, gas
 - God has three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit
- Water can be polluted
 - The life energy, spirit, breath of life, God breathed into Adam was pure love, but Adam contaminated his life, his spirit, with fear and selfishness and we are all born in sin, conceived in iniquity, born with spirits contaminated with fear and selfishness because this is the only life, the only spirit, Adam and Eve had to reproduce life with.
 - Jesus came to purify the wellsprings of life. To eradicate fear and selfishness and restore in humanity the pure life of love and trust. And through Jesus we can die to the old life of fear and selfishness and be reborn and receive the new life, the new spirit of love and trust with its animating and motivating energy. This is the water of life offered to the woman and to you and me.
- When the earth became polluted with sin water cleansed the earth—and in the end the Spirit of God, the unveiled glory of God, will wash over the earth and cleanse it from all sin
- Water symbolizes the cleansing of hearts and minds in baptism—but the H₂O doesn't cleanse the soul from sin it represents the Holy Spirit cleansing the heart and mind when we submit and surrender and are immersed in heart and mind into the cleansing power and presence of the Holy Spirit, i.e., experience baptism of the Spirit.
- Water coming from the Rock in the desert represented the pure Spirit of God coming through and from Jesus to humanity that heals, purifies, recreates us in righteousness, and gives us eternal life.
- In Elijah's day it did not rain for 3.5 years, an object lesson for the lack of the Holy Spirit because they turned their hearts away from God to Baal. Rain is symbolic of the pouring out of the Holy Spirit upon hearts and minds that bring the harvest of spiritual fruit, and we need the latter rain today more than ever.
 - What will enable the Holy Spirit to be poured out? Will God pour out His Spirit to empower people to lie about Him, to bring forth fruit of a satanic character?

- So, isn't the truth about God as our Designer, our Creator, which is predicated upon rejecting the imposed law lie, part of the end-time message that prepares hearts and minds to receive the outpouring of the Holy Spirit?
- Turning water into wine—what do you think this symbolically represents?
 - The water is the purifying presence of the Holy Spirit, the cleansing power of God. The wine represents the sinless righteous life of Jesus. The clay jars represent human beings who are made out of the clay or the dirt of the earth. Turning water into wine inside the clay jars, represents the water, Spirit of God working inside of us convicting us of sin, revealing the truth in love, which brings us to repentance. In repentance, we open our hearts and minds to God and the cleansing water of the Holy Spirit removes our guilt, removes our shame, removes our fear and selfishness, and we receive the wine which is symbolic of the blood, which is symbolic of the life of Christ. Thus we experience a new life, with new motives, the life of Jesus, it is no longer I that lives but Christ lives in me (Gal 2:20), we become partaker of the divine nature (2 Peter 1:4).
 - It is not enough to simply have the guilt and shame washed away, we must be reborn with a new life, a new spirit, which is the wine, the life of Christ animating and living within us.

This is the living water Jesus offers to the woman at the well. Drink of the water of truth and love and if you do you will not only be cleansed you from the guilt and shame from you past, but you will stop living a fear-based life always seeking for self and instead will be reborn with the life of Christ a life of love and trust that will become a well of love and truth that will flow out of you to others.

TUESDAY

The lessons cites Ezekiel 36:25-27, which is an incredible passage—what do you understand this to mean?

- I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws. (Ezekiel 36:25-27 NIV84).

What do you understand this to be saying?

Is this describing a legal solution to salvation? What is it describing? If it is describing healing, then what is being referred to by laws?

What kind of law?

Notice Ezekiel says that the Spirit of God will move us to follow God's law—what does that mean? Does it mean that God, through His Spirit, takes control of the driver's seat of our life and makes the choices, that we become puppets and He pulls the decision-strings?

Or does it mean that we experience a new animating energy, drive, motive, that the law of survival of the fittest, the law of sin and death, the law of fear and selfishness which has previously motivated us to action is replaced with God's design law of love and trust and we identify with, value, and are motivated by love for God and others and with that new life, new energy, new desire, new identity in Christ we choose to live in harmony with God and His design laws for life because we like it, love it, and prefer it.

And when we make the choice for the good, because we are in loving partnership with Jesus, we receive, experience, draw upon, are empowered by the Holy Spirit to succeed in carrying out the righteous choice. In other words, the Holy Spirit gives us the new heart, the new motive, the new desire—and we say yes and choose to live by those new motives, and as we choose the good we receive the divine power of God that enables us to actually succeed. The new life comes from God, the power to succeed comes from God, the wisdom and truth comes from God, the love comes from God, but the choice to say yes, the choice to act upon the truth and love of God comes from us.

Consider, what is the reason you do not, and would not, molest a child? Is it because there is a rule, a law, that says it is illegal, or is it because there is something in you that recoils, is repulsed, that causes you to rather die than do something so horrible?

This is exactly what we see when Joseph was approached by Potiphar's wife and she tries to seduce him. He recoils from the thought, not because there is a rule and he fears legal punishment, but because his heart is so in tune with God that the thought is disgusting and offensive to him.

This is not legalism. This is not human law. This is design law and is what happens when God's living law of love and truth is written upon our hearts. We are healed, transformed, renewed and we do live God's law because we love God's methods and ways.

Read second paragraph,

- Jesus was seeking to reach these people with spiritual truths, even though He used illustrations from the natural world to do so. (Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2024, Themes in the Gospel of John p. 41).

Why do you think Jesus used illustrations from the natural world to teach spiritual truths?

What kind of law does the natural world operate upon? It is the best way to teach truth, to teach reality. God is the God of reality and all His creation operates upon design law, including our hearts and minds. Thus teaching lessons from the natural world teaches how reality works, it exposes the lies of Satan that God's law functions like human law; the lie that claims that God is the source of inflicted

pain and suffering and death. It teaches the reality that sin deviates from the way God built life to function and causes pain suffering and death unless healed by our Creator. Thus Galatians says,

- The one who sows to please his sinful nature, **from that nature will reap destruction** (Galatians 6:8 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Read the last paragraph,

- Abruptly, Jesus changes the topic of discussion, telling the woman to go call her husband and come back. Why the sudden shift in topic? The woman's actions bespoke avoidance. Jesus could read her heart. She must face her situation to find healing. "Before this soul could receive the gift He longed to bestow, she must be brought to recognize her sin and her Saviour."—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 187. (Adult SS Guide 4th Q 2024, Themes in the Gospel of John p. 41).

What do you hear being described? What is Jesus doing? Dealing with reality. This woman must accept her accurate diagnosis and the true remedy that cures.

Satan works to deceive on both points. He deceives people into thinking that they are spiritually healthy when they are not, and thus they don't seek Jesus to heal them.

- On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2:17 NIV84).

Can you think of any examples of this?

- Pharisees in Christ's day, but they represent a class of people through history, who?
- Legalists—all those who have a legal rules-oriented religion and who believe they are right because they are a member of the right organization, or have done the right rituals, or keep the right Sabbath, or dress in the right clothes, or eat the right foods. In other words, they believe they are righteous by their law keeping.
- Heavenly legalists—those who know their law-keeping make them right with God, so they substitute Jesus' law keeping and feel secure because they have claimed the legal payment of Jesus' life and death and rest secure that their legal status in heaven has been changed even though they remain unrighteous in heart, they falsely believe they are okay because they claim they are legally declared righteous in heaven
- Both of these groups are the Laodiceans—those who say "I am rich; I have acquired wealth and do not need a thing." But Jesus says to them, "you do not realize that you are wretched, pitiful, poor, blind and naked." (Revelation 3:17 NIV84).
- He tricks people into believing that as long as they are morally righteous people and live civilly right lives that they will be saved.

But Satan deceives on the other side as well, those who are convicted of sin, realize their need of a Savior, the evil one will attempt to trick into accepting a false solution, a false savior, a false means of salvation to fix the problem:

- Buddha fell to this deceit—he recognized his problem, his fear of death and solved his problem by turning inward with emptying meditation until he experienced a self-induced altered mental state of euphoria and no longer had the conviction of the Holy Spirit
- The lie that God’s law functions like human law and salvation is in legal adjustment through same payment to the punishing and offended deity.
- The lie that there is no God and therefore no right and wrong and therefore no need of a Savior.

WEDNESDAY

Read John 4:16-24:

- He told her, “Go, call your husband and come back.”

“I have no husband,” she replied.

Jesus said to her, “You are right when you say you have no husband. The fact is, you have had five husbands, and the man you now have is not your husband. What you have just said is quite true.”

“Sir,” the woman said, “I can see that you are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you Jews claim that the place where we must worship is in Jerusalem.”

Jesus declared, “Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in truth.” (John 4:16-24 NIV84).

What is going on here?

Jesus focuses in on her spiritual need, on her long history of insecurity and seeking comfort in the arms of various men rather than making God first in her life. This inward look causes her discomfort, she doesn’t want to be exposed, she doesn’t want to discuss this area for which she is ashamed, feels guilty, and inadequate, so she shifts the conversation to something historically controversial between the Samaritans and Jews, the authorized place of worship.

How does Jesus deal with her question?

What does Jesus' answer mean for us today?

What does it mean for all the people in the world who are constantly fighting over so-called holy sites or places?

What does it mean for those who believe the geographic location is important in worship and/or end time events?

Where is the battlefield between Christ and Satan?

- For though we live in the world, we do not **wage war** as the world does. The **weapons** we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have **divine power** to demolish strongholds. We demolish **arguments** and every **pretension** that sets itself up against the **knowledge of God**, and we take captive every **thought** to make it obedient to Christ. (2 Corinthians 10:3-5 NIV84, emphasis mine).

Where is the battlefield? And what is the battle fought over? The knowledge of God, who we believe God to be!

And is this a physical battle? Is it a geographic battle? Do you see as the final events unfold on the world it will be all about seducing people into accepting, internalizing, and applying the methods of Satan in governance of self in how we address and solve problems. Will we be loyal to God and present the truth in love and leave others free or will we, in pursuing justice, use external laws with law enforcement to coerce consciences of people in order to do what is right, in order to save lives—like what happened during COVID?

What does it mean to worship God in spirit and in truth?

Consider this Bible commentary:

- He desired to lift the thoughts of His hearer above matters of form and ceremony, and questions of controversy. “The hour cometh,” He said, “and now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him. God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.” (The Desire of Ages 189).

Here is declared the same truth that Jesus had revealed to Nicodemus when He said, “Except a man be born from above, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” John 3:3, margin. Not by seeking a holy mountain or a sacred temple are men brought into communion with heaven. Religion is not to be confined to external forms and ceremonies. The religion that comes from God is the only religion that will lead to God. In order to serve Him aright, **we must be born of the divine Spirit. This will purify the heart and renew the mind, giving us a new capacity for knowing and loving God.** It will give us a willing obedience to all His

requirements. This is true worship. It is the fruit of the working of the Holy Spirit. By the Spirit every sincere prayer is indited, and such prayer is acceptable to God. Wherever a soul reaches out after God, there the Spirit's working is manifest, and God will reveal Himself to that soul. For such worshipers He is seeking. He waits to receive them, and to make them His sons and daughters. (The Desire of Ages 189, emphasis mine).

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

New Codependency Pamphlet is now available online and shipped to any US Postal address:

Designed4More Podcast: Is a joint effort of Come And Reason Ministries and Honey Lake Clinic. A new, 30 minute show is released every Tuesday. The focus is God's design for the four domains of our lives, body, mind, spirit, and relationships and how we can only thrive in harmony with His design laws for life. We explore a wide variety of topics and subjects, physical, mental, spiritual, relational, organizational etc. all seeking to understand how to apply God's designs to our real-world, real-life decisions and actions. If you have topics or questions you would like to see a show on, you can email your question or topic to questions@designed4more.net

