

The Refiners Fire Lesson 4 4Q 2007

Seeing the Goldsmith's Face

Thoughts about the title?

Who is the Goldsmith? God/Jesus, what does it mean to see His face –

Why did God say to Moses when Moses asked to see God's face, "no one can see me and live."? Exodus 33:20

Why do the wicked run and hide and ask to be hidden from the "face" of Him who sits on the throne? Rev 6:16 Is there something wrong with His face?

Why are the redeemed able to look on God's face? Rev 22:4, what is the difference between the redeemed in Revelation and Moses on the mountain?

Read 1John 3:2 – 6

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.

Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him.

Thoughts? How does this text relate to seeing God's face? Is there any indication of what enables the righteous in the end to see God's face? For we shall be like Him – like Him in what way? In character- how does this happen?

What is the connection between sin being lawlessness and His appearance to take away our “sins”? The Greek here is *hamartia* and should be rendered “sin” to take away our sin, not sins- does that make a difference? How? Why?

Notice that we are to become like Jesus, being in harmony with Him, His character, methods and principles, puts into harmony with the law – what law? The law of love – what is that? How does it work?

How does Jesus take away our sin? Take it away from where?

What was the problem? How did sin begin?

Lies believed result in broken love and trust
 Broken love and trust result in fear and selfishness
 Fear and selfishness result in sinful behaviors
 Sinful behaviors result in death

Truth revealed removes lies and restores trust
 Trust restored opens heart to receive God’s love (Indwelling Spirit)
 Love received transforms and results in love to others
 Love to others results in healthy behavior and life eternal

SABBATH

Read memory verse – Does this memory verse support what we just discussed? Any questions?

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

How does this story impact your concept of the judgment? Is God looking to see Jesus in us? Does this mean actual transformation of who we are so that we are actually like Him in character or is this some legal action in which we are accounted like Him and God “sees” us like Him even though we aren’t?

Does this mean God is the one who stokes the fires or puts us in the fires? How do we understand this concept in light of pain and suffering not coming from God?

If you were a physical trainer and wanted to get someone stronger – would you put them through exercises? Would this “exercise” increase in difficulty over time? Why? Would such actions be considered unloving?

Does God bring us into situations designed to allow us to exercise our faculties to grow and expand in Christlikeness, designed to give us the opportunity for overcoming defects in character? Does that mean all painful experiences are from God?

SUNDAY

In His Image- what does it mean to be created in God’s image?

Man was to bear God's image, both in outward resemblance and in character. Christ alone is "the express image" (Hebrews 1:3) of the Father; but man was formed in the likeness of God. His nature was in harmony with the will of God. His mind was capable of comprehending divine things. His affections were pure; his appetites and passions were under the control of reason. He was holy and happy in bearing the image of God and in perfect obedience to His will. {PP 45.2}

First question, “In what ways do we see this defacing of God’s image in humanity?”

1. physical disease and deformity and degradation
2. degradation of mental faculties – faulty reason, intelligence, impaired imagination, creativity...
3. degradation of character – selfish rather than loving
4. dulled sensibilities such that the ugly is seen as beautiful and the vile as virtuous and pain becomes pleasure

5. the mind turned upside down so that passions control actions become brute beasts

How does this happen?

1. violations of laws of health result in more physical illness, genetic deformity and physical depravity – (although some illness not due to volitional violations of health principles)
2. violations of law of worship – by beholding we become changed, sensibilities dulled, reason warped, conscience bruised, passions inflamed. i.e. TV watching, pornography etc.
3. violations of law of liberty – individuality destroyed
4. violations of law of love – hardens heart, warps reason, damages conscience, as people avoid their own guilt
5. Allow mind to operate out of balance with feeling controlling judgment –

What is God's plan to restore His image within?

The first sentence of the second paragraph, "It's obvious: We all have been corrupted by sin." This is true and what is your reaction to this fact?

When did anyone in this room choose to be a sinner? If an HIV infected woman and an HIV infected man had a child and the child was born HIV infected, what did the child do to deserve this? Nothing – we have done nothing as individuals to deserve being born in sin – we have not chosen to be born in sin – therefore we don't need to feel guilty for being born in sin.

But, does the HIV infected baby have all the burden of the disease to deal with? Do we, even though we didn't choose it, have all the burdens of sin to deal with?

With this in mind read third paragraph – "But there's another..." – thoughts?

How is the honor of God and Christ connected to this? Who created this creation? And whose image was this creation

made in? Why? Was there a significant reason to make us in God's image and give mankind dominion and reproductive ability? The GC over God Himself – mankind was part of that answer, created to reveal the truth about God.

When mankind sinned, do you think Lucifer alleged the defect in man was a design flaw? That the Designer made some error in creation? How does God's saving of this species connect to His honor?

It reveals no design defect, but more than that – it reveals that God's methods, principles, law of love etc. when applied to sinful beings actually heals, transforms, restores regenerates. That a being warped by sinfulness can be healed and restored! What does that say about God?

Read bottom pink section – thoughts?

Could your answer also tell you about the kind of God one serves? If Osama bin Laden were to answer the question which group do you think he believes would be cheering for him?

MONDAY

Faith Amid the Refining Fire – and then the lesson uses the example of Job – do you think Job is a good example of someone who is being refined or is something else going on?

In Job 1 and 2 God has already judged Job to be “perfect and righteous in all his ways there is no one on the earth like him.” Does that sound like someone who needs refining?

TUESDAY

Read first and second paragraph – then read Friday second paragraph – thoughts?

Is the oil in the parable the HS or character or are they somehow connected? Can we experience Christlike character

without the Holy Spirit indwelling our minds? Can the Holy Spirit genuinely dwell in someone's mind/heart without a subsequent resultant transformation of Christlike character? So does the oil represent both? But in this context, as something that cannot be shared, it more accurately represents character.

Is character something that is developed or we are born with or we receive as a gift from God?

"God gives the talents, the powers of the mind: we form the character." COL 331

Read first paragraph from Friday's lesson -

But then how do you make sense of this?

The law requires righteousness,--a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. 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." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2}

Does this add balance?

Christ was to suffer in our behalf, standing at the head of humanity as representative of the race. He was to work out the character which every follower of His is to work out, through the provision He has made,--His

infinite sacrifice, His life and death on earth. {GH, March 1, 1901 par. 4}

So what is the balance between our role and God's? We must trust Him – and in trust choose to follow what He says, choose to apply to our lives what we know is in harmony with His will. His role is to enlighten the mind with truth, convict the heart, ennoble the faculties, purify the conscience, regenerated the motives, strengthen the will, fill the heart with love and remove selfishness. He heals, we trust and follow – but trust is established by the truth and evidence and He provided this as the basis for our trust – thus He has done it all! All except choose to trust and follow which we must do.

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph – “Daniel is told...” thoughts? What do the righteous understand? Could it be this last day generation understands the entire GC, the issues that began the war in heaven, the nature and character of both Satan and sin, the original purpose for the creation of this world and man, what happened when man sinned, the nature and character of God and the purpose of Christ and His mission – they understand God?

John 15:15- they understand God's business? Could this be it?

Is this what God is waiting for? For a generation of people to rise up as His friends to understand Him and His business and proclaim it in the power of truth, love and freedom as a witness to all nations and then the end will come?

THURSDAY

Read second paragraph – “when Paul..” What does it mean to experience the “whole measure of the fullness of Christ.” To live in loving service? To not love life so much we would shrink from death?

The lesson asks, “In today’s text what does Paul say must happen before the fullness of Christ may be revealed in our Christian community?” What can our class do to reveal the fullness of Christ in our community?

FRIDAY

Question 3 read and discuss –

What does it mean to be saved? Healed, the Greek *sozo* means to heal. If you went to the ER with a snake bite and said “please save me” what are you asking for? Healing.

Does the Bible say we are “saved by faith”? or saved by “grace through faith.” Does this make a difference? Big difference, what is grace? See Ephesians 2:8. The Greek for grace is *charis* and can mean good will, favour, loving kindness – in other words we are healed by God’s good will, loving kindness and favour – the Creator, in love, recreates those who trust Him!

Thus we are healed as we trust God through His working in our hearts and minds to restore His character within. With this understanding there is no confusion between our work to cooperate with God and follow His prescription for our lives and His working in us to heal and restore.