

Discipleship Lesson 8 1Q 2008

Experiencing Discipleship

Read Memory Text – thoughts?

What does it mean to deny self and take up the cross?

Jesus now explained to His disciples that His own life of self-abnegation was an example of what theirs should be. Calling about Him, with the disciples, the people who had been lingering near, He said, "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." The cross was associated with the power of Rome. It was the instrument of the most cruel and humiliating form of death. The lowest criminals were required to bear the cross to the place of execution; and often as it was about to be laid upon their shoulders, they resisted with desperate violence, until they were overpowered, and the instrument of torture was bound upon them. But Jesus bade His followers take up the cross and bear it after Him. To the disciples His words, though dimly comprehended, pointed to their submission to the most bitter humiliation,--submission even unto death for the sake of Christ. No more complete self-surrender could the Saviour's words have pictured. But all this He had accepted for them. Jesus did not count heaven a place to be desired while we were lost. He left the heavenly courts for a life of reproach and insult, and a death of shame. He who was rich in heaven's priceless treasure, became poor, that through His poverty we might be rich. We are to follow in the path He trod. {DA 416.3}

What Bible texts support this position?

They overcame him
by the blood of the Lamb
and by the word of their testimony;

they did not love their lives so much
as to shrink from death. Revelation 12:11

This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers.
1 John 3:16

Any others?

Thoughts about this? What does it mean to submit? Why is it necessary we choose to submit to humiliation and even death?

What is our problem? What is it that God is trying to resolve in the plan of salvation? What was Christ mission? What did Christ come to accomplish and how does that translate to you and me?

Our problem? Love and trust was broken by lies and replaced with fear and selfishness (survival of the fittest) in the mind and heart of mankind. Our natural, inherited response, action, motives are self-centered, this methodology leads only to pain, misery and death.

God's universe runs on the law of love, the law of giving, the law of beneficence and it is only perfect harmony with this law that results in health, happiness and eternal life.

Christ came to win us to trust God and to restore in this race God's law of love, God's methods and principles. He did this by His own life experience and now He freely offers to download into us His character if we trust Him. But this means we must choose to open the heart to Him, trust Him and then choose not to act on the temptations to save self, when those temptations come. This is what it means to take up the cross daily and follow Christ.

Read first paragraph, thoughts? What does it mean to know God and Christ?

John 17:3 life eternal is knowing God, Jesus prayed we would come into unity with Him and the Father, the New Covenant is the process of having God's law (methods and principles reproduced in us) and no one will need to tell others to "know the Lord for all will know me) Heb 8:10.

So what is knowing God? Coming into such intimacy His character is actually recreated within us and our thoughts, motives and will are unified with His.

What is it that Christ offers us? His perfect character!

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}

SUNDAY

Read John 6:43-58

"Stop grumbling among yourselves," Jesus answered. "No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. No one has seen the Father except the one who is from God; only he has seen the Father. I tell you the truth, he who believes has everlasting life. I am the

bread of life. Your forefathers ate the manna in the desert, yet they died. But here is the bread that comes down from heaven, which a man may eat and not die. I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."

Then the Jews began to argue sharply among themselves, "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?"

Jesus said to them, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For my flesh is real food and my blood is real drink. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. Just as the living Father sent me and I live because of the Father, so the one who feeds on me will live because of me. This is the bread that came down from heaven. Your forefathers ate manna and died, but he who feeds on this bread will live forever."

What does this mean? What lessons do we learn? Does this mean cannibalism? What does the blood represent?

For the life of a creature is in the blood, and I have given it to you to make atonement for yourselves on the altar; it is the blood that makes atonement for one's life.

Therefore I say to the Israelites, "None of you may eat blood, nor may an alien living among you eat blood."

" `Any Israelite or any alien living among you who hunts any animal or bird that may be eaten must drain out the blood and cover it with earth, because the life of every creature is its blood. That is why I have said to the Israelites, "You must not eat the blood of any creature, because the life of every creature is its blood; anyone who eats it must be cut off." Lev 17:11-14

But be sure you do not eat the blood, because the blood is the life, and you must not eat the life with the meat.
DT 12:23

The blood represents life, in this case, Christ's blood represents His life, then does it mean we are to internalize the life of Christ?

“In the study of the Bible the converted soul eats the flesh and drinks the blood of the Son of God, which He himself interprets as the receiving and doing of His words, that are spirit and life.” Fundamentals of Christian Education 378.1

“The leaven of truth works a change in the whole man, making the coarse refined, the rough gentle, the selfish generous. By it [the truth] the impure are cleansed, washed in the blood of the Lamb.” Christ's Object Lessons 102

“Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” John 8:32

What does it mean to eat the flesh and drink the blood? It means to internalize the truth about God as revealed in Christ, to be won back to trust and to value His methods, principles and motives. It means to take into the heart Christ, to desire in the heart to be like Jesus and choose to use one's energy to pursue Christlikeness.

What does this mean for how we understand the OT sanctuary system?

In the Old System what represented the blood of Christ? The blood of the sacrificial animal. And where did Christ say His blood was to be applied? In us! And where in the Old System was the blood applied? Throughout the system, brazen altar, golden altar, before the veil and in the MH place – what lessons do we draw from this? Does this mean the Old System was designed to teach God's plan of restoring Christ's life, Christ's character, God's law of love back into the Spirit Temple, back into the heart and mind of mankind?

MONDAY

Read Matthew 18:1-4

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?"

He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.

Thoughts? What does it mean to become like a little child and how do we balance this statement of Jesus with Paul's statement in 1Cor 13:11:

When I was a child, I talked like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I put childish ways behind me.

What is the context of Paul's statement, what is the focus of 1 Corinthians 13? It is love. Is Godlike perfect selfless love natural to a child? Are we born, in this sinful world, able to love in this way? Or are children naturally self focused? Also, are children naturally able to overcome their fears to save self or are they easily frightened – except for the presence of their parents. So, Jesus says come to trust your heavenly Father like children trust their parents and Paul says, when this happens our fear and selfishness is replaced with love and we are no longer childish in our dealings with others but grow up to become intelligent, self-sacrificing loving Christians, giving ourselves for others.

Psalms 23 – we fear no evil – why? Because God is with us, why would this cause us not to fear? Because we know and trust Him. Think about a child in a dangerous place with their parent, if the parent is not afraid, if they trust that parent does it reduce their fear? Troublesome times are coming on

the world, will we be tempted with fear? How will we overcome such temptation?

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph "Jesus never calls...." Thoughts?

Do you agree God gives us reasons and evidence to trust Him? Absolutely! What do you think about the kind of evidence revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration? Is this the best kind of evidence? Is it the most reliable evidence upon which to base our faith? Why or why not? Would you like to have an experience like this?

Can Lucifer counterfeit this type of evidence? Can Satan appear as an angel of light and have a fiery show with some of his underlings along with him?

If you had an angel appear at your bed tonight like Daniel of old, and the angel told you to move to a new city or marry a certain person, what would you do? How would you know whether that angel was from God or an evil angel masquerading as an angel of light? Didn't an angel in heaven lie and then that angel lied to Adam and Eve? Didn't that same angel present himself to Christ on earth and claim to be from heaven and try to deceive Christ? Did that angel do miraculous things like take Christ to the Temple, show Him the cities of the earth? Did Christ allow the "evidence" of miracles to persuade Him?

Why is this important as we prepare to meet Jesus? Which takes us to Wednesday's lesson...

WEDNESDAY

Read Matthew 24:4-14

Jesus answered: "Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the

Christ, ' and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed. Such things must happen, but the end is still to come. Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of birth pains.

"Then you will be handed over to be persecuted and put to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of me. At that time many will turn away from the faith and will betray and hate each other, and many false prophets will appear and deceive many people. Because of the increase of wickedness, the love of most will grow cold, but he who stands firm to the end will be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Thoughts? What do you think it means when the gospel of the kingdom goes to the entire world? What is the kingdom? The kingdom of love? God's kingdom of love? And what is that good news of that kingdom? The truth about God Himself, that God is exactly like Jesus revealed Him to be. How has this gospel been hidden?

The Christian church has accepted a pagan view that God requires appeasement, that God requires someone to assuage His wrath, that God inflicts the punishment for sin upon the wicked and His Son took the sinner's place and thus God executed His Son. Such ideas misrepresent the truth about God as revealed in Christ. The truth, our condition was terminal, we were out of harmony with the law that life was based upon and without Divine intervention we would die. God the Father, Son and HS were all actively involved in healing and redeeming us. The truth is the truth about God Himself, which wins to trust, purges fear, opens the heart to love and eradicates selfishness!

In the opening of the great controversy, Satan had declared that the law of God could not be obeyed, that justice was inconsistent with mercy, and that, should the law be broken, it would be impossible for the sinner to be pardoned. Every sin must meet its punishment, urged Satan; and if God should remit the punishment of sin, He would not be a God of truth and justice. DA 761

THURSDAY

Read first paragraph – thoughts?

On what basis did Christ want people to recognize Him as the Christ?

The Saviour of the world proposed that no attraction of an earthly character should call men to his side. The light and beauty of celestial truth alone should be the drawing power. The outward glory, the worldly honor, which attracts the attention of men, he would not assume. He made himself accessible to all, teaching the pure, exalted principle of truth as that which was only worthy of their notice. ST Jan 20, 1890

FRIDAY

Question 3 read and discuss

Question 4 read and discuss