

Agents of Hope God's Great Missionaries Lesson 9 3Q 2008

A Pillar of Mission: The Apostle Peter

When you think of Peter any thoughts, questions or lessons from his life you would like to discuss?

THURSDAY

After Pentecost was Peter complete in his understanding and methods or was their still growth to do? What about for us today? What about after Christ comes again and we are all in heaven with Him? Will we ever stop growing?

Was it just a matter of growth for Peter or was he actually wrong on some issues?

GAL 2:11 When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. ¹² Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³ The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray.

If Peter was clearly wrong after Pentecost does that mean prophets and Apostles can be wrong? Was Peter wrong on some issues that needed correcting? What about other prophets?

In 1Kings 13 we have the story of the young and old prophet. The young prophet is given a message to take to the king and told not to stop on the way there or back to eat or drink. But the old prophet intercepts the young prophet and says:

1KI 13:18 The old prophet answered, "I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the LORD: `Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.' " (But he was lying to him.) ¹⁹ So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house.

1KI 13:20 While they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the old prophet who had brought him back. ²¹ He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, "This is what the LORD says: `You have defied the word of the LORD and have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you. ²² You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your fathers.' "

Can prophets and Apostles be wrong? How about more modern prophets? Do we permit them to grow in understanding or do we think that whatever a prophet says must be true?

What about EGW?

The testimonies of Sister White should not be carried to the front. God's Word is the unerring standard. The Testimonies are not to take the place of the Word. Great care should be exercised by all believers to advance these questions carefully, and always stop when you have said enough. Let all prove their positions from the Scriptures and substantiate every point they claim as truth from the revealed Word of God.--Letter 12, 1890. {Ev 256.2}

The more we look at the promises of the Word of God, the brighter they grow. The more we practice them, the deeper will be our understanding of them. Our position and faith is in the Bible. And never do we want any soul

to bring in the Testimonies ahead of the Bible. --
Manuscript 7, 1894. {Ev 256.3}

I do not claim infallibility, or even perfection of Christian character. I am not free from mistakes and errors in my life. Had I followed my Saviour more closely, I should not have to mourn so much my unlikeness to His dear image. {DG 272.6}

There is no excuse for anyone in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. {CW 35.2}

We have many lessons to learn, and many, many to unlearn. God and heaven alone are infallible. Those who think that they will never have to give up a cherished view, never have occasion to change an opinion, will be disappointed. As long as we hold to our own ideas and opinions with determined persistency, we cannot have the unity for which Christ prayed. {CW 37.1}

What is the take home point no matter who says it?

RO 14:5 One man considers one day more sacred than another; another man considers every day alike. Each one should be fully convinced in his own mind.

TUESDAY

Read last paragraph – “Throughout the book of Acts...”

Any danger of such happening in our church?

What about presenting stand alone doctrines like Sabbath, state of dead, baptism by immersion, the prophecies of Daniel and Revelation, the second coming etc. by using proof texts to persuade of the Biblical accuracy of these doctrines, but as stand alone points. Then people are converted to believe these facts but never change their basic understanding of God's character, the Great Controversy, the purpose of the Cross. So we convert people who have at the core of their understanding basic paganism believing in an angry, offended God who requires appeasement and who will kill all those who don't offer Him something to assuage His wrath.

Is our church in danger of slipping back into paganism?

SUNDAY

Read Bible verse at top – thoughts? What is this referring to? Who is the Rock upon which the church is built? Jesus, how do we know?

EPH 2:19 Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household, ²⁰ built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. ²¹ In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. ²² And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.

1PE 2:4 As you come to him, the living Stone--rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- ⁵ you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. ⁶ For in Scripture it says:

"See, I lay a stone in Zion,

a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame."

Thoughts about this text? What does it mean? Not only is Christ the chief cornerstone, but what are we? We are the building blocks of which the Temple is constructed!

What about the idea of the gates of hell not prevailing against it? What kind of weapon is a gate? A defensive weapon!

2Cor 10:3-5 tells us the war is in the mind and our weapons demolish everything that sets itself up against the knowledge of God! Satan took the minds of mankind captive with lies about God and our characters were warped with fear and selfishness. Jesus Christ came into Satan's domain and revealed the truth about God which demolishes the lies and overcame fear and selfishness with perfect love and trust.

Now, because of Jesus, Satan is no longer on the offensive but on the defensive. He is working to close minds to the truth, to hold what he has, but the gates of hell, the gates of lies about God, the gates of demonic distortion will not stand as we present the truth about God in love we demolish Satan's strongholds and set people free!

Does this have something to do with cleansing of the Temple?

2TH 2:1 Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, ² not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. ³ Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, for that day will not come until the rebellion occurs and the man of lawlessness is revealed, the man doomed to destruction. ⁴ He will oppose and will exalt himself over everything

that is called God or is worshiped, so that he sets himself up in God's temple, proclaiming himself to be God.

MAL 3:1 "See, I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty.

MAL 3:2 But who can endure the day of his coming? Who can stand when he appears? For he will be like a refiner's fire or a launderer's soap. ³ He will sit as a refiner and purifier of silver; he will purify the Levites and refine them like gold and silver.

This is the final work of preparation Christ is doing before He comes! He is preparing a people to be like Him when He appears.

Christ came to earth and He crushed the serpents head. Christ won the victory we could never win, but now, for those who trust in Christ the Holy Spirit will take Christ's very character and reproduce in us and we will be like Jesus triumphing over Satanic agencies for the purpose of revealing the glory/character of God to all the universe!

Ezekiel 36: 23-27: I will show the holiness of my great name, which has been profaned among the nations, the name you have profaned among them. Then the nations will know that I am the LORD, declares the Sovereign LORD, **when I show myself holy through you** before their eyes. `For I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land. 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.

And notice what Paul says will happen when God does this in us:

RO 16:20 The God of peace will soon crush Satan under your feet.

SABBATH

Read first paragraph “Last week we...” thoughts?

The last sentence of the first paragraph the quarterly states Peter’s fall was not God’s intention for this flawed hero – how true, what is God’s intention? Victory – what does it tell us about God’s willingness to work with flawed people?

What examples can we give of God working with flawed people?

- Noah – drunkard
- Abraham – polygamist
- Isaac – refused to follow God’s direction
- Jacob – liar and cheat
- Rahab – prostitute
- Samson – womanizer
- David – Murderer and adulterer
- Solomon – mega polygamist, idolater, sacrificed his own son
- Peter – denied Jesus

How many of these people would you consider worthy to be deacon, elder, pastor, teacher in your church? What does it say about God? What is the key element that God looks for in people? What should we do when we find out about someone’s past sins?

The issue is not whether we have sinned, all of us have for we are all infected with sin. The question is, are we participating with God for healing, restoration, recreation, renewal!

God will use anyone who trusts Him!

Why was Peter unstable? What was the underlying issue? Was Peter purposely working to undermine success or was there some element of his character that sabotaged his own intentions?

When Peter said "Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death." Luke 22:33, was Peter lying? Then what happened? What led Peter to deny Christ three times?

Fear and selfishness, Peter was afraid, afraid of what others thought of him, afraid of what might happen to him, afraid of humiliation and embarrassment. Where did such fear and selfishness come from? What is another name for it? Survival of the fittest, looking out for number one and we are all born infected with this element of Satan's government.

How does this principle impact our lives? Examples from society today?

- Cheating to get ahead, athletes, countries, business
- Lying to protect self
- Attacking others verbally or physically
- Criticizing others, gossiping, rumor spreading

What is the solution? What is the only power that can free our hearts and minds of fear and selfishness? LOVE!

- Patient who was always afraid of what others thought of her overcame her fear when she began to think of others needs rather than herself
- Soldiers overcome their fear for self by love for their friends, comrades and fellow soldiers and thus will put themselves in harms way to save their buddy

- o Parents will sacrifice their selves for their children

Where does such love originate? Can we produce it on our own? How can we have it in our lives?

RO 5:1 Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, ² through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God. ³ Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; ⁴ perseverance, character; and character, hope. ⁵ And hope does not disappoint us, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

RO 5:6 You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly. ⁷ Very rarely will anyone die for a righteous man, though for a good man someone might possibly dare to die. ⁸ But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

RO 5:9 Since we have now been justified by his blood, how much more shall we be saved from God's wrath through him! ¹⁰ For if, when we were God's enemies, we were reconciled to him through the death of his Son, how much more, having been reconciled, shall we be saved through his life! ¹¹ Not only is this so, but we also rejoice in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

RO 5:12 Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned-- ¹³ for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not

taken into account when there is no law. ¹⁴
Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

RO 5:15 But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God's grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! ¹⁶
Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man's sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. ¹⁷ For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

RO 5:18 Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. ¹⁹ For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous.

Thoughts? In order to understand the passage we need to understand the words, key words that need understanding are:

- Justified
- Faith
- Glory
- Blood
- Wrath

Justified – set right, put right, made right, put in harmony

Faith – trust

Glory – character

Blood – life and truth

Wrath – letting go, giving up (Romans 1:18,24,26,28)

My Paraphrase of Romans 5:1-19

Romans 5:1 Therefore, if our minds and hearts have been set right through trust, we are at peace with God through the remedy brought by our Lord Jesus Christ. ² It is through Jesus that we know the truth about God, are won back to trust and thus open our minds to experience God's gracious healing power. And our joy is found in the hope of full restoration into beings possessing Godlike character. ³ Because of this, we rejoice in our trials and afflictions, because we know that trials bring to light our shortcomings and defects of character ⁴ and if we persevere, choosing God's methods, the defects are removed and character is purified; and pure character increases our hope for God's kingdom. ⁵ And our hope will not be disappointed, because God pours out his love into our hearts maturing, ennobling, perfecting us into his image by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.

^{5:6} You see, at the exact moment it was needed, when we were infected with distrust, rebelling against God and our condition was terminal, Christ died to restore trust and cure the terminally ill. ⁷ Very rarely will someone die for a healthy man, though this might rarely happen. ⁸ But God the Father demonstrates his own love for us in this: while we were dying and in rebellion against him, Christ died to restore trust and cure sinfulness in order to heal us and restore us to unity with God.

^{5:9} Now that we have been won back to trust, cleansed, healed and set right with God by the truth revealed when Christ died, how ridiculous to think that God would now

let us go. ¹⁰ For if, when we distrusted God and fought against him in every way, His Son died to win us back to trust and friendship and cure our rebellious hearts, how much more, having won us back to trust and friendship, will God heal all the damage caused to us while we were in rebellion against him! ¹¹ And even better yet, having experienced this healing of mind and heart we are filled to overflowing with joy for God whom we know through Jesus and through whom we have been restored to friendship with God.

^{5:12} Therefore, the infection of distrust of God, which deformed man's heart and mind with selfishness and fear and results only in death, infected the human race when Adam accepted Satan's lies about God and broke trust with him. This infection of distrust and selfishness is inherited by all mankind as all are born infected – ¹³ this is revealed by the fact that before the written law was given, the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness was already in the world. But this infection of distrust, fear and selfishness is not diagnosable without the law. ¹⁴ Nevertheless, even without being diagnosed as infected with this terminal condition, mankind still died from the time of Adam to Moses, even those who did not break a specific command, like Adam did – revealing that the problem is the infected state of our minds not a legal issue with God.

Adam, the first man, being the conduit through which the infection entered humanity, represents the one man who is the conduit of the antidote which cures the many who accept it.

^{5:15} But the gift of the antidote is not like the infection. For if everyone is born infected with a terminal condition because of the choice of Adam, how incredibly effective must the antidote, brought by Christ, be, since it cures all who take it! ¹⁶ Again the gift of the antidote is not like the result of the breach of trust. Adam's breach of trust

infected all humanity and all humanity is diagnosed as sick and dying. This occurred without each individual choosing to be infected, but the antidote came after mankind had been severely damaged and deformed by selfishness and sin and brought cleansing, purification, health and complete restoration. ¹⁷ If by the choice of one man's distrust, selfishness and death permeated all humanity, how much more will those who accept the remedy that Christ has achieved, experience restored trust and complete healing to live forever with God.

^{5:18} Therefore, just as Adam's choice infected humanity with the fatal condition of distrust, fear and selfishness, so too Christ's action reveals the truth and dispels the lies of Satan, establishing trust and bringing the life-giving remedy for all mankind. ¹⁹ Just as Adam's choice infected the human race with a terminal condition, so too Christ's perfect life has brought the remedy to heal all who accept it.

Thoughts? How do we experience God's love in our lives? We see the truth about God which Christ revealed and are won back to trust. In trust we open the heart and the Holy Spirit is poured out. The Holy Spirit takes what Christ has achieved, perfect love, perfect character, and this love is poured into our hearts and fear and selfishness are removed and we live lives in love to God and others rather than in fear and selfishness!

MONDAY

The Shadow of Peter – what do you think the significance of this is? Why were people being healed by Peter's shadow? Were these healing miracles occurring because people had great faith or their faith was weak and needed encouraging? Were these miracles for the purpose of jump starting the expansion of the Christian church?

What happened to all the people who experienced healing of some physical malady from Peter or the other Apostles? They

died and are in the graves today, what does that mean? Is it God's primary plan to heal our current physical illness? What is His primary plan? To heal our characters/minds for eternity, then would the physical healings be part of that mission?

WEDNESDAY

A Wider Vision

What wider vision do we need to have? How wide do we need to go? Do we need to see beyond ourselves to the universal struggle which has involved angels? Did Christ's death have any benefit for angels? Did Christ's death have benefit for mankind angels didn't need?

COL 1:15 He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. ¹⁶ For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in him all things hold together. ¹⁸ And he is the head of the body, the church; he is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything he might have the supremacy. ¹⁹ For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, ²⁰ and through him to **reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven,** by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

Notice that heavenly things were reconciled to Christ at the cross, what does this mean? Were the angels in heaven fallen or were they loyal? Then what does it mean reconciled?

HEB 2:14 Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death--that is,

the devil-- ¹⁵ and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. ¹⁶ **For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.** ¹⁷ For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. ¹⁸ Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.

But here the Bible tells us that Christ did something not for angels but for mankind, what? Where is the balance?

All intelligent beings throughout the universe needed to have the truth about God revealed to destroy the lies Satan had told and secure the unfallen beings in their loyalty. Thus, Christ's life, death and resurrection demonstrates the truth and "reconciles" all things in heaven and earth to God.

But mankind not only needed the truth revealed but also needed the damage sin had done to us healed, the angels didn't need that. Thus Christ came and took our sick status and cured it by His victorious life! He perfectly restored love back into the human species in His own life on earth and simultaneously destroyed death and brought life and immortality to light.

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph and discuss – some of the best witnesses for Christ made the biggest mistakes.