

Worship Lesson 12 3 Q 2011

Worship in the Early Church

SABBATH

Read second paragraph, "At Pentecost..." thoughts?

Was this a good thing or a bad thing that 3000 were baptized this day?

How often do you see this happen now? What do you think prevents this from happening now? Do we do anything that hinders this process?

What would happen if we did a public campaign and anywhere from 1-3000 people stood up and said they wanted to become Christians? What would we do? Would we baptize them that day? Why not?

Have we substituted something for Bible baptism? Is it Biblical? If a non-Christian hears the gospel and wants to give their lives to Christ, do we take them, right then, or as soon as is physically possible, and baptize them? What do we do instead? We have them pray the sinner's prayer.

Is this God's method? What are the benefits to immediate baptism? Is there benefit to substituting prayer for baptism? Is there a problem with substituting prayer for baptism?

Why do we require a long indoctrination period before baptism?

At Pentecost did the Apostles require those who wanted to be baptized to attest to change their diet, give up smoking, stop using alcohol, or commit to pay tithes and offerings before being baptized? Why do we?

What would happen if we had a public series of meetings in Chattanooga and we began baptizing people into Christ that very day?

Would it be in harmony with Scripture or opposed to it? Would it be in harmony with the organized church?

Do you think baptizing people into Christ at a public meeting would have a positive impact on the lives or a negative impact? Would it hinder or help the work of the Spirit?

What about the way we currently do it? Any thoughts?

Should we conduct such a series of meetings?

SUNDAY

Read first paragraph, "From a human..." thoughts?

Is there any attempt at slight revisionist history going on? I have noticed that many evangelicals are moving away from the Jews crucifying Christ and instead putting the responsibility of His crucifixion on the Romans. What do you think about this?

I want to read a little from Scripture Matt 27:19-25:

While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: "Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him."

²⁰ But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed.

²¹ "Which of the two do you want me to release to you?" asked the governor.

"Barabbas," they answered.

²² "What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ?" Pilate asked.

They all answered, "Crucify him!"

²³ “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!”

²⁴ When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It is your responsibility!”

²⁵ All the people answered, “Let his blood be on us and on our children!”

Thoughts? Yes it is true that the Roman government had the legal authority to carry out and ultimately ordered the execution of Christ – but, who was responsible for orchestrating the crucifixion? Who took public responsibility for it? Who tried to resist and avoid the crucifixion of Christ?

Is it honest to present the Crucifixion of Christ as solely done by the Romans, or even the preponderance of the responsibility on the Romans?

Why is this happening? What do we lose if we go down this path? What lesson will we fail to see if we accept this line of thinking? We fail to realize that those who call themselves God’s children, but accept a false picture of God, are actually God’s enemies.

The Jewish rulers did not love God; therefore they cut themselves away from Him, ... They envied Christ's beauty of character. His manner of teaching was far superior to theirs, and they dreaded His success. He remonstrated with them, unveiling their hypocrisy, and showing them the sure results of their course of action. This stirred them to madness. They smarted under the rebukes they could not silence. **They hated the high standard of righteousness which Christ continually presented.** They saw that His teaching was placing them where **their selfishness would be uncloaked, and they determined to kill Him.** They hated His example of truthfulness and piety and the elevated spirituality revealed in all He did. **His whole life**

was a reproof to their selfishness, and when the final test came, **the test which meant obedience unto eternal life or disobedience unto eternal death, they rejected the Holy One of Israel**. When they were asked to choose between Christ and Barabbas, they cried out, "Release unto us Barabbas!" Luke 23:18. And when Pilate asked, "What shall I do then with Jesus?" **they cried** fiercely, "Let Him be crucified." Matthew 27:22. "Shall I crucify your King?" Pilate asked, and **from the priests and rulers came the answer, "We have no king but Caesar."** John 19:15. When Pilate washed his hands, saying, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person," **the priests** joined with the ignorant mob in declaring passionately, "His blood be on us, and on our children." Matthew 27:24, 25. {COL 293.3}

Thus the Jewish leaders made their choice. Their decision was registered in the book which John saw in the hand of Him that sat upon the throne, the book which no man could open. In all its vindictiveness this decision will appear before them in the day when this book is unsealed by the Lion of the tribe of Judah. {COL 294.1}

Thoughts? Who does she hold responsible for the crucifixion of Christ? Why might we want to forget this? Could this next paragraph provide a reason we want to deny what the Jews did?

The **Jewish people cherished the idea that they were the favorites of heaven**, and that they were always to be exalted as the church of God. They were the children of Abraham, they declared, and so firm did the foundation of their prosperity seem to them that they defied earth and heaven to dispossess them of their rights. **But by lives of unfaithfulness they were preparing for the condemnation of heaven and for separation from God.** {COL 294.2}

What happened to the Jewish nation because of its rejection of Christ? Why did ruin come to them?

- Were they agnostic?
- Did they deny God existed?
- Did they claim to be the true worshippers of God?
- Did they worship the Roman pantheon?
- Did they possess the oracles of God?
- Yet, despite all this did they reject God?

Could we do the same thing?

Read last paragraph, “One of the most...” thoughts?

Were they to believe in Christ with or without “proof”? What is your understanding of faith? Is our faith based on evidence, proof, facts or is our faith believing without evidence?

Read bottom green section?

What is faith? Where does it come from? How do we get more?

What undermines our growth in faith? Does evidence and experience undermine faith or strengthen it? What then would the idea that we don’t need evidence do to faith?

MONDAY

Read first paragraph, thoughts? Is the protestant weekly sermon and what Peter and Paul did the same thing?

Can you think of examples of sermons from scripture?

- Jesus sermon on the mount
- Paul Mars Hill
- Peter Pentecost
- Stephen

How would you describe all of these Bible examples of

preaching?

- Who was the audience?
- Where was the forum?
- Were they regularly scheduled events?
- Were they scripted?
- Were they paid to present these speeches?
- Does it matter?
- Do we lose anything if we have regularly scheduled speaking events, scripted by professionally trained speakers?

Where did the “power” come from in the Bible preachers?

About the middle of the festival Jesus went up into the temple and began to teach. ¹⁵ **The Jews were astonished at it, saying, “How does this man have such learning, when he has never been taught?”** ¹⁶ Then Jesus answered them, “My teaching is not mine but his who sent me. ¹⁷ Anyone who resolves to do the will of God will know whether the teaching is from God or whether I am speaking on my own. ¹⁸ **Those who speak on their own seek their own glory;** but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true, and there is nothing false in him. John 7:14-18

Then Peter, **filled with the Holy Spirit**, said to them: “Rulers and elders of the people! ⁹ If we are being called to account today for an act of kindness shown to a cripple and are asked how he was healed, ¹⁰ then know this, you and all the people of Israel: It is by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified but whom God raised from the dead, that this man stands before you healed. ¹¹ He is

“ ‘the stone you builders rejected,
which has become the capstone.’

¹² Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other

name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

¹³ When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that **they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.** Acts 4:8-13

Does the liturgy of our current church service originate in the Bible? Has the traditions we have accepted promoted the spread of the gospel, the health of the church, the finishing of the work, hindered it, or had not effect?

What about the way we observe the Lord's Supper, is it how they did it in the New Testament? Did they have a thimble full of grape juice and a tiny cracker? Did they have a professional speaker give a homily designed to focus their attention on their sinfulness and unworthiness?

But the Communion service **was not to be a season of sorrowing.** This was not its purpose. As the Lord's disciples gather about His table, **they are not to remember and lament their shortcomings.** They are **not to dwell upon their past religious experience,** whether that experience has been elevating or depressing. They are **not to recall the differences between them and their brethren.** The preparatory service has embraced all this. The self-examination, the confession of sin, the reconciling of differences, has all been done. **Now they come to meet with Christ. They are not to stand in the shadow of the cross, but in its saving light.** They are to open the soul to the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. With hearts cleansed by Christ's most precious blood, in full consciousness of His presence, although unseen, they are to hear His words, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you." John 14:27.
{DA 659.1}

Was the NT a celebration love feast in which they celebrated

the victory provided by Jesus Christ?

Who is the church? What is its purpose on earth? What is its purpose when it meets together?

What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, **everyone** has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church. 1Cor 14:26

Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as **you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.** Col 3:12-16

- Isn't the purpose of the church to spread the truth about God and to equip each of us for this mission?
- Are we not, when we meet together to be helping each other overcome sinfulness in our lives?
- What role in the process of overcoming does ministering to one another have?
- Do we benefit when we have more interaction, discussion, heart to heart communion, conversation, prayer for and with each other, or do we hinder the work of character development?

Where do you think more character development and down to brass tacks overcoming of defects occurs, in a weekly church service or a AA meeting? Where should be the #1 place on earth for a person to be able to experience help in overcoming problems in their hearts, minds and characters?

Should it not be the church? Is it? Why not? Is it because we no longer function as God designed?

Read last paragraph, "No doubt..." thoughts?

THURSDAY

Love conquers all – what does love look like in action?

I received this email this week:

Dr. Jennings,
I have a friend who has been with her husband for many years and he has cheated much of those years. He is a good father and the children love him. This woman has been an obedient child of Christ in staying with her husband.

Last year she had had enough and divorced him. He came back and wanted to mend his marriage but continues to sin with other women and every week still comes home and sleeps in another room in the house. My sister in Christ would like her marriage to heal but cannot take his cheating.

Does God want her to stay in this marriage when her husband continues like this. Role modeling evil behavior in the house.

I believe God does not want her to live in pain

What does love do? How would you respond? Here is my response:

Of course God does not want anyone to live in a deceitful, exploitive, selfish relationship where trust doesn't exist. Her husband doesn't love her and until she realizes it she will fail to be able to love him. The most loving action for

her is to hold him accountable for his untrustworthy character and throw him out. She should only allow him back when he had demonstrated, reliable, documentable, credible evidence that he is trustworthy and loves her more than himself. His words are meaningless, his actions demonstrate an immature human being who is not qualified to be a husband.

Here is the response back:

But Dr Jennings ~ Can't a person still love his wife and give into the flesh? He has to love her, why would he come back to be with her & the children. The bible says to forgive so she has forgiven and when we marry aren't we suppose to stay married ~ God wants us to keep our families together doesn't he?!

It's confusing (when there is emotional abuse) to know what God would have us do. It must be possible to have the Holy Spirit guide us out of bad relationships and focus on God.

At the same time, when emotionally leaving someone we may feel like we are hurting them but be strong and it feels like we are being unloving.

What does love do? How would you respond to this? Here is my response:

Love does what is right because it is right, not because it feels right. Love is the principle of selfless giving for the benefit of the other's welfare and happiness. In this case neither husband nor wife act upon love toward the other. The husband acts in self interests and deceives his wife with his emotional attachment he calls love and the wife deceives herself allowing him to say calling it loving as she colludes with a path that is destructive to his character and ruining him for heaven. If she loved him she would not cooperate with him by allowing him to stay

but would hold him accountable.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, He works by presenting truth to our minds. When we choose to reject the truth we close our minds to the Spirit. In this case which of them doesn't know the truth about adultery? Which of them doesn't know the truth of its destructiveness and its selfishness? Which of them doesn't know the truth that they try to hide from because it will be painful to deal with? But love does what is right because it is right, look at Gethsemane, the greatest act of love, what were Christ's emotions? They were not pleasant, love is not mere emotions but harmony with God's character despite emotions.

Here is their final response:

You are sound and correct as much as it is difficult to listen to. I will share this with her. She only wants to do what is right and needs our prayers and support. Please pray for her as I will brother Jennings. Thank you for being here for us your wisdom helped me very much I will pass all your teachings on.

And again thank you for your time.

What is love? What does it look like?

WEDNESDAY

Read second paragraph, "Though we..." thoughts? We cannot rely on worship leaders, but do we? Is the system friendly to those who would forgo the worship leadership and want to have their own worship experience?

Read third paragraph, "At the same time..." thoughts?

What is the "end"? What is the purpose of worship?

Read fourth paragraph, "It is fascinating...." Thoughts?

Read last paragraph, "Again, though our..." thoughts? Could people be led, in worship, to the cross, but still not encounter Christ? How could that happen?

When we are led to the cross what are we to experience at the cross? What is it we are to attain at the cross? What are we to learn?

1) God's love for man

a. John 3:16

b. 1John 3:16

c. **Christ's death proves God's great love for man.** It is our pledge of salvation. To remove the cross from the Christian would be like blotting the sun from the sky. **The cross brings us near to God, reconciling us to Him.** With the relenting compassion of a father's love, Jehovah looks upon the suffering that His Son endured in order to save the race from eternal death, and accepts us in the Beloved. {AA 209.3}

Without the cross, man could have no union with the Father. On it depends our every hope. **From it shines the light of the Saviour's love,** and when at the foot of the cross the sinner looks up to the One who died to save him, he may rejoice with fullness of joy, for his sins are pardoned. Kneeling in faith at the cross, he has reached the highest place to which man can attain. {AA 209.4}

Through the cross we learn that the heavenly Father loves us with a love that is infinite. Can we wonder that Paul exclaimed, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ"? Galatians 6:14. It is our privilege also to glory in the cross, our privilege to give ourselves wholly to Him who gave Himself for us. Then, with the light that streams from Calvary shining in our

faces, we may go forth to reveal this light to those in darkness. {AA 210.1}

- 2) Reveal God's character – never use power to force His way or act selfishly
 - a. John 13 – all power given to Christ
 - b. On the Cross how did Christ treat those who crucified Him?
 - c. Did He use power to stop them? Could He have?
 - d. In Gethsemane did Christ use power to save self?
 - e. But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; **but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe.** To this result of His great sacrifice--its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man--the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, **will draw all unto Me.**" John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it **would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan.** It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}

- 3) The Value of the human soul
 - a. The **value of a soul**, who can estimate? Would you know its worth, **go to Gethsemane**, and there watch with Christ through those hours of anguish, when He sweat as it were great drops of blood. **Look upon the Saviour uplifted on the cross.** Hear that despairing cry, "My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?" Mark 15:34. Look upon the wounded

head, the pierced side, the marred feet. Remember that Christ risked all. For our redemption, heaven itself was imperiled. **At the foot of the cross, remembering that for one sinner Christ would have laid down His life, you may estimate the value of a soul.** {COL 196.4}

- 4) The security of the heavenly universe
- a. Col 1:20 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.
 - b. That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, **will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels.** Fallen men could not have a home in the paradise of God without the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Shall we not then exalt the cross of Christ? **The angels ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven.** Human perfection failed in Eden, the paradise of bliss. All who wish for security in earth or heaven must look to the Lamb of God.

The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, **provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen** worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb. {5BC 1132.8}

- 5) Expose Satan as a liar and fraud

- a. To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, "It is finished," had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory.

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion. {DA 758}

- 6) Destroy Satan's power – lies about God
- a. 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—**
- 7) Destroy the carnal nature, selfishness in the human soul
- a. 1John 3:8 The reason the Son of God appeared was to **destroy the devil's work.**
- b. Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God; but **Satan has labored to obliterate the image of God in man, and to imprint upon him his own image.** LHU 48
- c. He restored God's character, law into mankind in His own person.
- 8) Destroy death
- a. 2Tim 1:10 Christ Jesus, who has **destroyed death and has brought life and immortality to light**

TUESDAY

Read first paragraph, "In the days..." thoughts?

The lesson points out that on Mars Hill Paul did not quote the Bible but used logic, reason and their own philosophers – was this a good idea or bad idea?

Read last paragraph, “In the end...” thoughts? What would happen today if you went to scientific people, who haven’t had the gospel brought to them, but were taught to think, reason, look for evidence, and you said, “you must believe what I say. God sent His Son, He died for you, to pay for your sins. You must repent and accept this on faith, without thinking, for human reason is flawed, and don’t ask for evidence. You must believe!”

Read bottom green section – thoughts?

FRIDAY

Read first paragraph, “Holiness...” is this what you typically think of when you think of holiness? So could one be holy while running in a marathon, playing basketball, baseball, cooking, cleaning, going to school? When you see daily living activities, do you see holiness? Should we? Or should we see holiness only in religious activities?

Read and discuss questions 1-4