



Discipleship Lesson 2 1Q 2014

Discipling Through Metaphor

SABBATH

Read first paragraph – thoughts? Is Christianity supposed to be reasonable and logical? Absolutely! Is it consistently presented that way?

This week I was reading an online discussion and some people were discussing penal versus healing models. One person told a metaphor he heard once:

Jesus is knocking on the door to a person's heart and saying, "Let me in."
The person asks, "Why?"
Jesus responds, "So I can save you."
"From what?" the man asks.
Jesus replies, "From what I will do to you if you don't let me in."

This is a great metaphor for penal theologies. Is this reasonable and logical?

What about the idea of an innocent being punished in place of the guilty and calling it justice, is it reasonable and logical?

What about God saying, "I love you, all I want is you to love me, but if you don't I will kill you, after proper torture of course."

What about, "We have faith we don't need evidence." Is that reasonable and logical?

Any examples of ideas that permeate Christianity that don't make sense to you?

Read second paragraph, "Meanwhile, complex..." thoughts?

Do you find these ideas complex? What do you think the source of their complexity is: that the idea and concept itself is complex, or what is currently taught within Christianity about these topics is so convoluted, infected with false ideas, and inherently contradictory that it becomes confusing and appears complex?

Listen to this description of Satan's methods from a book called Patriarchs and Prophets. See if you agree with it.

He [Lucifer] had artfully presented his side of the question, **employing sophistry and fraud to secure his objects**. His power to deceive was very great. By disguising himself in a cloak of falsehood, he had gained an advantage. **All his acts were so clothed with mystery** that it was



difficult to disclose to the angels the true nature of his work...**It was his policy to perplex with subtle arguments concerning the purposes of God. Everything that was simple he shrouded in mystery, and by artful perversion cast doubt upon the plainest statements of Jehovah. And his high position, so closely connected with the divine government, gave greater force to his representations.** {PP 41.3}

What do you hear in this passage? Do you agree that such tactics as sophistry, fraud, subtlety, perversion, mysteriousness are used by Satan? And that such tactics are used to make the simple and plain mysterious and complex?

Would Satan abandon such tactics after being cast out of heaven, or would he continue to use them?

How would such tactics be manifest today? Would Satan have agents in places of high position, appearing to be closely connected to God's government on earth? Who would such people be? Theologians, Pastors, Church leaders, and would their power to deceive be all the greater because of their leadership position?

Let's be balanced: Does Gabriel hold a high position in God's government? Does he deceive or work against God? Absolutely not, so I am not suggesting every theologian, pastor or church leader is an agent of Satan, only that Satan would use such strategies as getting his agents into leadership positions.

Examples from history: Caiaphas, Annas, and many leaders in the Dark Ages etc. Do you think such tactics stopped in the Dark Ages, did it stop with every denomination except ours?

Do you think all the various people in positions of church authority throughout history who worked to misrepresent God were aware they were working for the enemy, or did many, most perhaps, think they were doing God's work?

Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!' (MT 7:22,23)

So, back to the question of these ideas being complex, are they inherently complex ideas or have they been made to seem complex by, perhaps well meaning, but misguided theologians?

Let's examine these ideas:

How is justification traditionally taught?

From Wikipedia:

Justification, in Christian theology, is God's act of removing the guilt and penalty of sin while at the same time **declaring a sinner righteous through Christ's atoning sacrifice.**



In Protestantism, **righteousness from God is viewed as being credited to the sinner's account** through faith alone without works.

The means of justification is an area of significant difference between Catholics/Eastern Orthodox and Protestants. Broadly speaking, **Catholic and Orthodox Christians distinguish between initial justification, which in their view occurs at baptism**, and permanent justification, accomplished after a lifetime of striving to do God's will. **Most Protestants believe that justification is a singular act in which God declares an unrighteous individual to be righteous, an act made possible because Christ was legally "made sin" while on the cross** (2 Cor 5:21). Justification is granted to all who exercise faith, and that is viewed as a gift from God (unmerited favour) by Lutherans and Calvinists, who use Eph 2:8, as well as Acts 16:14 and Phil 1:29 to support that belief. Catholics and Eastern Orthodox use James 2:14-26, Galatians 5:19-21 and Matthew 19:17 to support **their belief that justification is kept through avoiding grave sins**. Justification is seen by Protestants as being the theological fault line that divided Catholic from Protestant during the Protestant Reformation.

Christ's death and resurrection (triumph over Satan and death) provide justification for believers before God. His righteousness becomes theirs, and **his death becomes an offering to God in their place, to pay for all of their sins**. According to Protestants this justification is by faith alone - not through good deeds - and is a gift from God through Christ. According to **Catholics and Eastern Orthodox justification is a free gift but is gotten through baptism initially and through the sacrament of reconciliation if justification is lost through grave sin**.

So, is this simple or complex? Why? It is actually very simple, if you start from a bedrock of reality – the way the universe actually works, and do not start off from a false assumption regarding God's law.

God's law – is it design law, protocols upon which the Creator constructed life to operate, or imposed law, rules like humans use, with no inherent consequence for breaking?

Daniel prophesied that a little horn power would arise and seek to change God's law – which happened when Constantine converted and Imperial Rome's idea of law infected Christianity. God's law was no longer seen as design protocols, the principles of love functioning in the circle of giving, but rules we must adhere to, which requires the law giver to punish for breaking.

Thus both Protestant and Catholic theologies have a God, which must receive some form of payment from His Son in order to legally pardon, assuage wrath, have sin penalty paid, expiate His vengeance, or justify us legally before God.

The point of argument between the two is not over God's character or law, both Protestants and Catholics agree God requires payment, God inflicts suffering and death, God tortures, God must be paid by the blood of His Son, that sin must be punished by God, that God cannot forgive sin unless He receives something from humanity. The point of argument is what? Protestants say only the blood of



Jesus, which the believer accepts on faith justifies, Catholics say the blood of Jesus plus the sacraments when we fall and fail justifies.

Do you see they are both actually teaching the exact same thing, the exact same view of God, and don't even realize it.

If you start out upon the truth of God's law of love, and realize deviations are incompatible with life, you understand justification is simply setting one right with God, in heart, in trust, in relationship, and righteousness is the experience of actually being right with God, in heart, in character, in method, motive, relationship, and sanctification is the maturing, growing, healing that comes from being set right and abiding daily in one's right relationship and heart attitude with God.

But if you start out with the false law construct, that God operates like a Roman dictator, and imposes law, without inherent consequence, and then He must inflict punishments, justification becomes a legal process whereby one is declared to be righteous, based on some legal event, even though the person is actually not righteous. It has the unjust act of an innocent being tortured and killed in place of the guilty and then calling that just. It becomes convoluted, contradictory and confusing, because it is based on a lie.

But the Bible says:

“Abraham believed God, and because of his faith God accepted him as righteous.” (Rom 4:3 GNT)

the word “accepted” in some translations is “credited” others “reckoned.” This is from *Strong's Lexicon*:

3049 λογίζομαι [*logizomai* /log·id·zom·ahee/] v. Middle voice from 3056; TDNT 4:284; TDNTA 536; GK 3357; 41 occurrences; AV translates as “think” nine times, “impute” eight times, “reckon” six times, “count” five times, “account” four times, “suppose” twice, “reason” once, “number” once, and translated miscellaneous five times. **1** to reckon, count, compute, calculate, count over. 1a to take into account, to make an account of. *1a1* metaph. to pass to one's account, to impute. *1a2* a thing is reckoned as or to be something, i.e. as availing for or equivalent to something, as having the like force and weight. 1b to number among, reckon with. 1c to reckon or account. **2** to reckon inward, count up or weigh the reasons, to deliberate. **3** by reckoning up all the reasons, to gather or infer. 3a to consider, take into account, weigh, meditate on. 3b to suppose, deem, judge. 3c to determine, purpose, decide. *Additional Information: This word deals with reality. If I “logizomai” or reckon that my bank book has \$25 in it, it has \$25 in it. Otherwise I am deceiving myself. This word refers to facts not suppositions.*¹

When people account something, or reckon something, they are counting up what actually is, what already exists.

¹ Strong, J. (2001). *Enhanced Strong's Lexicon*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.



So, in the case of Abraham, what came first was a change in Abraham's heart, which was naturally "enmity" to God, in a distrusting state, but was changed to a heart that trusted God. Heart change CAME FIRST and then God accounted, reckoned, recognized, stated, agreed, declared the reality of what had already happened in Abraham's heart, that Abraham had been "set right" with God in heart, from distrust to trust, thus Abraham was recognized to be right with God, or righteous.

This is not complex, it is straightforward and simple, the reality of God's law of love, the methods of truth at work to displace lies and win to trust. Yet, theologians have come along and built a confusing pile of distorted ideas founded on Satan's lie about God's law.

Thus, they make God out to be a liar when they have God declaring people righteous when they are not righteous. Penal substitution theology makes God out to create a duplicity, a falsehood. They claim God doesn't see our wickedness, but the righteousness of Christ, which is legally accounted to our records, even though we are actually not righteous in heart and character.

Here is a metaphor: You are sick with the black plague. Because of this you are quarantined and "judged" to be in a terminal condition, unless the disease can be cured. A doctor is coming to examine your case. When he arrives he picks up your chart, but before he does so your older brother, who is perfectly healthy, has replaced your record with his physical examine findings, taking his name off and putting your name on the findings of his exam. Now, when the doctor comes and examines the record he declares you healthy, even though you are still terminal and dying. Note:

- The doctor is being deceived
- The doctor is declaring something to be true which is not true
- The doctor is participating in a fraud and deception along with the older brother
- You the patient are still terminal and dying
- If this wasn't bad enough, in the penal theologies of Christianity, the doctor is unwilling to sign off on the fraud unless He personally receives some payment to do so

This is the grossest and most disgusting portrayal of God. It makes God out to be a fraud, a liar, and in pursuit of some recompense to benefit Himself.

But if one worships Him who made the heaven, earth and seas, the Designer and not the dictator, one realizes justification, is setting people right in heart, character, method and motive with God. Here is from one of the founders of our church:

Christ came to save fallen man, and Satan with fiercest wrath met him on the field of conflict; for the enemy knew that when divine strength was added to human weakness, man was armed with power and intelligence, and could break away from the captivity in which he had bound him. Satan sought to intercept every ray of light from the throne of God. He sought to cast his shadow across the earth, **that men might lose the true views of God's character**, and that the knowledge of God might become extinct in the earth. **He had caused truth of vital importance to be so mingled with error that it had lost its significance. The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary.** He was pictured as one who could take



pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. **Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth.** Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. **The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature.** {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 6}

The only way to “justify” the only way to make humans right with God, was to take beings whose minds were filled with lies about God, whose characters were dominated by selfishness and 1) present the truth about God in order to destroy the lies and win to trust which is to justify or set right, and 2) provide a new heart and right spirit, write the law of love on the heart and mind, to develop a perfect character that is freely given, reproduced in the heart of all those who trust God. Thus the human species was set right (justified) in the person of Christ who constantly and always had a right relationship with His Father and purged the infection of selfishness and developed a perfect human character. And we as individuals are set right (justified) by Christ when we accept the truth and trust God, and then actually made righteous and transformed by the Holy Spirit taking what Christ achieved and reproducing it in us.

Thus, when God looks at us He does not see our wickedness and sin, not because of some trickery, but because “it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me.” We are renewed, reborn, recreated, cleansed within so that we actually love God, His methods, principles and law of love and long to be like Him, grieving over every shortcoming, old habit, selfish motive that remains in this defective body of sin.

So listen to what Paul says in Romans:

²¹ But now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify. ²² This righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference, ²³ for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴ and are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. ²⁵ God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood. He did this to demonstrate his justice, because in his forbearance he had left the sins committed beforehand unpunished— ²⁶ he did it to demonstrate his justice at the present time, so as to be just and the one who justifies those who have faith in Jesus. (Rom 3:21-26 NIV)

I purposely quoted the NIV, which uses the most legal sounding language. But interestingly the word for righteous, righteousness, justice, justify, justification in the Greek are all the same basic word, and it simply means to be right, or put right, or set right, or do the right thing.

From my paraphrase:

^{3:21} But now God has revealed, a healthy state of being – a character that is right and perfect in every way, that did not come from the written code, but is exactly what the Scriptures and the



10 Commandments were pointing your minds toward.²² This perfect state of being comes from Christ and is created within us by God when we trust him. Our trust in him is established by the evidence given through Jesus Christ of his supreme trustworthiness. There is no difference amongst any ethnic group,²³ for all humanity is infected with the same disease of distrust, fear and selfishness, and are deformed in character and fall far short of God's glorious ideal for mankind.²⁴ Yet all, who are willing, are healed freely by God's gracious remedy that has been provided by Jesus Christ.²⁵ God presented Jesus as the way and means of restoration. Now, through trust established by the evidence of God's character revealed when Christ died, we may partake of the remedy procured by Christ. God did this to demonstrate he is right and good, because in his forbearance he suspended, for a time, the ultimate consequence of being out of harmony with how he designed life to exist and has been falsely accused of being unfair.²⁶ So, he did it to demonstrate how right and good he is at the present time, so he would be seen as being right when he heals those who trust in Jesus.

Thoughts?

Now, listen to this written in 1902, more than 100 years ago in a periodical called Signs of the Times:

God is omnipotent, omniscient, immutable. He always pursues a straightforward course. **His law is truth--immutable, eternal truth.** His precepts are consistent with His attributes. But Satan makes them appear in a false light. **By perverting them, he seeks to give human beings an unfavorable impression of the Law-giver.** [Attack God's law, and alters how we see the Law-giver. How is the law attacked? Changed from Design law to Imposed law] Throughout his rebellion he has **sought to represent God as an unjust, tyrannical being.** [What does a tyrant do? Makes up rules and imposes them as they see fit.] {ST, July 23, 1902 par. 12}

In the beginning it was Satan's purpose to separate man from God. [How? Lies believed break the circle of love and trust...] And this purpose he has carried out in every age. Constantly he is at work among the children of men. He sways all classes. The same **method of deception**, the same logic, that he used to deceive the holy pair in Eden, he has used in all succeeding ages. **His plan of work has ever been one of deception.** [What method? Lies believed...] **At times he assumes a cloak of piety, purity, and holiness. Often he transforms himself into an angel of light.** [Where will Satan have agents placed?] He has blinded the eyes of men so that they can not see beneath the surface and discern his real purpose. [How? Could it be by complex and confusing theologies?] As a result of Adam's disobedience, every human being is a transgressor of the law, sold under sin. [Why? Born in sin, conceived in iniquity Ps 51, what kind of law?] Unless he repents and is converted, he is under bondage to the law, serving Satan, falling into the deceptions of the enemy, and bearing witness against the precepts of Jehovah. **But by perfect obedience to the requirements of the law, man is justified.** [Who obeyed perfectly? Jesus, as a human, thus humanity, man, was set right with God in the person of Jesus Christ. Why? Because Jesus restored God's design of love back into the humanity He assumed] Only through faith in Christ is such obedience possible. Men may comprehend the spirituality of the law, they may realize its power as a detector of sin, but they are helpless to withstand Satan's power and deceptions, **unless they**



accept the atonement provided for them in the remedial sacrifice of Christ, who is our Atonement--our At-one-ment--with God. [What was the atonement provided for? Not a legal payment, but as a remedy, it was a remedial sacrifice, it remedied, remediated, what was wrong in man that sin caused, and thus when we trust God, we experience renewal of heart so that we are at-one with Him again, through what Christ accomplished in our behalf] {ST, July 23, 1902 par. 13}

Those who believe on Christ and obey His commandments are not under bondage to God's law; for to those who believe and obey, His law is not a law of bondage, but of liberty. [What does bondage to the law mean? How does God's law, if broken, hold one in bondage? Is it a legal condemnation by the ruling authority, or an actual state of being, for which we cannot of ourselves escape or change? A person who violates God's laws of health, and becomes sick, say smokes 2 packs per day and gets COPD, do they experience bondage? Do tight cords hold them where they do not have the liberty that once was theirs? Can they climb stairs, go skiing at altitude, run, walk fast, cut wood, or do any real labor? Are they actually tied down to an oxygen bottle, their liberty restricted? Consider someone who does MDMA, an illegal drug, which if prepared wrong can destroy the dopamine producing cells in the brain and cause a Parkinson's like problem, permanently. Will they be in bondage? Will their liberty be restricted? Which restricts ones liberty more completely and without compromise, a jail cell, a legal condemnation, or inability to move because one had destroyed either their lungs or their brain cells? Penal models of atonement undermine the law of God by representing it as human law, and suggesting what holds us in bondage is legal condemnation and the law enforcement angels from heaven.] Every one who believes on Christ, every one who relies on the keeping power of a risen **Saviour that has suffered the penalty pronounced upon the transgressor**, every one who resists temptation and in the midst of evil copies the pattern given in the Christ-life, will **through faith in the atoning sacrifice of Christ become a partaker of the divine nature**, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. **Every one who by faith obeys God's commandments, will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression.** {ST, July 23, 1902 par. 14} [What is the penalty of unremedied sin? Being let go by God, complete separation from Him. Jesus experienced this on the Cross, "My God, My God, Why have you forsaken me?" God let Jesus go to experience what Jesus chose, to be our Remedy, to do what was necessary to heal our condition, to love perfectly and purge the infection of fear and selfishness from humanity. Thus He rose again, having cleansed and purified the humanity He assumed. Christ, in His human brain, developed a perfect human character and became the human that God intended Adam originally to become. But of course, Christ was more than Adam, for He is also fully God. And notice, our faith in our reconciling (atoning) sacrifice results in what? Our actual partaking of the divine nature, we are not declared righteous merely, we are regenerated as righteous, and one day we will be fully glorified to be sinless.

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, "Isaiah's poetic story..." thoughts?



Are punishment and discipline the same? Do you hear them the same. Do we derive the same connotation from them?

Dictionary definition:

PUNISHMENT

- 1:** the act of punishing
- 2:** **a:** suffering, pain, or loss that serves as retribution
 b: a penalty inflicted on an offender through judicial procedure
- 3:** severe, rough, or disastrous treatment

DISCIPLINE

- 1:** punishment
- 2:** *obsolete* : instruction
- 3:** a field of study
- 4:** training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character
- 5:** **a:** control gained by enforcing obedience or order
 b: orderly or prescribed conduct or pattern of behavior
 c: self-control
- 6:** a rule or system of rules governing conduct or activity

So, one can hear discipline as punishment, but do you think they actually mean the same when referring to God?

My son, do not despise the Lord's discipline and do not resent his rebuke,
because the Lord disciplines those he loves, as a father the son he delights in. Prov 3:11,12

Read last paragraph, "Jeremiah's parable..." thoughts? So what does the Lord do to those who refuse Him? He eventually releases them to reap what separation from the Lord and His design for life brings.

Examples:

- Snakes in the desert – were they sent of God, or when they rebelled, God withdrew His protection that was keeping the snakes away, and snakes came in, as snakes do?
- Babylonian captivity –

These were disciplines, but what about other actions in the OT?

- The 10 plagues of Egypt?
- Sodom and Gomorrah?
- 185,000 Assyrians?
- The platoons that came to arrest Elijah?

Were these discipline or punishment?



- 10 Plagues – discipline to expose the falsehood of their idols and lead to God
- the other three – neither discipline nor punishment, but therapeutic intervention to keep open the channel for Messiah. Cauterizing a necrotic or cancerous lesion. When one cauterizes a lesion they are not punishing, or disciplining, but working to heal. Without Christ’s arrival, the entire race is lost. Satan is working to shut down the avenue for the Messiah, God worked to keep it open. All those individuals put in the grave will arise again in one of two resurrections. What happened at that time was not the end of their existence.

MONDAY

The lesson asks us to read MT 7:24-27:

“Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

Thoughts? What do you understand the metaphor to mean?

Christ illustrated character building by a house built on a rock, against which storm and tempest were powerless, and the house built on the sand, which was swept away. We are living in perilous times. Amidst the changing scenes, **with heresy and false doctrines coming in that will test the faith of all**, the house built on the solid rock cannot be shaken. But when storm and tempest come, the house built on the sand will fall, and great will be the fall of it.

Let us take heed, then, how we build. Let no one build unwisely. The word of God is our only foundation. Every semblance of error will come upon us. **Some of these errors will be very specious and attractive, but if received, they would remove the pillars of the foundation that Christ has established and set up a structure of man's building.** There are those who **seeing, see not, and hearing, hear not**, and under Satan's guidance they prepare false foundations for human minds. {MM 87.2}

Consider the following metaphor, and examine which method will most likely result in building habits or traits of character that will be solid, and less likely to collapse, versus those which can be undone under deception or stress:

Child A is taught by their parent that they are to brush their teeth, because the parent has a rule, and if they don't, the parent will punish. The child never grows to understand any other reason for brushing teeth, other than parental rules, and imposed punishments by parents if the rules are not obeyed.

Child B is taught by their parent, when they are very young, to brush their teeth, because the parent has a rule, and if they don't, the parent will punish. But as the child grows older they



discover that the reason the parent had the rule was because of love to protect the child from violations of the design law, of entropy, that if energy isn't put into the system the system will decay. If they don't brush they will eventually get cavities and lose their teeth. They realize their parents punishments were never the actual punishments for not brushing, but were disciplines designed to protect and prevent the loss of their teeth. They now understand the real purpose for brushing.

Which child, when an adult, will have their teeth brushing built on solid rock, and which will be built on sand? Why?

How does this metaphor apply to Christianity, our understanding of God's law and our obedience to God? What builds our character on solid rock and what constitutes sand?

What false doctrines have come in to test our faith, to erode solid rock? Nothing is more destructive to character than distortions of God's character, and particularly God's law as imposed, which has infected Christianity in the guise of penal theologies. This is part of the wine of Babylon that must be replaced with the truth about God the Designer and His law as the law of love.

TUESDAY

Read second paragraph, "At the same time..." thoughts? The paragraph is referring to the wheat and tares growing up together until the harvest.

Did you find it peculiar that they use judgment that God does as "condemnation" but judgment we do as "discernment"? Do you see again the infection into our theology of the imperial Roman law construct?

The idea that God judges, i.e. finds guilt or innocence and then condemns the guilty, rather than the truth, that God's law is design law, and God judges, or diagnoses perfectly. His judgments are merely the accurate diagnosis of one's condition, example,

- "Ephraim is joined to idols; leave him alone! (Hos 4:17)
- Or "Let him who does wrong continue to do wrong; let him who is vile continue to be vile; let him who does right continue to do right; and let him who is holy continue to be holy." (Rev 22:11)

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Christ's ministry..." thoughts? Well said, yes revolutionary, and the weapons were truth, love and freedom. Breaking down the lies and setting minds free.

But, what did Satan do? He counterattacked, the man of sin, set himself up in God's temple proclaiming himself to be god. How? By infecting Christianity with Satan's view of God's law, thus



altering in the minds of Christians how they conceive of God's character and government. Thus, in the spirit temple is a false god construct set up proclaiming God is like a dictator who inflicts pain and suffering and death for disobedience.

Read last paragraph, "No question..." thoughts? What does this sound like? Does it sound like lack of mercy, the judge doesn't care whether you are ignorant, meant well, etc. He has rules you broke them and he must punish?

Why will ignorance not be an excuse? Deviations from God's design for life are deviations from God's design for life, thus a person who smokes cigarettes ignorantly, believing they help a person live longer and have better health, will still suffer the results of damaged lungs and heart disease.

A person, who prefers selfishness, lies, etc. will still find love and truth hateful, will still experience torment of their own condition when they can no longer hide from who they really are, having never been reborn and transformed to be like Jesus.

Many well meaning Christians will find themselves crying out in pain, we kept the rules, we ate the right foods, we worshipped on the right day, we did miracles in your name, but they never experienced a changed heart. Why? Because they relied on a legal religion and had false security, never believing transformation of the inner man was necessary, just legal pardon.

THURSDAY

Read last paragraph, "However they are expressed..." thoughts? The Bible is filled with imagery, metaphor, parable – but we must remember there is an eternal reality to which all this metaphor and imagery points. Are we to remain in symbols, or should we struggle to move past metaphor and symbol to, as far as possible, reality?

Is healing, transformation, regeneration of character, renewal, restoration in Godlikeness metaphor or the reality to which God, through Christ is working?

Then we need to stop calling the healing plan of salvation a metaphor, and lumping it in with all the other actual metaphors like ransom etc. It is not a metaphor, it is the reality to which all the metaphors point.

FRIDAY

Read and discuss the questions.