



The Role of the Church in the Community Lesson 11 3Q 2016 Jesus Bade Them “Follow Me”

I received this email yesterday:

Dear Dr. Tim,

My brother and I were brought up SDA, legalistic, beat over the head with EGW, frightened of God and living in fear. After leaving home, and getting married, I left the church not seeing any way I could work enough to earn my way to heaven, so why beat myself up trying? 25 years later (1997) I was diagnosed with MS (multiple sclerosis) and 2 years later started attending church again, remembering that they had the health message and for the first time in my life started reading EGW and seeing an entirely different God picture that didn't align with my upbringing. I started searching for God with a new heart.

*Since 2009 my husband and I have been eating a whole food plant based diet, my MS has been completely reversed, my last MRI showed no new or recent activity, (my Dr. couldn't believe it). I have been off **all** the MS meds since October 2011.*

A few years ago my brother shared your audio book “God Shaped Brain” what an eye opener! Also shared your Sabbath School lessons and other information with me and it is completely changing my view of God. For the first time in my life I am experiencing a God of Love, and for the first time can discuss Him with non-Adventists, and co-workers, and even other struggling church members. After attending church for the past 15 years, I was finally re-baptized last year. I have shared your materials with many friends, and recently one of my friends and I started a Monday night Bible study group using your materials as the base.

I just can't get enough of Him and its all because you are sharing your teachings of the Creator, Designer, God is love, view of the law.

Lately I've also been transcribing most of your SS class presentations and sharing them with my friends, because there is so much more information in the classes than in the notes you so kindly provide. My mind doesn't absorb things well, so I need the entire transcription to refer back to when I want to review some of the issues that come up in my discussions with others who struggle with their image of God.

When I discovered your Let's Talk article on Difficult Questions and Biblical Answers I felt almost like it was a gift just for me. Answers to lots of problematic Bible stories I was never able to reconcile with a God of love.



May God continue to bless and keep you, your family and your class (including the virtual one) as you continue to share to truth about His character, and all those being released from the bondage we're in from looking through the wrong lens view.

With a very grateful heart I thank you. Rita Hartman

Just a reminder to our online listeners to take advantage of our comeandreason.com website online resources. We have a large number of blogs and other resources that answer many questions. So if you have a question, use the search feature at the top of the home page and type in your subject and see what resources we already have available.

SABBATH

What do you think of Jesus' calling to "Follow Him?" Have you considered how difficult that would have actually been?

Consider, you are at work one day this week and a visitor comes to your organization and as he is walking past your workstation he says, "Follow me." Perhaps it is a person you have heard about, but don't personally know, would it be easy to just walk away from your job? What if you have a wife and kids that need your income?

Is this close to what Jesus called His disciples to do?

Now Jesus calling of His disciples wasn't without some preparation—what kind of preparation preceded Jesus calling of His disciples?

- Jesus Himself had been preparing His entire life to be our Messiah
- The Holy Spirit had been preparing receptive hearts for the arrival of Jesus
- John the Baptist had been preparing the hearts and minds of the nation to receive Jesus and John made an announcement to some of the ones who became Jesus disciples.

³⁵ The next day John was there again with two of his disciples. ³⁶ When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, "Look, the Lamb of God!"

³⁷ When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus. ³⁸ Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, "What do you want?"

They said, "Rabbi" (which means Teacher), "where are you staying?"

³⁹ "Come," he replied, "and you will see."

So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour.

⁴⁰ Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. ⁴¹ The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother



Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ).⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. Jn 1:35-42

- Individuals had been preparing themselves by their worship, life choices, study of God’s Word, practicing of God’s methods

So, when Jesus called them, there had been preparation happening before that moment.

What about in our lives, if we are to be ready for some calling Jesus has for us, do we have preparation to do BEFORE the calling occurs?

Read memory text, “But they [the sheep] will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice.” John 10:5

What does this mean?

- Does it mean that we hear the voice of Jesus like you hear my voice right now?
- Is it supposed to mean this?
- Could it mean this, sometimes?
- Will it one day mean this?
- How do we get to know the voice of Jesus so well we recognize it and also recognize any voice that is not His?

Consider this description from the book *Christ’s Object Lessons*:

Our life is to be bound up with the life of Christ; we are to draw constantly from Him, **partaking of Him**, the living Bread that came down from heaven, drawing from a fountain ever fresh, ever giving forth its abundant treasures. **If we keep the Lord ever before us, [law of worship, by beholding we are changed]** allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, **[law of exertion, the more we exercise something it gets stronger]** we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. **He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet joyful sense of the presence of Jesus.** Often our hearts will burn within us as He draws nigh to commune with us as He did with Enoch. When this is in truth the experience of the Christian, there is seen in his life a simplicity, a humility, meekness, and lowliness of heart, that show to all with whom he associates that he has been with Jesus and learned of Him. {COL 129.3}

How is it we get to know the voice of Jesus and that we hear Him speak His mysteries to us?

Can we hear the voice of Jesus if we:



- Stay high on drugs or alcohol? Why not? Is God unwilling to speak to us in such a state, or are we in such a mental fog we can't hear?
- Are so proud and arrogant that we cannot be taught?
- Have beliefs about God that make us afraid to let Him talk to us lest He kill us? (Job's friends)
- Have beliefs that we need someone to protect us from God?
- If we think we already have the answers and there are no mysteries to reveal?
- Fill our minds with entertainment, TV, video games, worldly reading material?
- Are so busy with life we never stop to listen—remember Martha
- If we conclude there is no God and thus don't ever consider He is there to listen to?
- If we worship a false god and have trained the mind to listen to a false voice?

So how do we know the voice of Jesus and hear Him speak to us?

- We must recognize our need of Him
- We must spend time with Him
- We must clear the mind of anything that obstructs His voice, stop the noise, take time to listen
- Read and study His Word, harmonized with science and real life experience (The integrative evidence-based approach)
- Meditate on His Creation
- Contemplate His methods (identify, understand, appreciate His design laws)
- Choose His principles (apply His design laws)
- Remove the distortions about Him that we may have in our minds
- Open the heart and invite Him in and actually reach the mind out in conversation and discussion with Him over the issues and problems of life

Other actions?

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, "It is, of course, important..." What is "divinely given discernment"? The ability to tell the difference between things, in this case between truth and error, right and wrong, healthy and unhealthy.

But how do we get this? Is this just a gift that God uses His divine power to impart to some but not others?

Heb 5:14:

- But solid food is for the mature, **who by constant use have trained themselves** to distinguish good from evil. NIV
- But solid food belongs to those who are of full age, *that is*, those **who by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern** both good and evil. NKJV



Discernment is something that we develop by practice. If you want to be a great musician you must practice. You cannot become a great musician by listening to the stereo 10 hours per day; you must practice. Now, listening to other great musicians is appropriate to inspire and learn etc. but at some point you will have to practice. Likewise, to be a great thinker at some point, after listening to others, you will have to think for yourself.

What helps a person to discern?

What do you think of this quote?

All whom God has endowed with reasoning powers may become intellectual Christians. God has given **abundant evidence** of the truth of his word, and he requires that those who would be counted as the followers of Christ **should study the Scriptures**, that they may be able to give to every man a **reason** of the hope that is in them, with meekness and fear. **He has not required any one to believe without evidence.** Let the inquirer after truth put to the **stretch his mental powers in diligent study of the word of God.** {Medical Missionary, May 1, 1892 par. 5}

What, according to this quote is required to be discerning?

- Possessing reasoning powers
- Application of one's reasoning powers in study of Scripture
- And harmonizing Scripture with evidence, the integrative approach

One example, some of the people who criticize what we teach in this class do so because of passages in Scripture like:

*The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom,
and knowledge of the Holy One is understanding.* Prov 9:10

The critics argue that we teach a message that removes fear of God and that passages like this teach we must be afraid of God.

So, this is opportunity to discern, to practice, to think—how do you know which view is right?

- First fear can also mean be in awe, not be afraid, but even so
- What about perfect love casts out all fear 1Jn 4:18, if we come back into perfect love with a perfect God do we have more fear or less?
- What about the law of liberty? What does fear, terror do to love? If God is saying love me or I will kill you, what happens?
- If God were to use power and might to put down sin by infliction of pain, suffering and death i.e. kill His enemies, then why not just do it from the beginning?



The paragraph in Sunday's lesson also pointed out that there is an enemy who works by great stealth to keep people from coming to a saving relationship with Jesus.

Is Satan's most successful and stealthy methods of keeping people from a saving relationship with Jesus achieved through non-religious means? Or, is the stealthiest attack of Satan done through religious channels?

Any examples?

Read next paragraph, "Nevertheless, we can be..." Blind leading the blind—was Jesus referring to non-religious people when He used this description? No! Jesus was referring to the church leaders of His day. What made them blind? How were they blind? To what were they blind?

Let's check the Scripture, Matthew 15:1-14:

Then some Pharisees and teachers of the law came to Jesus from Jerusalem and asked, ² "Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? They don't wash their hands before they eat!"

³ Jesus replied, "And why do you break the command of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴ For God said, 'Honor your father and mother' and 'Anyone who curses his father or mother must be put to death.' ⁵ But you say that if a man says to his father or mother, 'Whatever help you might otherwise have received from me is a gift devoted to God,' ⁶ he is not to 'honor his father' with it. Thus you nullify the word of God for the sake of your tradition. ⁷ You hypocrites! Isaiah was right when he prophesied about you:

⁸ " 'These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.

⁹ They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men.' "

¹⁰ Jesus called the crowd to him and said, "Listen and understand. ¹¹ What goes into a man's mouth does not make him 'unclean,' but what comes out of his mouth, that is what makes him 'unclean.' "

¹² Then the disciples came to him and asked, "Do you know that the Pharisees were offended when they heard this?"

¹³ He replied, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be pulled up by the roots. ¹⁴ Leave them; they are blind guides. If a blind man leads a blind man, both will fall into a pit."

To what were the religious leaders blind? They were blind to God's character of love and God's design law! They were worshipping through the imposed law lens and more interested in rule keeping, than living in harmony with God and His design of love!



Do we have any problems in religion today? Is there an accepted orthodoxy, that is rarely questioned, that God's law requires God to punish? Is this a stealthy attack on God's character?

MONDAY

The lesson is about seeking the lost—what does it mean to seek the lost?

read second paragraph, “If you merely focus on praying...” Is there something we are to pray, to ask, that is to come to us?

We are to pray to the Lord of the harvest for more workers in the field! But, the workers are to go out into the field to reach those ripe for harvest!

Can you think of ways we can be more effective in outreach, in taking this healing message to those who need it? Any idea?

If you think of any possible ways Come and Reason Ministries could do more than we are to share this message and reach people, send us an email with your idea. We are constantly looking for ways to wake people up and help them see the reality of God's character of love and God's methods for their lives!

One of the methods of Come and Reason has been to teach people the truth about God, His character and methods, and call people to a saving relationship to Jesus Christ. Our ministry has not sought to call people to a specific worship facility, or to join a specific denomination, but has operated under the belief that God needs His true followers in every highway, byway, institution, and denomination and thus we leave it to the Holy Spirit to direct people where they should specifically worship, affiliate, attend, and work for God's kingdom.

Do you think this is the right approach or is there some element we are missing?

In **TUESDAY's** lesson, second paragraph, we read this quote:

“The Lord does not now work to bring many souls into the truth, because of the church members who have never been converted and those who were once converted but who have backslidden. What influence would these unconsecrated members have on new converts? Would they not make of no effect the God-given message which His people are to bear?” {6T 370.3}

What is this saying? Is this saying that some churches are not healthy places for new converts to attend and that God doesn't convict everyone of His followers into the same organization?



Read first paragraph, “Sometimes a church...” Do you see yourself as a bridge, an ambassador, an envoy from God to people?

Anyone who is joined to Christ is a new being; the old is gone, the new has come. ¹⁸All this is done by God, who through Christ changed us from enemies into his friends and gave us the task of making others his friends also. ¹⁹**Our message is that God was making the whole human race his friends through Christ.** God did not keep an account of their sins, and **he has given us the message** which tells how he makes them his friends. **Here we are, then, speaking for Christ, as though God himself were making his appeal through us.** We plead on Christ’s behalf: let God change you from enemies into his friends! 2Cor 5:17-20

Do we see ourselves as God’s ambassadors, with a message from God that God wants every human being to be His friend?

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, “Jesus and His disciples...” What do you understand medical missionary work to be?

Here is a quote from EGW, one of the founders of the SDA church:

Again and again I have been instructed [by whom do you think?] that the medical missionary work is to bear the same relation to the work of the third angel's message [what is the third angel's message] that the arm and hand bear to the body. Under the direction of the divine Head they are to work unitedly in preparing the way for the coming of Christ. The right arm of the body of truth is to be constantly active, constantly at work, and God will strengthen it. **But it is not to be made the body.** At the same time the body is not to say to the arm, "I have no need of thee." The body has need of the arm in order to do active, aggressive work. **Both have their appointed work, and each will suffer great loss if worked independently of the other.**--Testimonies, vol. 6, p. 288. {ChS 134.4}

What do you hear in this admonition?

- Who is EGW stating this message is from? God!
- What message is the medical missionary work to be part of that is to be taken to the world? – the message of the three angels, which is what? How do you understand it?
 - The three angels message is the end-time message that God is to prepare the world for Christ’s return. What is that message?
 - That God is Creator, Designer, Builder of reality and His laws are the laws upon which reality is built. We are to give glory to Him, by being healed in our characters to be like Him and live out His law of love, because the time in human history has come for human beings to make a right judgment about God! (first angel)



- The other churches and religions of the world are fallen into a system of imposed law, arbitrary rules and legal theology with a punishing God, just like Babylon; it is a system that doesn't make sense and is confusing. We are to come out of her. (second angel)
- And those who reject God who is love and His law of love, and prefer the beastly methods of human imposed law constructs, and mark themselves in their minds by believing and promoting the methods of coercion, or mark themselves by their works of practicing the methods of coercion, will ultimately die of their terminal and unhealed selfish condition. (third angel)
- Why is it the right arm of the message and not the message?
 - Because the laws of health are design laws, nothing reveals design law better than the laws of health and how violations of the laws of health result in pain, suffering and death to the unhealthy, and that doctors don't have to have tribunals and inflict punishments upon their patients for breaking the laws of health. But healing the body is not the same as saving the soul and thus the health message is the right arm, not the gospel itself. God wants to heal the mind, cleanse the heart, purify the character and that is what happens when the true gospel message—that God is not like Satan says, that God is not the source of pain, suffering and death, that God is love and that through Christ God is reconciling, restoring, and healing the world back into unity with Himself.

THURSDAY

What is the balance between:

- “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened.” MT 7:7,8

and passages like this:

- Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me. Rev 3:20
- Parable of the lost sheep and lost coin

Are we to seek to be saved, or is God seeking to save us? What is the balance? What is meant? Who seeks first?

- But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Rom 5:8
- Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, tolerance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness leads you toward repentance? Rom 2:4
- John 3:16

Salvation is a cooperative effort between God and sinful humans. Sinful humanity could do nothing to heal, fix, save or cure ourselves. Thus, God sought to save us.



- Immediately, in Eden God went after Adam and Eve.
- God began interceding with the powers of darkness, holding Satan in check,
- God intercedes in the hearts and minds of sinners to convict, draw, woo,
- And He sent Jesus to intercede in the natural course of sin, fixing what Adam broke and creating a Remedy to heal and restore us.

But, we each must choose to accept God's call, to cooperate, to seek after God and God's methods.

We are laborers together with God. This is the Lord's own wise arrangement. **The cooperation of the human will and endeavor with divine energy is the link that binds men up with one another and with God.** The apostle says, "We are laborers together with God: ye are God's husbandry, ye are God's building" (1 Corinthians 3:9). **Man is to work with the facilities God has given him.** "Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling," He says. "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure" (Philippians 2:12, 13).--MS 113, 1898. {2MCP 694.3}

There are two grand forces at work in the salvation of the human soul. It requires the cooperation of man with the divine agencies-- divine influences, and a strong, living, working faith. **It is in this way only** that the human agent can become a laborer together with God. **The Lord does not sanction in any one of us a blind, stupid credulity. He does not dishonor the human understanding,** but, far from this, He calls for the human will to be brought into connection with the divine will. **He calls for the ingenuity of the human mind, the tact, the skill, to be strenuously exercised in searching out the truth as it is in Jesus. . .** . Ye are labourers together with God. {OHC 310.5}

And he who seeks to give light to others will himself be blessed. "There shall be showers of blessing." "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." Proverbs 11:25. **God could have reached His object in saving sinners without our aid; but in order for us to develop a character like Christ's, we must share in His work.** In order to enter into His joy,--the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice,--we must participate in His labors for their redemption. {DA 142.2}

This is design law; by beholding we are change, and the law of exertion, and the law of liberty and the law of love all together here. God cannot change a person without the freewill participation of that person, but a sinner has no ability on their own to change and heal themselves. It is a partnership with God, through Jesus. Thus Jesus said we are to take His yoke upon us. A yoke binds to together to share the work!

Jesus would have them lay aside this yoke of bondage, and **take upon them his yoke of love,** that they may learn to be meek and lowly in heart. The weakest soul, wearing Christ's yoke, bearing his burden, may become strong in his grace, and he will find the yoke easy, the burden light. {ST, January 19, 1891 par. 5}



FRIDAY Discuss question 3

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

The God-Shaped Brain is now available in Korean and is available at this website:
http://book.naver.com/bookdb/book_detail.nhn?bid=9519886

The Remedy – Dr. Jennings’ New Testament Paraphrase—FREE for ios and android systems.

The Journal of the Watcher is now available as a **HARD COVER book at Amazon** as well as a movie in itunes for everyone without ios or android in itunes. It is also available as an APP for Apple and Android devices.

September 15-17: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC National Conference in Dallas, TX. For more info, see AACC.net

October 14-16: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Drakensville, South Africa Campmeeting.

October 19, 20: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Ladismith South Africa (venue to be determined)

October 21, 22: Dr. Jennings will be speaking in Somerset West, South Africa

November 4: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC Fall Summit at the Calvary Chapel in Naperville, IL.