2020 3Q Making Friends for God: Lesson 7 **Sharing the Word**

by Tim Jennings (announcements last page)

SABBATH

Read first paragraph, "When we witness..." This is an great point, that our witnessing is about Jesus, not about a denomination, or a rule, or a creed, or a ritual, but about Jesus.

And who is Jesus—what would you tell someone about Jesus?

And as we witness about Jesus what is important that we witness about?

Then the dragon was enraged at the woman and went off to make war against the rest of her offspring—those who obey God's commandments and hold to the testimony of Jesus. (Rev 12:17 NIV84)

What did Jesus say He was here to witness about?

- Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. (John 14:9 NIV84)
- I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. I have revealed you... (John 17:4-6 NIV84)

What was Jesus' testimony to reveal? The truth about God, is this related to the eternal gospel mentioned in the 3 angel's messages and the final message of mercy to the world? How?

- The eternal good news is the good news about God—which Satan lied about in heaven and lied about in Eden and has continued to lie about and misrepresent through all human history
- The final message of mercy to the world is the truth about God's character of love, which is manifested in Jesus Christ, who lived out perfectly God's living law of love.

So, when we witness about the Word are we making it clear Jesus is the living Word of God who became human in order to reveal God to us while simultaneously exposing Satan and sin and procuring the remedy to heal humanity from sin?

When we witness about Jesus, whose testimony was about His Father, do we have to use the name Jesus?

Is it sometimes wise when witnessing about Jesus not to actually use the name Jesus? When?

How did Jesus speak to the people? He used parables, why?

What did many of His parables reveal?

Design law, the methods of God, exposing the lie of imperialism and arbitrary rules.

Parables of Jesus

The Lamp - Matthew 5:14-16

If one lights a lamp and let it do what it does naturally and don't interfere by artificial means, it shines. What kind of law is revealed in the parable? God's truth and love will always shine out of our lives to brighten the world around us. And if one tries to hide the light they are working against how reality operates.

The Speck and The Log - Matthew 7:1-5

• What is the natural result of a larger object in one's eye? One cannot see clearly with obstructions in the eye. This parable teaches the reality that lies obstruct our ability to discern. The more lies one believes the greater the blindness. So if we want to be effective in helping others we must first remove the distortions from our own minds. What kind of law is described here? Again, design law, how reality works.

New Cloth on Old Garment - Matthew 9:16-17

• What happens, if new cloth is sewn onto old cloth? The new cloth tears the old garment, why? Does a ruling authority inspect the garment and issue a decree that law enforcement must enforce by tearing the garment or is it design law, how reality works? This is the same lesson as in the new wine in old skins that one of our class members wrote an excellent blog about, which you can find on our website.

The Divided Kingdom - Matthew 12:24-30

A kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, why? What is the reason? It is the natural result of warring against oneself. The system collapses. Do we see forces at work in America today to divide the country—not just typical politics in which all parties are for the same goal of a stronger nation and merely debate different ways to get there, but are the divisions growing in such a way they threaten the actual health of the nation? What kind of law causes the collapse when a kingdom wars against itself?

The Sower - Matthew 13:1-23

• What is the lesson? Why do the seeds grow differently? Is it because of God uses His power to make the seeds grow differently? Or are the seeds equally healthy when planted, the sunshine and rain are the same for all, but the soil where the seeds are planted is different? Which represents what? The hearts of people into which the seeds of truth are planted—what kind of law is involved?

The Weeds Among the Wheat - Matthew 13:24-30

What is revealed in this parable? Why do weeds grow in a field? Do they come up naturally or are they planted? What happens if you pull weeds growing next to wheat? Does some of the wheat get pulled up? Why? So what is the lesson—what kind of law is involved?

The Mustard Seed - Matthew 13:31-32

• What do mustard seeds do when planted in a garden? How do they do it? What does the mustard plant become—a place of shade for others—why? What is taught? What kind of law is involved?

The Leaven - Matthew 13:33-34

What is the lesson of leaven? How does leaven work? Is it that God inspects the flour and if there is leaven then God uses power to perform a miracle for those who use leaven but won't perform the miracle for those who don't? No, it is a natural result of design law at work.

Hidden Treasure - Matthew 13:44 and Pearl of Great Price - Matthew 13:45-46

What is taught in these two parables? What is the natural result when our hearts value something? And when we value it more than anything else in the world what do we do? What law is being described?

The Net - Matthew 13:47-50

 What determines which fish are kept and which are discarded? It is the condition of the fish themselves—there is no jury, no prosecutor, no defense lawyer, no judge. It is all based on the actual condition of the fish. So too in the end of time people are separated by their condition of heart—having accepted Jesus and been renewed in love, or rejected Jesus and been hardened in selfishness. This is design law, no penal/legal issue at all!

What Comes Out of the Mouth - Matthew 15:10-20

• Why is it that what goes into a person's mouth does not determine his cleanliness but what comes out does? What kind of law is involved? Is the person unclean because someone hears what they say, reports it to authorities, has a judicial review and a legal ruling that declares them unclean? What was Jesus teaching?

The Lost Sheep - Matthew 18:10-14

• What is revealed? The heart of God, who loved the world so much He gave His only begotten Son—does it teach that God was paid such a high price, the blood of His Son, that He was induced to go look for the sheep? No, He already valued the lost sheep so much that He went to find it. Did the sheep have to do anything to get the shepherd to come looking? What is the natural action to take when we love someone who is lost? Again, the reality is God's character of love, nothing legal.

The Unforgiving Servant - Matthew 18:23-35

• What causes the servant with the great debt to ultimately be lost? What lesson is taught? Is it a legal issue, or an issue of character? Was the man with the great debt given grace—did the grace change his heart? What law is revealed?

Laborers in the Vineyard - Matthew 20:1-16

This is a great parable because it really exposes the fallacy of imposed law. The workers who worked one hour got the same pay as those who worked all day. What did those who worked all day think? What do you initially think when you hear this story? What if we added to the story that those who worked all day were people of color and those who worked one hour were white? Is it fair that they all got the same pay? It is totally unfair if we have an imposed law view, but if we have design law view and understand that the payment, the reward, is eternal life with Jesus and the field is the field of this earth where we work to save souls, then it is totally fair. Those who worked all day had salvation early in their life and the privilege of working with God and therefore coming to know Him better. They applied His methods early in their lives and became more skilled in laboring for Him, and applying His principles, which means they became more mature than those who only worked an hour. But, if one holds the human law model it appears unfair. It is a great parable.

The Two Sons - Matthew 21:28-32

• One says he will work in his father's field but then doesn't, the other son says he will not work in his father's field but then does, what is the lesson? What law is involved? How many today are being duped because they go merely on the words people say and don't look at their actions? Lies are mere words, truth is how reality works. Thus, the parable is again application of design law revealing the truth in spite of the words.

The Tenant Farmers - Matthew 21:33-45

This parable reveals the actual condition of the hearts of people and the actions they take when selfishness rules in the heart. They are lost in the end because of hardening their own hearts despite all the pleas from the landowner (God) to repent. No legal issue, but reality of their heart condition.

Marriage Feast or Great Banquet - Matthew 22:1-14

Who was invited, who came, who decided who attended, what is the lesson? So who decides who is at the banquet and who is not? Is this a legal process of bad deeds done and then getting records expunged by the application of some payment, or is it a process of accepting the invitation and partaking of the resources provided—i.e. the clothing given, which represent the remedy of Christ's righteousness which heals us.

The Ten Virgins - Matthew 25:1-13

• What makes the difference in the wise or foolish, what is the lesson? Why don't lamps shine without oil, is it a miracle God performs for those who have oil but refuse to perform for those who don't? Or is it how reality works? Who can have the light of God's character without the oil of the Holy Spirit in their hearts? So, who decides which are the wise and foolish, who have the oil and who doesn't? What law is involved?

Ten Talents or Gold Coins - Matthew 25:14-30

• What is the lesson? What law is described? The law of exertion! What happens if you don't use the talents you have—if you don't use it, you lose it. But if you apply yourself you gain more abilities.

The Good Samaritan - Luke 10:29-37

• What determined who was right with God? What is exposed as fraudulent? How many Sabbaths did the Samaritan keep? How many sacrifices at the temple did he make? How much tithe did he pay to the temple? How many kosher meals did he eat? Do you see what mattered was not a list of rules, but having God's love in the heart—what law is this?

The Rich Fool - Luke 12:13-21

• What is revealed? What determines his eternal end? What law is involved?

The Lost Coin - Luke 15:8-10

- What is taught about God's kingdom and God? Is God's character to search for His lost children revealed? What is different between the lost coin, sheep, and son?
- The lost coin didn't know it was lost and the owner searched for it and found it.
- The lost sheep knew it was lost but didn't know how to get home and the owner searched for it and found it.
- The lost son knew he was lost and knew the way home and the father waited for the son to make the choice to come home.
- In all three what does the father/owner reveal about himself? What kind of law is involved?

The Prodigal Son - Luke 15:11-32

• What is taught? Why did the father leave the son in dire straits? Why did the father accept him back? Why did the older son get upset? What did the older son value? What law is involved? Did the prodigal have to pay a legal penalty? Why not?

The Rich Man and Lazarus - Luke 16:19-31

• What is the lesson, what is taught? What law is involved? If people won't accept truth when presented, miracles won't change them.

In all of these parables what is Jesus revealing the kingdom of God and what kind of kingdom is it? What law does it operate upon? Over and over again Jesus taught reality, design law, how things actually operate. No where do we find Jesus teaching penal substitution theology, no where do we find

Jesus teaching imposed law with imposed punishments. Jesus constantly overthrew their system of rules and creeds.

So, are we giving the testimony of Jesus to the world or have we accepted the wine of Babylon, that God's law is like human law and misrepresent the teachings of Jesus through the lie that God must use His power to punish sinners?

What is God waiting for? What is the final message? So, what do you tell people about Jesus?

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The lesson points to various symbols of God's Word and asks what we can learn from each symbol.

• Lamp

Gives light to see but one has to move forward in the light to see beyond your immediate circumstance. Likewise we don't get more light of truth until we apply and move forward in the light we have. Then the light is advancing.

Fire

What does fire do? It cleanses, the truth of God's Word will burn out lies, distortions, falsehoods, will convict of sinful habits or practices, and lead us to God to have them burned out of our hearts.

Fire also warms, heats, gives energy and spreads—when we are on fire for God's Word we bring warmth to our environment, we are energized for action, and the fire spreads to others.

Seeds

Sometimes lie dormant until the right circumstances then sprout and bear fruit—sometimes the truth is planted in a heart but doesn't sprout until later. But when it does sprout in good soil, the truth bears fruit of righteousness and will be shared with others and the truth spreads.

Bread

Nurtures, gives strength, and as bread is taken into the body and broken down into molecules that become building blocks to our body tissues. So too truths taken into our hearts become building blocks to our ideas, beliefs, constructs, philosophies for life and worldview shaping our mindsets and characters leading us out of darkness, lies, and distrust of God back to trust in God.

Sword

Can be used to block attacks, it can be use to attack, it can be used to cut and kill. So the Word of God can defend, like Jesus did with Satan's temptations in the wilderness. It can be use to pierce through defenses based on lies and selfishness, it can cut deep into the heart and mind

and separate emotions from facts bringing conviction, breaking through denial and distortion. It can kill—what did the truth do to Judas? What happens to those hardened in lies and selfishness when they are exposed to infinite truth and love—the fires of God's life-giving glory?

When we share the seeds of truth, the word of God is it a requirement to quote a Bible verse? Can we share the truth of God's kingdom, the Word, without quoting the Bible? Is it wrong to do so? Can we value the Bible as God's Word, yet sometimes choose to share the truth without quoting it?

MONDAY

Read first two paragraph, "The Word of God is the Living Word..." What do we understand this to mean?

Is it the vocalizations of God that are meant or does this refer to a person, a member of the Godhead?

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. (John 1:1-5, 14 NIV84)

If God didn't speak the words of Creation, does that mean He couldn't have created—if we could put a gag in God's mouth, would that render Him powerless?

It isn't about vocalizations—it is about a person, Jesus the living Word. And it is about the truth, the truth that emanates from God and resonates throughout God's universe.

From the book *The Desire of Ages:*

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. He was the Word of God,--God's thought made audible. In His prayer for His disciples He says, "I have declared unto them Thy name,"--"merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth,"--"that the love wherewith Thou hast loved Me may be in them, and I in them." But not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. Both the redeemed and the unfallen beings will find in the cross of Christ their science and their song. [science meaning reality, understanding, reason, facts, design law, song our joy, our love, our heart's appreciation, our emotional expression—and both our understanding of reality and our emotional experience will be in perfect harmony] It will be seen that the glory shining in the face of Jesus is the glory of self-sacrificing love. In the light from Calvary it will be seen that the <u>law of self-renouncing love is the law of life</u>

for earth and heaven; that the love which "seeketh not her own" has its source in the heart of God; and that in the meek and lowly One is manifested the character of Him who dwelleth in the light which no man can approach unto. DA 19, 20

What kind of law is described here? It isn't about proclamations or edicts or declarations or vocalizations like human rulers give, it is about God's character of love and the reality He created which operates upon His design of love!

What do you think of the quote from the book *Education* in the second to last paragraph,

The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. This word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. It transforms the nature and re-creates the soul in the image of God. Ed 126.4

Is this creative energy that called worlds into existence referring to vocalizations, or a Person, a member of the Godhead?

When we partake of the divine nature, of what are we partaking?

Is there more than concepts and facts involved? In other words, when we partake of the truth, experience a trust relationship with God, apply His methods to our lives do we not only get a change of heart attitude, a change of mind, a change of character, do we also get physically changed? Yes, our brains change. And do all of these changes bring us into actual closer intimacy with God? Can we become ever closer in some resonance frequency, some harmonic, some quantum connection? Is there some actual connection between God and God's creation that God designed and built into the universe that goes beyond just agreeing upon ideas, values, beliefs?

What happened to Moses on the mountain? What happened to his face? What were Adam and Eve covered in before the fall? Where did that light come from?

As we partake of the Word, the truth and connect with our Creator is there some aspect of God's reality, that we don't fully comprehend, that connects us with God and we become conduits of greater life energy from God?

When Jesus asks us to let our light shine could it mean more than just truth—could it mean that as we come into unity with God His life-giving energy and presence dwells in us and we eventually will shine—actually shine?

What did Moses and Elijah look like at the mount of transfiguration?

TUESDAY

Benefits of Scripture, what benefits have you found in studying God's Word?

Read first paragraph, "There are multiple benefits..." I love this—they are referencing the law of worship—exactly right, this is a design law.

Then, if by reading the Scriptures we ingest truth which leads us to trust God and ultimately we partake of the divine nature and via the law of worship are changed to be more and more like God, what did Jesus mean when He said:

You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life. (John 5:39-40 NIV84)

What is happening here? How is it possible to read and study Scripture, yet not become a partaker of the divine nature, nor become more like Jesus?

Did they have the wrong Scriptures?

Did they have the wrong premises when they approached Scripture? Such as?

- God's law is imposed law, therefore Scripture is a law book, or code book
- Salvation is found in the right law keeping
- Salvation is found in the right rituals
- Salvation is found in the right sacrifices
- Salvation is found in belonging to the right group

What is the right understanding of Scripture—a revelation of God to humankind of what?

- God's nature, character, government, law, methods
- Satan and sin
- The Great Controversy
- The plan of salvation

Consider this quote from the book *Education* p. 190:

The student should learn to view **the word as a whole**, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two

antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found. Ed 190.2

Do we have a view that integrates the entire inspired record? Can we see the grand theme? Can we understand the purpose of the world, the rise of the great controversy, the two antagonistic motives what are they? How does the plan of salvation work? Who decides your salvation?

Read the bottom green section, "Think about a time..." For me personally, when I have faced difficulties, the way the Word of God benefited me was not in some prose, or sentiment, or promise, or cliché, but in helping me experience God. My strength was not from the book, but from the author of the book, my comfort was not from the Scripture, but from connecting with the God of the Scripture. And this is how the Bible helped me—it helped me connect with God in truth, in reality, in meaningful and real ways.

WEDNESDAY

Read first paragraph, "Someone has counted..." I really like how they emphasized that God's promises to give us everything necessary to be victorious over sin in our lives—for eternal life. The promises of God are not given for us to attain all this world has to offer.

What does it mean that the Bible is filled with promises?

- That God is a God who is reaching out to us, who loves us, who has our good at heart, who is filled with infinite blessings for us...but why does God make promises?
- When are promises necessary? Or, another way to ask it, what is the purpose of giving a promise? Isn't it to instill confidence in the one to whom the promise is given?
- Why is the Bible filled with so many promises? Because humanity is filled with so many lies about God, so much fear, selfishness, and sin and thus doubts God's goodness. Therefore God is constantly giving of Himself what we need to overcome our distrust of Him. thoughts?

So, I am thankful the Bible is filled with promises from God, because it reveals a God who will do everything that is in harmony with His nature of love and truth to save us.

But what about the idea that the Bible promises are made to each one of us?

In the sense that they reveal our trustworthy God and we can all gain confidence in God as we read the record of His promises, then this is true. But, does it mean every individual promise is made to each individual on earth?

- Is the promise that the Savior would be your descendant made to you?
- Did God make you a promise that you will have a descendant who will reign on your throne forever?

Are some promises of God conditional?

Consider the promise of salvation—it is an interesting promise because it is unconditional and conditional.

It is unconditional in that God promised in Eden that the Seed of the woman would crush the serpent's head, that the Messiah would come and would redeem Adam's sin and save the species human. This promise is not conditional—God would fulfill this in His own person. And in so doing God would also provide the way for any individual human to partake of the victory achieved by Jesus for their individual salvation—but that is conditional.

It depends upon them accepting what Jesus has done, of being persuaded in their own mind, of choosing to surrender their hearts, let go of fear and selfishness and trust God with their lives, of preferring God's design law methods over the imperial systems of this world. Why is salvation conditional upon our individual agreement and choice? Because it is the only way to retain our individuality—we must agree and choose and accept in order to be transformed while still being us.

Some people get confused on the unconditional the unconditional elements of God's actions in His Son overthrowing Satan and redeeming the species, and apply this to every individual human teaching that every individual will be saved regardless of their free choice. Reality simply doesn't work that way.

The lesson points out that God promises to provide for our physical needs—hmmm... Why did many Jews stop believing in God after the holocaust? Because many prayed, claimed the Bible promises and were not delivered. Many of survivors who lost so many family gave up on God because of this.

What about Christians in the Dark Ages—were any martyred? What happened to God's promises to provide for their physical needs?

Read the last paragraph, "There are so many..." I am not a fan of this paragraph, there is a truth here, but it isn't presented in the best light.

It is true that if we have no faith in God, don't want Him in our life, rebel against Him, persist in sinful living then our lack of faith obstructs God's power in our life and we should not expect miracles from God in such a state.

However, this paragraph could lead to the false conclusion that if one doesn't experience a miracle then it is because of a lack of faith—this is a lie. Consider the book of Job—did Job have a lack of faith? Yet, what did he experience?

In fact, in my book *The God-Shaped Brain* I describe the danger in believing such things and point out that in Scripture most of the time miracles are performed for the weak in faith, not the strong in faith.

• When Gideon was called by God to defeat the Midianites did he ask for the miracles of the fleece because his faith was strong or because his faith was weak and he needed encouraging?

- At Mount Carmel when the fire fell from God consuming the sacrifice offered by Elijah, was the miracle given for Elijah to strengthen his faith or was the miracle given for the people who were weak in faith?
- When Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego were thrown into the fiery furnace God miraculously intervened to save their lives, but for what purpose? Was it primarily to extend the lives of the men thrown into the furnace or was it a means of exposing the impotence of the golden idol, the truth about God and of reaching Nebuchadnezzar, a man weak in faith? By contrast notice the genuine mature faith of the three worthies who when threatened with a burning death put their lives into God's hands and trusted Him with the outcome knowing God could save, but allowing God not to intervene. They said, "O Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to save us from it, and he will rescue us from your hand, O king. But even if he does not, we want you to know, O king, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up." Daniel 3:17,18.
- Consider the lives of the Apostles, God miraculously intervened in many places (opening prison doors), but always as a means of spreading the gospel. Were the miracles of healing done through the Apostles done in order to strengthen the Apostles faith, or to strengthen the faith of those to whom the Apostles were preaching the gospel? When the Apostles eventually lost their lives, God did not miraculously intervene to save them (with the exception of John). Did God refuse to perform miracles to save His Apostles because they didn't have enough faith or was their faith so strong that they trusted God with their very lives? Was their faith so intense that God didn't have to perform a miracle to help them maintain their confidence in Him?

Many people believe that miracles are a good barometer of who we should believe or in whom we should place our faith. But in Eden the miracle of a talking serpent didn't make the serpent trustworthy. Satan often confuses the mind and obstructs the way to God by the use of miraculous signs and wonders. In fact, the Bible prophecies that before Christ returns Satanic agencies will perform miracles as a way of deceiving many (Mark 13:22, Rev 13:13, 16:14). Jesus said that in the end there will be those who claim to be Christian who have performed miracles in His name but who were never on God's side (Matthew 7:21-23).

God wins people to faith in Him by the revelation of His trustworthiness as revealed ultimately in life and death of Jesus Christ. Miracles can be counterfeited, the truth as revealed by Jesus cannot. The question is never about God's ability to perform miracles, the question is, do we know God well enough that our confidence will not be shaken when He doesn't miraculously intervene.

Genuine faith is not having confidence that God can perform miracles, but is trusting Him even when He doesn't.

THURSDAY

What methods have you found effective in sharing the Word of God?

- Putting it into the language of the people
- Letting people read it for themselves
- Sharing how God's truth have impacted your life for the better
- Identifying with people and sharing your experience and how God's word helped you with a similar problem to them
- Sharing God's design laws and how life actually works best in harmony with His methods

FRIDAY

Read and discuss question 1

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Thank you to all of our supporters!!! We appreciate your prayers and financial support.

The first of every month we will be making available FREE resources for you to share in your community, with family, friends, pastors, church members. These resources will be free and shipped free to US addresses only and while supplies last. So follow us on Facebook and watch the first of each month as a new resource is made available. **August 1 resource is** *God Is Love*, **Children's Book.**

Saturday, October 3, 2020! Come and Reason will be presenting a live in-person event at the Chattanooga Convention Center in Chattanooga TN! **Healing the Mind and Transforming the Character in a Broken World** is one-day event and will be packed with presentations by Timothy R. Jennings, Katie McPherson, Ben Bost and Kent Delhousaye. Join us to learn principles and strategies to heal the mind and heart from fear and habits that overrun our lives You'll want to book your spot soon before the event is sold out-- lunch is included in this great price! Click here for more information.

October 9-10, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Lakewood SDA church in Lakewood OH

November 6-7, 2020: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at an AACC River Conference at Plano, TX. More info at http://theriverconference.com/