



WEEKLY

BIBLE STUDIES

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“THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC - Part 1”

Lesson 1 ■ For week ending April 4, 2020

You and I are facing a worldwide pandemic (*def. a disease prevalent over a whole country or large part of the world*). It has shuttered our schools, closed our businesses, and panicked the majority of the population. It has even caused our churches to be cancelled. Many, including Christians, have sought to understand what in the world is happening. In this lesson, we will address 4 key questions relative to this unique time on planet Earth.

KEY TEXT: “...And there shall be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:7b,8).

1. QUESTION #1: Is God still in control?

- » Within a matter of days, we seem to have lost control of our lives. We’ve been told to stay home from work. We’ve been told to quarantine in place. Our churches have been shut down.
- » What does God’s Word say about obeying our country’s government (Romans 13:1; I Peter 2:13,14)?
- » While our world seems to be out of control, God is always in control.
- » We must never forget that the world belongs to God, and that He is still in control of everything within it (Psalm 24:1,2; Jeremiah 32:26).

2. QUESTION #2: Can God take care of us when we can’t take care of ourselves?

- » There has been an unprecedented run on the stores, which has caused shortages and empty shelves. Things that we have always been able to purchase without issue—have now become scarce (who bought all the toilet paper?).
- » This has caused many to panic (*def. a sudden uncontrollable fear or anxiety*).
- » As believers, do we have cause to panic? Read Psalm 46:1.
- » Consider the words of Jesus found in Luke 12:22-31.
- » Read Philippians 4:6,7. Discuss how the “peace of God” guards us in times of trouble (I John 4:18).

3. QUESTION #3: How should believers respond during this pandemic?

- » The Church of God believes that we are living in the Last Days. We have been told for years to expect a time of trouble that will come upon us during this time.
- » Read Isaiah 60:1,2. How can we as believers allow God’s glory to be seen upon us?
 - 1) By giving our burden to the Lord (Psalm 55:22).
 - 2) By acknowledging that God has not left us alone without help (Isaiah 41:10).
 - 3) By having peace, while others are fretting (John 16:33).
 - 4) By helping and ministering to others—rather than focusing on ourselves (I John 3:17).

4. QUESTION #4: As a believer, how can I help those around me?

- » While this pandemic has brought out the worst in some people, it is also an opportunity to bring out the best in Christians. Instead of becoming part of the problem (civil disobedience, hoarding, self-centered actions), we as believers have a unique opportunity to share our faith.
- » The best way to share your faith—is to serve others. We can check on the elderly, share our resources with those in need, pray for those in government and our health care providers, and speak words of encouragement and hope to those who are scared.

“THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC - Part 2”

Lesson 2 ■ For week ending April 11, 2020

Last week we addressed what our response as believers should be during this pandemic. Today, we will answer questions about what this pandemic *is*—and what it *is not*.

KEY TEXT: “...And there shall be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows” (Matthew 24:7b,8).

1. QUESTION #1: Can you show me a scripture that explains what is happening with this pandemic?

- » **The answer is YES.** It’s found in the words of Jesus recorded in Matthew 24:3-8.
- » Jesus was discussing what would happen in the Last Days with His Disciples. The pandemic we are experiencing now is talked about in verse 7 when Jesus mentioned “pestilences,” which means *plague or disease*. Please note that the word *plague* simply means *a contagious disease spread by bacteria and characterized by fever and delirium*.
- » Jesus said that these signs of the Last Days did not mean that the end was here, it meant that these signs were “the beginning of sorrows” (verse 8).
- » Discuss the fact that President Trump has said that we are at “war” with this virus (verse 6).

2. QUESTION #2: Is this pandemic part of the plagues of God described in the book of Revelations?

- » **The answer is NO.** The Church of God believes that we are living in the Last Days; however, the pandemic that has impacted the whole world, is not part of the plagues of God associated with His wrath.
- » The plagues of God’s Wrath are poured out at a specific time—in fact, it will be a dispensational change (from Grace to Wrath).
- » This change takes place in the middle of the last 7 years (Daniel 9:27).
- » God’s plagues will last for a period of 3½ years (Revelation 11:3-6).
- » Also, there will be no vaccine or cure for the plagues of God’s Wrath (Revelation 6:15-17).

3. QUESTION #3: Is Jesus getting ready to return at any minute?

- » **The answer is NO.** There are specific things that must happen before Jesus returns.
- » They asked the Apostle Paul the same question in II Thessalonians 2:1-4.
- » The Man of Sin (the Antichrist) must be revealed first, which does not happen until after the Battle of Gog and Magog (Ezekiel 38,39).
- » Jesus returns to this earth after God’s wrath is poured out for a period of 3½ years. He will return at the Last 7th Trump (Revelation 11:15; 19:11-21) with the resurrected saints (I Corinthians 15:51,52).

4. QUESTION #4: Is this the beginning of the last 7 years?

- » **The answer if NO.** The last 7 years begin at the end of the Battle of Gog and Magog outlined in Ezekiel 38,39. That battle happens when a group of Arab/Muslim nations attack Israel from the north (the Golan Heights region).
- » These Muslim nations attack Israel for her wealth (Ezekiel 38:10-16).
- » Not only has this pandemic sickened and killed thousands of people worldwide, it has also brought about an economic recession. This recession may well be used to incite the impoverished Muslims to attack the wealthy Israelis.

“MISSING HEAVEN BY 18 INCHES – Part 1”

Lesson 3 ■ For week ending April 18, 2020

Doctors say that it is approximately 18 inches from your mind (brain) to your heart. A lot of people know about God in their minds (intellectually), but they have not let that knowledge travel the distance needed to welcome God into their hearts (relationship). Just knowing about God is not enough. The Bible tells us that the demons know about God. If you want to spend eternity with Jesus, you have to form a relationship with Him, and that happens in your heart!

KEY TEXT: “...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. **For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation**” (Romans 10:9,10).

1. What do we mean when we talk about a person’s heart?

- » When the Bible talks about a person’s heart, it is referring to the *inner being* of a person (I Peter 3:4).
- » It denotes a person’s center for both physical and emotional, intellectual, and moral activities.
- » So according to the Bible, our heart is not simply something we feel emotion with. Because it’s composed of our mind, our will, our emotion, and our conscience, it does much more; our heart also thinks, decides, and senses right from wrong.
- » Our heart is composed of 3 major parts:
 - 1) **OUR MIND/REASONING** – The mental process of reasoning/thinking which causes our actions and reactions (Matthew 9:4), and the seat of our conscience (Hebrews 10:22).
 - 2) **OUR EMOTIONS** – The feelings we express (John 16:22).
 - 3) **OUR WILL** – The heart is where decisions are made that guide our lives—our purpose (Acts 11:23).
- » Our heart is the gateway, the portal, of our entire being. So whether we open or close the doors of our heart determines what we let into our inner being.

2. Why is God interested in the condition of our hearts? Because that’s where He dwells within us.

- » Read Ephesians 3:14-21. According to verse 17, where does Jesus want to dwell?
- » If Jesus is dwelling in our hearts, is it any wonder that He wants our hearts to be pure before Him?
- » In Matthew 15, we find Jesus angrily confronting the scribes and Pharisees. Read Matthew 15:1-7.
- » In verse 7, Jesus calls them, “*Hypocrites!*” The Greek word translated as “hypocrites” actually means “actor, a character.” Jesus was upset because they were saying one thing with their lips, but their hearts were far from God (Matthew 15:8).
- » God is not interested in our “intellectual” worship, He wants a whole-hearted approach.

3. Our heart is also where we discern the difference between right and wrong, and where judgments are formed and lodged.

- » In I Kings 3, we find the account of King Solomon’s response when God said to him, “*Ask! What shall I give to you?*” (verse 5). Solomon had just been named King of Israel after the death of his father, David (I Kings 2:10).
- » Solomon responded to the Lord by asking for “...an understanding heart to judge Your people, that I may discern between good and evil” (I Kings 3:9).

4. Our hearts need continual maintenance.

- » Proverbs 4:23 says, “*Keep your heart with all diligence, for out of it spring the issues of life.*”
- » The word *diligence* in Hebrew means “guard”.
- » God is telling us to “guard” our hearts. Why? Because unrighteous judgments can become lodged there and affect the issues of our lives.
- » This is what Hebrews 12:15 is referencing. Unrighteous judgments result in bitterness which WILL defile you and those around you! Next week we will discuss how this can keep you out of heaven.

“MISSING HEAVEN BY 18 INCHES – Part 2”

Lesson 4 ■ For week ending April 25, 2020

Last week we talked about the difference between knowing about God in your mind, and having a relationship with Him in your heart. Let's put that into practical perspective: Have you ever said, "I forgive you, but I won't forget"? That means that you forgave them in your mind, but that forgiveness didn't travel the 18" to your heart. Remember, it's your heart that controls your reasoning, emotions, and will. So, how does that keep you out of heaven? The Bible says that if you can't forgive others, God can't forgive you. Uh-oh!

KEY TEXT: “Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God” (Hebrews 3:12).

1. Last week we established that the heart is where unrighteous judgments are formed and—if not repented of—are lodged.

- » Many times those judgments were made during our formative years (0-6 years of age) and have subsequently been forgotten by our minds.
- » So, how can I determine if I have “hidden” judgments in my heart? This can be accomplished with the help of a Christian Counselor.
- » James 5:16, *“Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”*
- » This is what Christian Counseling does. It's simply a time of examination and exploration that can help identify hidden judgments. Once they are discovered, a prayer of forgiveness ensues, and healing, deliverance, and freedom takes place!

2. Can't I just pray to Jesus by myself and be forgiven?

- » The answer is YES! You can always go to the Father, through His Son, Jesus Christ, for the forgiveness of sins. That's part of what Jesus secured for us when He was crucified at Passover (I John 2:1-2).
- » However, what happens when you don't know what to pray for? Just like we go to doctors when we can't figure out what is wrong with our physical bodies, we can go to a Christian Counselor when we can't seem to be victorious over an attitude or an action/reaction that is wrong in our “spiritual” lives (Romans 7:15).
- » God's Word advises us to seek Christian counseling. Proverbs 11:14, *“Where there is no counsel, the people fall; but in the multitude of counselors there is safety.”*
- » Read Ephesians 4:17-32. Is there lingering bitterness, a bad temper, ungodly habits, or discrimination in your life that you have not been able to “put off” on your own? A Christian Counselor can help find the root issue that keeps producing that bad fruit in your life.

3. Weren't all my sins forgiven when I accepted Jesus as my Savior? Read I John 1:9.

- » The answer is YES! When you received Jesus as your Savior, you received the tools you needed to be victorious in your life; however, we must all admit, that we haven't been perfect since that moment on! Why not? Because there are still some areas of our heart that have not yet believed.
- » If we are honest with ourselves, most of us will admit that there are still areas in our lives that we are working on to bring up to the Godly standards set forth in His Word. To put it bluntly: We still have issues!
- » We can't trust men. We can't trust women. We can't trust God—because we couldn't trust our earthly father. We're mad at God because bad things have happened to us—and He didn't stop them! These are just a few examples of issues that people are dealing with.
- » While the blood of Jesus washes away our sins, we still have to deal with the strongholds in our heart by taking them to the cross and forgiving the people who have trespassed against us (John 20:23). Remember, Jesus made this part of our daily prayer to God the Father (Matthew 6:9-15). While our sins were forgiven when we initially got saved, what about the people who have trespassed against us since then? What about the sins that were hidden and forgotten—but reappeared later?
- » **WE ALL NEED HELP AT TIME IN OUR LIVES.** A Christian Counselor's sole purpose is to lead you in a prayer of forgiveness for those who have abused and trespassed against you. Aren't you tired of caring that weight all by yourself? Jesus wants you to be free of it—a Christian Counselor can help!

“THE NECESSITY OF FORGIVENESS – Part 1”

Lesson 5 ■ For week ending May 2, 2020

Every anger in a family is stimulus (*def. something that evokes a specific reaction in an organ or tissue*). Every stimulus engenders response, whether we acknowledge it consciously or repress it. Each response becomes stimulus to the other, in turn demanding response, which becomes stimulus, demanding further response, and so arguments incite to fights, group hassles to riots, and national tensions to wars. What's a person to do? And answer is simple: FORGIVE!

KEY TEXT: “*What is causing the quarrels and fights among you? Don't they come from the evil desires at war within you? You want what you don't have, so you scheme and kill to get it. You are jealous of what others have, but you can't get it, so you fight and wage war to take it away from them....*” (James 4:1,2a).

1. As long as we remain unrepentant of a bitter root (the result of unforgiveness in our heart), our response to an emotional stimulus will illustrate the law of sowing and reaping.

- » This law will operate as legally as the laws of electricity. We may try to control our passions, break the stimulus-response ark by willpower or kindly character, or withhold further stimuli by suppressing our own responses, but we only delay, for there are lawful forces that cannot be denied.
 - » According to Galatians 6:7, WE WILL REAP WHAT IS SOWN.
 - » God's laws (His Word) cannot be broken (John 10:35a, NLT, “*And you know that the Scriptures cannot be altered...*”).
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2. The fact of the immutability of law is the truth of what the Holy Spirit said in Malachi 3:6, “For I, the LORD, do not change; therefore you, O sons of Jacob, are not consumed.”

- » If God changed, we *would* be consumed! If He changed what? If Jesus changed and thus stopped interceding before the Father, the result would be, that we would all be consumed because of our sins (Hebrews 7:25).
 - » The laws of sowing and reaping and of increase ensure that all our human relationships, indeed all human life, because of our continually sinning flesh, must be ever accelerating to war and destruction! Nothing can stop that swing, save the Cross of Christ. What did Paul say about his flesh (I Corinthians 15:31)?
 - » This is the centrality of forgiveness: “*And according to the Law, one may almost say, all things are cleansed with blood, and with shedding of blood there is no forgiveness*” (Hebrews 9:22).
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3. Hate murders. “Everyone who hates his brother is a murderer; and you know that no murderer has eternal life abiding in him” (I John 3:15).

- » All resentments and bitterness are born of hate; no matter how we may want to down play and claim we don't hate—we do!
 - » Our emotions murder (or bless) the other (Proverbs 18:21). Murder destroys life. Life is in the blood (Genesis 9:4).
 - » Unless sinful propensities born of bitter roots are repented of, stimulus demands response, and seed down requires reaping (Galatians 6:8).
 - » Therefore, every hatred requires blood. Only the blood of Jesus can enable us to die to self, and stop the increasing cycle of human hate. The blood of forgiveness is thus central even to the possibility of continuance of human life.
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4. When Mary Jones feel slighted by her husband, Sam, her unresolved bitterness towards others who have slighted her in the past demands a response.

- » If she vents it, he might respond out of his own bitterness. Anger increases, and battle ensues. If he suppresses it, THAT STIMULUS DOES NOT DIE.
- » It ferments in his heart. Somewhere, somehow, it *will* express, even if only by silent rejection, while unconsciously, Sam's bitterness is unknowingly murdering his wife.
- » Same may, by fleshly determination, or even by the power of the Holy Spirit, give back a loving answer, and that may evoke a loving response. Nevertheless, that original hurt cannot be denied.
- » If we multiply that event by the thousands that normally occur in any relationship, we see that if Jesus failed to intercede continually, death of happiness, or even physical destruction, is unavoidable for all of us.

“THE NECESSITY OF FORGIVENESS – Part 2”

Lesson 6 ■ For week ending May 9, 2020

The power of forgiveness is found in the blood of Jesus. And, the blood of Jesus is sufficient (Hebrews 10:19-29)! We doubt that the Church could get “bloody” enough. It is the blood of Jesus that sprinkles the heart, the arena of inner space we need to conquer. How can I tell if I still have unforgiveness lodged in my heart? The Bible tells us that out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. What is your mouth revealing about your heart?

KEY TEXT: “Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water” (Hebrews 10:22).

1. May every Christian never forget the greatest tool of power that God has placed in his hands—the blood of Jesus!

- » The Word of God is given for a mighty tool, for it is “*the power of God for salvation*” (Romans 1:16).
- » But the blood of Jesus is the foremost power for the cleansing of the heart. Read Hebrews 12:24.
- » God’s Word tells us emphatically that without the shedding of blood, there is no remission of sins (Hebrews 9:22).

2. The blood of Jesus is central to the healing of the human heart.

- » The Word *corrects the mind and pierces to the heart* (Hebrews 4:12); however, it is the blood that heals the heart.
- » The paradox is that though that blood once offered need never be offered again, its application is daily required, or the heart sickens and sours anew.
- » We cannot by logic or willpower change the heart. No matter how clearly we see what lodges there, there it remains (Jeremiah 10:23).
- » Here is where the secular psychologist stands bankrupt, for he cannot cleanse what he sees. But the Christian can. Where the secular leaves off, the Christian has only begun.
- » We have but to call for the blood of the Lamb: “*Behold, the Lamb of God [our perfect blood sacrifice] who takes away the sins of the world!*” (John 1:29).

3. The prayer of repentance takes no measure of faith, only enough to voice the asking.

- » The least Christian wields the fulness of power (II Corinthians 12:10).
- » How indescribably great, that though sins multiply as darkness increases, we can never exhaust the blood of Jesus! Read God’s promises to us found in Colossians 1:13-14.
- » His faithfulness guarantees that it is always there, at the nearest asking, to cleanse the heart thoroughly and completely (John 3:16,17).

4. The greatest difficulty concerning forgiveness is that most often we do not know we still cherish resentment or that we have lied to ourselves and forgotten.

- » You must not base conviction of sin or lack of it on *feeling like* you have forgiven. Feelings about such issues are habitual liars at best (Proverbs 28:26). Our thoughts and memories are often glossed over with euphemisms and lies such as: “I was never angry.” Or, “It didn’t hurt.”
- » The key is this: “If a bad fruit exists, a hidden unforgiveness must lie at the root!” Read Matthew 7:17-20.
- » Not sure if you have forgiven from your heart? Consider what your mouth says about that person (Matthew 12:34).
- » It is the clean logic of the Word of God that brings to light the hidden sins of your heart, not you own confused notions and feelings about yourself (Psalm 119:105).
- » Consider King David’s prayer found in Psalm 51:6,10,11.
- » It is one thing for a person who is ministering to another to see the problem; it is another thing altogether for the one receiving ministry to ALLOW HIS HEART, AS WELL AS HIS MIND, to do so.
- » Invite the other—by questions, parables, stories, and so forth—to recognize what has been hidden in his heart.
- » Once that unforgiveness is recognized, forgiveness can be achieved by forgiving those who have trespassed against you (Colossians 3:13; Matthew 6:14).

“THE NECESSITY OF FORGIVENESS – Part 3”

Lesson 7 ■ For week ending May 16, 2020

When talking about forgiving someone, many people confusedly think that they have to go back and find whoever the person or event was that precipitated the root of sin and talk about it. This is not even possible if that person has died. It may not only be unnecessary to talk to the person in question, but also hurtful. Whoever hurt us may be unaware, or if aware thought it long ago forgiven and done with.

KEY TEXT: “*As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us*” (Psalm 103:12).

1. Forgiveness can be accomplished purely within the hidden heart of the believer.

- » Consider King David’s predicament after his sin involving Uriah and Bathsheba. Uriah was killed as a result of David’s sin. What did David pray in Psalm 51:5-17? Discuss verse 14, “*Deliver me from the guilt of bloodshed...*”
- » It may be that the Holy Spirit will later prompt you to take part in a present-day talk and reconciliation, but this should only be done with wisdom and tact. It is not always necessary.

2. When parents were normal and good, it is strangely more difficult to get at roots than when parents were recognizably evil. Remember, we are not blaming parents, we are simply identifying childhood judgments.

- » Resentments in the latter case are easily seen and admitted consciously. But loyalty masks the other, both in childhood and as a grown believer desiring transformation (Proverbs 28:13).
- » Frequently, resentments lie totally beneath both the heart and mind (hidden), having originated so early that we sometimes cannot remember, or from reactions to things left undone by those who ought to have done them for us (Psalm 19:12). Always remember the maxim: Where there is fruit, there is a root.

3. Sometimes parents have almost never done anything demonstrably evil, and yet have almost failed as parents.

- » One instance occurs in homes in which parents were God-fearing, moral, upstanding, dutiful people, but they never touched the children with affection/love. The children’s minds and hearts could not know what was lacking and remembered only the good things the parents did. But their spirits ached for touch and resented its lack. Now the adult cannot give love, and the family is starving.
- » Read I John 4:7,8. Since we were created in God’s image (Genesis 1:26), we crave love and acceptance.

4. Prayer for forgiveness delivers where no resentment has ever been consciously felt. If bad fruit persists, forgiveness is not yet accomplished.

- » A person may, however, fully forgive the one who initially wounded and yet retrain a destructive resulting practice. The practice is also dismantled (or transformed) by the cross—and forgiveness.
- » When a person has forgiven another, **HE YET HAS HIMSELF TO FORGIVE**. We cannot allow the destruction of our inner practices until forgiveness of self restores our capacity to trust and to let go.
- » Death of self is made possible only by the fullness of forgiveness (John 3:30).
- » Even Jesus had to get victory over His flesh (Luke 22:42). We cannot stand to be crucified with Him so long as we continue to blame and chastise ourselves and try to be different (Matthew 16:24). Death of that striving to set things straight is built upon fullness of forgiveness, in which we cease to attack ourselves.

5. Forgiveness brings us to rest. The blood of Jesus washes away the strivings of guilt precisely so that the structures of habit can be let go to death.

- » If you have prayed for the death of your sin and guilt on the cross many times, and yet that old pattern of sin continues to operate, there is a need to return to base one and examine whether fullness of forgiveness of self has in fact been accomplished. True forgiveness washes the guilty conscience (Hebrews 10:19-23).
- » The only route to the cross is through Gethsemane—which is when we identify our sin and wrestle our emotions away from attachment to the old way (Romans 12:1,2).
- » Without fullness of forgiveness, the work of sanctification and transformation is heavy and sweaty. But forgiveness makes it feel light and easy!

“THE NECESSITY OF FORGIVENESS – Part 4”

Lesson 8 ■ For week ending May 23, 2020

As we continue to study and talk about forgiveness, we must recognize that transformation has two parts. The blood of Jesus washes the heart clean, but the blood of Jesus will not destroy the works of darkness in the soul (I John 3:8). Only the cross can do that. Forgiveness is central, but it only begins the process. The work of transformation is a daily struggle from then on to crucify the self (flesh). Our flesh does not get saved. That is why it has to be crucified on a daily basis. Let's discuss the transformation process.

KEY TEXT: “*And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God*” (Romans 12:2).

1. Some ongoing aspects of forgiveness can continue to influence and enhance our transformation.

- » Pray that God will bless those who wounded or failed you (Romans 12:14-21; I Peter 3:8-14).
- » Minister to others in like difficulties; as you do, you will see yourself more clearly and love will overflow from your own desert places.

2. Most especially, pray in thanksgiving for everything in the past.

- » As you pray with thanksgiving, your heart will be changed from a stance of self-pity and anger to glorifying in what God has accomplished in and through all.
- » Read II Corinthians 12:7-10.
- » Discuss the test and trials that Paul endured in his life (I Corinthians 11:24-28).

3. Forgiveness is not complete until God the Father is included.

- » Scripture says, “*The foolishness of man subverts his way, and his heart rages against the LORD*” (Proverbs 19:3). Note again that word *heart*. The mind protests, “How could I ever be angry at God? He’s perfect. He never did anything to me.”
- » But that’s not what the heart says. The heart perversely cries out, “Oh, yeah, if You were a good Father, You wouldn’t have let me fall this far!”
- » Or in the case of people wounded in early childhood, “You sent me to serve You, and then You let me get messed up by these people. Now how do You expect me to serve You! It isn’t fair!”
- » Or, “Where were You when I needed You?” And so on, the heart’s cries being as infinite as the problems we get into.
- » The scriptures are clear that our flesh wars/fights against the things of God (Romans 8:7; Galatians 5:17).
- » When Adam and Eve’s sin was discovered in the Garden of Eden, they immediately began to blame each other for their troubles, and Adam even blamed God! Read Genesis 3:6-13.

4. For that reason Job cried out, “*Neither is there any daysman betwixt us, that might lay his hand upon us both*” (Job 9:33).

- » A daysman was the same as a prayer minister in Bible times. Men went to such a man to settle disputes, as when the two women made King Solomon their daysman in their dispute over whose baby was whose (I Kings 3:16-28).
- » Such a prayer minister, or daysman, talked to both parties, reasoned with them, and having settled the dispute, laid his hands on both their shoulders and drew them together for forgiveness.
- » Job’s cry calls for our Lord Jesus Christ to become our daysman betwixt God and man. And that is what II Corinthians 5:18-20 says He is, namely, that “*God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself.*”
- » Observe in the last phrase of the quote, Paul speaks of our being reconciled to God because we are angry with Him. In the next phrase the Holy Spirit speaks of His forgiving us: “*not counting their trespasses against them.*”
- » That is the function of the daysman, to lay his hand on each and so make mutual forgiveness and peace.
- » Jesus is our daysman. Through Him, we are to enable forgiveness between God and man.

“POSITIONING YOURSELF FOR GOD’S BLESSING”

Lesson 9 ■ For week ending May 30, 2020

We serve a God who stands ready to abundantly bless us. As a matter of fact, Jesus said, *“It is your Father’s good pleasure to give unto you the kingdom.”* That being said, it is important that we do not let anything come between us and the Lord. By drawing near to God and staying free from sin, we position ourselves in a way that God can pour out His blessings upon us.

KEY TEXT: *“Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation. This is the generation of them that seek Him, that seek thy face, O Jacob. Selah”* (Psalm 24:3-6).

1. The word *position* as a verb means to put or arrange (something or someone) in a particular place or way.

- » According to our key text, the position we should desire to be in is *“in His holy place.”*
- » Ascending into the hill of Lord can only be accomplished by humbling one’s self.
- » Confirm this as you study James 4:6-10.

2. One of the requirements to receive God’s blessing is that we have clean hands.

- » According to the Bible, *“having clean hands”* symbolizes innocence (Psalms 73:13).
- » God also rewards us according to the cleanliness of our hands (Psalms 18:20,24).
- » Our hands represent the things that we do. Discuss the righteousness that we have in Christ and its effect upon our actions (I John 3:5-10).

3. God looks beyond our outward actions to the condition of our heart. It is for this reason that we must have a pure heart.

- » The heart here is pertaining to the inner man. It is in the heart that sin begins.
- » Remember, the heart is the seat of our mind (reasoning), our emotions, and our will.
- » Confirm this as you study Matthew 5:27,28 and Psalms 51:6.
- » It is through faith in the atoning work of Jesus on the Cross that our hearts are made pure.
- » Acts 15:7-9 confirms how the heart is made pure.
- » *“Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God”* (Matthew 5:8).

4. God will not tolerate idolatry in any way, form, or fashion.

- » The phrase, *“lifted up his soul unto vanity,”* is referring to idol worship.
- » The definition of *idolatry*, according to Webster, is *“the worship of idols or excessive devotion to, or reverence for some person or thing.”* An idol is anything that replaces the one, true God.
- » What are some things people allow to become idols in their lives (Colossians 3:5)?

5. Honesty is always the best policy.

- » God hates lies and deceitfulness (Proverbs 6:16-19).
- » He blesses those who speak and live according to truth.
- » Ephesians 4:25, *“Therefore, putting away lying, “Let each one of you speak truth with his neighbor,” for we are members of one another.”*

“THE CALL TO PREACH”

Lesson 10 ■ For week ending June 6, 2020

Preaching the Word of God is one the highest callings a person can attain unto. It is a call to speak on behalf of God to mankind. Preaching, as foolish as it may seem to some, is a way God has chosen to convey the message of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ to the world. Preaching, that is anointed by the Holy Spirit, has power to change lives!

KEY TEXT: *“For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe” (I Corinthians 1:21).*

1. Without the personal contact of preaching, the truths that are to be experienced in the New Testament could not be effectively communicated to the masses.

» Confirm this truth from Romans 10:11-15.

2. There are several different aspects that should be integral parts of the call to preach.

- » The first thing that should be evaluated is whether or not the Word of God is being preached.
- » A preacher’s sermons should be centered on the Word of God (II Timothy 4:2-4).
- » Next, preaching should be delivered in the anointing of the Holy Spirit.
- » Discuss Paul’s description of his preaching and his reasons for its effectiveness (I Corinthians 2:4,5).
- » I Corinthians 2:4-5, *“And my speech and my preaching were not with persuasive words of human wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, that your faith should not be in the wisdom of men but in the power of God.”*

3. The preaching of the Gospel of Christ is an “every creature” message.

- » God is not a respecter of persons.
- » The preacher that is called of God will be willing to proclaim the message to whomever the Lord sets them before (Acts 10:34-36).
- » Acts 10:34-36, *“Then Peter opened his mouth and said: “In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all.”*
- » Confirm this further from Matthew 11:5 and Mark 16:15.

4. The responsibility of the preacher is two-fold.

- » First, it is to preach the Gospel of a spiritual Kingdom which we receive when we are born again (Colossians 1:8; Romans 1:15,16).
- » Secondly, preaching is the act of warning the righteous of the evils of the world and of the sins of the flesh and spirit which so easily overtake us.
- » Read and discuss II Peter 2:5; Ezekiel 3:21; and Isaiah 58:1.

5. The everlasting Gospel of the coming Kingdom of God on earth is the message that should be preached in this generation.

- » Discuss the role of the flying angel of Revelation 14:6 and the fact that he was to preach this good news to every nation, tongue, and people.

“WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE SHOULD WE BE?”

Lesson 11 ■ For week ending June 13, 2020

There are times when we need to stop and put our lives into perspective. Are we doing all we can do to live our lives for the Lord? Do we love the Lord with all our heart, soul, and strength? Are we putting God’s Kingdom and His will first in our lives? As we anticipate the return of Jesus to this earth, our focus should revolve around Jesus rather than the things of this world.

KEY TEXT: “*Seeing then that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?*” (II Peter 3:11).

1. In II Peter 3:7-13, we find a passage of scripture that is meant to challenge our view of life and the way we choose to live it.

- » Peter informs us that the world in which we live is temporary and it is reserved for judgement so we should live to honor God.
- » Expand upon this as you also read James 1:9-12.

2. As believers who are watching for the soon coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, we must really consider what is important in our lives and what is not.

- » Paul put it like this in Galatians 6:8, “*For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.*”
- » A man is foolish to invest everything in things that he cannot keep, when he can invest in things he cannot lose—things that are eternal!
- » Discuss the teaching of Jesus on “treasures” found in Matthew 6:19-21.

3. Peter, in our key text, asks us the question, “*what manner of persons ought ye to be?*”

- » One of the first things that Peter points out is that it is God’s will that, “*..all should come to repentance.*”
- » The Greek word for “repent” in the New Testament is “metanoeo” which means “to change one’s mind.” This involves a turning from sin with contrition to God.
- » **contrite >adjective** feeling or expressing remorse.
- » Repentance has to be more than just feeling bad about something you have done and saying, “I’m sorry.” That’s just an apology.
- » There must be a turning away from sin.
- » Read and discuss II Corinthians 7:9,10.

4. Another aspect of the Christian life that Peter highlights is the need for holiness.

- » Peter asks, “*...what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness?*”
- » The main idea behind *holiness* is *apartness*.
- » The idea is that God is separate, different from His creation, both in His essential nature, and in the perfection of His attributes.
- » But instead of building a wall around His *apartness*, God calls us to come to Him and share His *apartness*.
- » Study I Peter 1:13-16.
- » Along with *holiness* comes *godliness*, which is defined as a *reverence or fear of God that is manifest in our actions*.
- » Conclude by reading Titus 2:11-14.

“UNLOCKING THE DOOR TO FINANCIAL BLESSINGS—PART 1”

Lesson 12 ■ For week ending June 20, 2020

One of the biggest issues facing Christians today, believe it or not, is how we handle our finances. This is a subject we need to pay closer attention to for the way we use money can be an indicator in many ways of our spiritual condition. God does want to bless our finances—but the way to be blessed is to obey the Word of the Lord!

KEY TEXT: “Keep therefore the words of this covenant, and do them, that ye may prosper in all that ye do” (Deuteronomy 29:9).

1. The Bible has a lot to say about money or possessions.

- » Did you know that about two-thirds of the parables that Jesus used in teaching dealt specifically with finances?
 - » Jesus knew how closely related the way we handle our possessions is to our spiritual condition.
 - » Examine what Jesus said in Matthew 6:24. In this passage Jesus points out that possessions can become a god to us. We have to decide who we are going to serve.
 - » Jesus was asking, “Where do you put your trust?”
 - » He taught throughout this chapter that we should not be so preoccupied with the cares of this life, but rather we should “*Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness,*” and all these things will be added unto us.
-

2. Another teaching of Jesus on possessions is found in Luke 12:15-21.

- » **Covetousness** is defined as *envious eagerness to possess something or extreme greed for material wealth.*
 - » In this teaching, Jesus emphasized that our goal should be to lay up treasures in heaven.
 - » Our finances should be used to bring glory to God rather than simply for selfish gain.
 - » The goal is to be rich toward God.
-

3. Having money is not a bad thing (Ecclesiastes 10:19). Somebody say, “Amen!”

- » Abraham was the father of the faith and was wealthy (Genesis 13:2).
- » The root of the problem with our money is our spiritual condition, the way we see and handle the money we have. This is established in I Timothy 6:6-11.
- » Discuss the dangers associated with being discontent (*def. lack of contentment or satisfaction*). “Content” is defined as *in a state of peaceful happiness or satisfaction.*
- » Many are drowning in debt because they are not satisfied. They feel like they have to have things right now, even if they really cannot afford them. The idea of saving our money until they get to where they can afford the things they want—is a foreign concept.
- » What is meant by, “*the love of money is the root of all evil*”?
- » When we understand up-front some of the pitfalls that can come along with money and possessions, we will be better equipped to be good stewards of the blessings of God (Matthew 13:22; 19:23,24).
- » We will continue our study next week.

“UNLOCKING THE DOOR TO FINANCIAL BLESSINGS–PART 2”

Lesson 13 ■ For week ending June 27, 2020

As we continue our study of the biblical way Christians should handle their finances, this week we will examine the concept of being a steward for God. Everything we have belongs to God. This means we are simply caretakers of whatever portion God has given us. Realizing this should make us take a harder look at the way we handle money.

KEY TEXT: “*The earth is the LORD’S, and the fulness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein*” (Psalm 24:1).

1. When you truly understand that everything that you have belongs to the Lord, it changes the way you think about and handle money.

» Consider this more as you read Ecclesiastes 5:18,19.

2. Stewardship is a common theme in the teachings of Jesus.

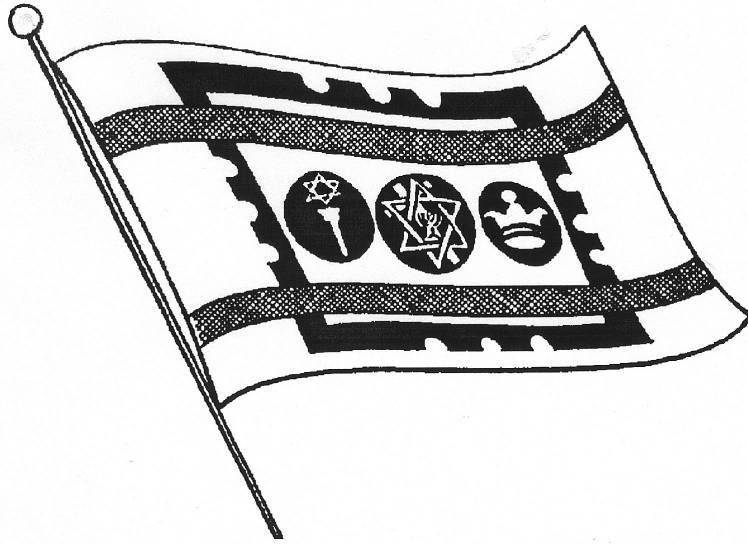
- » Remember the story of the man who left with each of His servants a certain portion of money?
 - » When he returned, he judged them according to how they used the money that he had given them.
 - » We need to consider hard what Jesus said in Luke 16:10-12.
-

3. What are some things that we need to do as faithful stewards of God’s money?

- » We need to give God back His portion—our tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:8-11).
 - 1) A tithe is a firstfruit offering. You give a tenth of everything God has blessed you with back to Him.
 - 2) Also, above and beyond our tithes, we need to give generously unto the Lord with our offerings. Tithes is that 10%, but much of the abundant blessing is tied up in the giving of offerings to the Lord (II Corinthians 9:6-8).
 - 3) Another part of giving is giving to those who are less fortunate than we are (Proverbs 19:17; 28:27).
 - » God wants us to be good managers of what He has given us.
 - 1) One way to do this is by working out a personal budget for your family.
 - 2) The key is having a plan and knowing where the Lord’s money is going (Proverbs 24:3,4).
 - » Another good thing to do as a manager of God’s money—which is biblical—is to have a savings plan (Proverbs 6:6-8; 21:20).
 - » It is also God’s will that His people work to be out of debt (Proverbs 22:7).
-

4. Ultimately, God wants to give us an increase so that we will be able to give more to His work and His purposes.

- » If we really believe that all we have belongs to the Lord, then as good stewards we will seek God to find out what His will is for our finances.
- » What it comes down to is *trust*. Do we have faith in God to take care of everything that concerns us (Proverbs 3:5-10)?



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