

6. The Compassionate Savior (3Q 2008—Agents of Hope)

Biblical material: John 1:14; John 3; John 4; 9:1–7; Eph. 4:32; 1 John 2:12, Matthew 9:36.

Quotes

- We are never nearer Christ than when we find ourselves lost in a holy amazement at his unspeakable love. *John Owen*
- Though our Savior's passion is over, his compassion is not. *William Penn*
- Jesus takes to heart the sufferings of his friends. *William Hendriksen*
- Jesus Christ is not only the Son of God mighty to save, but the Son of man able to feel. *J.C. Ryle*
- God gets more out of your salvation than you ever will. *David Shepherd*

Questions

Why is it so important to see the compassionate Savior and understand that if we have seen Jesus we have seen the Father? How does this affect us through this supreme “agent of change”? How do we understand Jesus best? How would you explain the truths that Jesus came to demonstrate? In what way do these contrast with traditional ideas?

Discussion

The proof of Jesus' nature is in his actions. His willingness to defy tradition, to break social norms, and to directly confront those who needed to find salvation in him—all these aspects are revealed in Jesus' interactions. The examples given: Nicodemus and the Samaritan woman at the well—are classic representations of the Jesus we need to know.

Ephesians 4:32 reminds us to forgive one another just as in Christ God forgave us. This seems so hard for us as Christians to do, surprisingly enough. Some of the most unforgiving actions happen within the church. Only as we look again to Jesus and his spirit can we find the warmth to melt our cold and unforgiving hearts. Here Jesus as compassionate Savior is the ultimate agent of change.

Comment

SETTING FORTH THE TRUTH PLAINLY (NIV)/DECLARING THE TRUTH OPENLY (NEB). 2 Corinthians 4:1-6 NIV

1. We have this ministry—spelled out in previous verses: 3:12 hope; 3:18 reflecting God and His glory. We have a GOSPEL to share, a good news story to tell. Good news about God Himself! And because we have this ministry, then what? We do not lose heart! Are you depressed, discouraged, broken-hearted? Then listen!

2. We are not secretive or deceptive. Who is? The liar from the beginning, the deceiver himself. We are to set forth the truth plainly—the truth about what, and how? The truth about God Himself—against the lies the Devil has spread about God's

character and government. Sometimes we need to be more direct, more plain in the way we tell the truth.

3/4. Veiled to those who cannot see. Don't you often want to grab them by the lapels and shake them to convince them about the gospel? For what do people live for? Blinded by money, greed, lust, power, and fun—the disco mentality.

Blinded by science, secularism, and the philosophies of this world.

Blinded by selfishness, pride, ambition, foolishness.

And what happens when the blind lead the blind? All end up in the ditch.

So blind they can't see the light of the gospel, the blinding truth of the good news! Can't see the glory of Christ, the image of God. Illustration: images of idols, blind eyes. What do they tell us?

5. We do not preach ourselves. Most important! The gospel is not about us! Not about living seven years longer, happier families, better health and welfare. We preach Jesus as Lord! What does this mean? That God is great, that He is still in control, that He is our Saviour—and most importantly, what kind of God He is. We don't have to win people to ourselves or our church. We simply have to speak and live the truth about God. That He is not the kind of person His enemies and even some of His friends have made Him out to be.

6. Creator God, creating light out of darkness. Jesus the light of the world. This light of truth, this right understanding of God must be in our hearts, must burn within like those on the road to Emmaus. Convinced not because of God's might and power, but by the rightness of the truth. As Jesus himself told his disciples, if you seen me, you've seen the Father. (Jn 14:9). Through Jesus we understand the very nature of God Himself.

Hanging on the Cross, Christ was the gospel—the revelation of God in love.

Join with me, and let the light of God shine through us as we reflect the face of Christ to this sad and dying world, before it is too late.

Ellen White Comments

Christ came to represent the Father. We behold in him the image of the invisible God. He clothed his divinity with humanity, and came to the world that the erroneous ideas Satan had been the means of creating in the minds of men, in regard to the character of God, might be removed. We could not behold the glory of God unveiled in Christ and live; but as he came in the garb of humanity, we may draw nigh to our Redeemer. We are called upon to behold the Lord our Father in the person of his Son. Christ came in the robe of the flesh, with his glory subdued in humanity, that lost man might communicate with him and live. Through Christ we may comprehend something of him who is glorious in holiness. Jesus is the mystic ladder by which we may mount to behold the glory of the infinite God. By faith we behold Christ standing between humanity and divinity, connecting God and man, and earth and heaven....

The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature...

When the object of his mission was attained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men. {ST, January 20, 1890}