

How to Tell Someone the Good News

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Study Three: The Good News of What Christ Has Accomplished

I. REVIEW OF LAST STUDY'S HIGH POINTS.

1. You can't "win souls" with bad tidings, only "glad tidings." John 12:31-33.

Note: "Christ must be revealed to the sinner as the Saviour dying for the sins of the world; and as we behold the Lamb of God upon the cross of Calvary, the mystery of redemption begins to unfold to our minds, and the goodness of God leads us to repentance. In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul. ... The power of Christ ... is drawing them. ... The sinner may resist this love, may refuse to be drawn to Christ; but if he does not resist he will be drawn to Jesus; a knowledge of the plan of salvation will lead him to the foot of the cross in repentance for his sins, which have caused the sufferings of God's dear Son" (*Steps to Christ*, pp. 26.4, 27.1).

2. What has Christ accomplished on His cross?

Note: Christ has redeemed "the whole race of men," has already died the second death "for every man," purchased the gift of justification and has given it to "all men" (Isa. 53:6; Rom. 5:15-18; Heb. 2:9). "The grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all men" (Titus 2:11, NAS).

"God has wrought out salvation for every man, and has given it to him; but the majority spurn it and throw it away. The judgment will reveal the fact that full salvation was given to every man and that the lost have deliberately thrown away their birthright possession" (E. J. Waggoner, *The Glad Tidings*, pp. 13, 14). Therefore, the only way one can be lost is to resist and reject this gift. This "glad tidings" reconciles an honest but alienated heart. 2 Cor. 5:21; 6:1, 2; John 3:16-18.

"Heaven's glorious ladder is let down in every man's path, barring his way to vice and folly. He must trample upon a crucified Redeemer ere he can pass onward to a life of sin". (*Our High Calling*, p. 11).

"Christ ... took in His grasp the world over which Satan claimed to preside as his lawful territory, and by His wonderful work in giving His life, He restored the whole race of men to favor with God" (*Selected Messages*, book 1, p. 343).

3. As a method of winning hearts to Christ, is there a better motivation than fear of being lost or desire for reward in heaven? 2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

Note: "It is not the fear of punishment, or the hope of everlasting reward, that leads the disciples of Christ to follow Him. They behold the Saviour's matchless love, ... they hear His voice, and they follow Him" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 480).

4. What is the "broken link" that has kept many of us from winning souls?

Note: "We must look more to the presentation of God's love and mercy to move the hearts of the people. We must have a sense of both the justice and mercy of God. Those who can blend together the law of God and the mercy of God can reach any heart. For years I have seen that there is a broken link which has kept us from reaching hearts, this link is supplied by presenting the love and mercy of God. There has been a sentiment creeping in that we should not present the claims of the Sabbath so strong. Why not? Is it not true that the man of sin is raising up the counterfeit and undermining the law of God, and should we not raise up the standard against him? (Ellen G. White, Council of Presidents meeting No. 5, March 3, 1891; General Conference Archives; used with permission).

"The wonderful love of Christ will melt and subdue hearts, when the mere reiteration of doctrines would accomplish nothing" (*The Desire of Ages*, p. 826).

II. HOW PRESENTING THE LOVE OF GOD MOTIVATES TO HEART-OBEDIENCE.

1. How is God's love related to man's faith? John 3:16; Gal. 5:6; Col. 1:4.

Note: These texts indicate that the Bible definition of faith is a heart response to, or a heart-appreciation for, the love of God revealed in Christ. Such faith is better than fear as a motivation.

2. What is the only true source of gospel motivation? 2 Cor. 5:14, 15.

3. Why is agape a unique, a sine qua non element of the "everlasting gospel"? 1 Cor. 13:1-3; 1 John 4:7, 8.

4. How is agape the effective truth to heal our deep human fears? 1 John 4:17, 18; compare Heb. 2:14, 15.

5. If Paul were here helping people today, what would be his special prayer for them? Eph. 3:14-18.

6. How is the final work of the gospel related to the truth of agape? Verse 19.

Note: "Those who wait for the Bridegroom's coming are to say to the people, 'Behold your God.' The last rays of merciful light, the last message of mercy to be given to the world, is a revelation of His character of love" (*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 415).

7. When John identifies the people who refuse to accept the mark of the beast, what is their outstanding characteristic? Rev. 14:12; compare with Rom. 13:10.

8. Where is agape revealed most clearly? 1 John 4:9, 10.

Note: "A work is to be accomplished in the earth similar to that which took place at the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the days of the early disciples, when they preached Jesus and Him crucified. Many will be converted in a day; for the message will go with power. ... The theme that attracts the heart of the sinner is Christ, and Him crucified. On the cross of Calvary Jesus stands revealed to the world in unparalleled love [*agape*]. Present Him thus to the hungering multitudes, and the light of His love will win men from darkness to light, from transgression to obedience and true holiness" (*Review and Herald*, Nov. 22, 1892).

III. UNDERSTANDING WHY SUCH LOVE WINS HEARTS.

1. How does agape differ from all other loves? Rom. 5:7, 8, 10.
2. What element of agape must a person understand in order for his/her heart to be won? Luke 19:10, compare 15:1-10.
3. How does agape create value in its object? Isa. 3:12; 1 Cor. 6:20.

Note: Appreciating this "price" is what delivers a person from self-depreciation and develops in him/her a true and lasting self-respect. "You may say you believe in Jesus when you have an appreciation of the cost of salvation. You may make this claim, when you feel that Jesus died for you on the cruel cross of Calvary; when you have an intelligent, understanding faith that his death makes it possible for you to cease from sin, and to perfect a righteous character through the grace of God, bestowed upon you as the purchase of Christ's blood" (*Review and Herald*, July 24, 1888).

4. How can one develop an effective appreciation for what it cost the Son of God to redeem us? Phil. 2:5-8. (Contrast the opposite spirit in Lucifer in Isa. 14:12-14.)
5. Why is the soul-winning power of agape a truth unique to Seventh-day Adventists? See *Early Writings*, pp. 55, 56.

Note: Christians who believe in the natural immortality of the soul cannot in the depths of their souls believe that Christ truly "died for our sins" (1 Cor. 15:3), for they think that the human soul is immortal. Thus, they cannot appreciate the "breadth, and length, and depth, and height," of the agape that was revealed at the cross, for Christ did "taste death for every man" that is, the equivalent of the "second death" (see Heb. 2:9; Rev. 2:11). In consequence, their understanding of faith is distorted; and thus, they sense no motivation to obey "all the commandments of God." *Early Writings* profoundly discloses how the truth of agape is ministered only to those who follow Christ by faith into His closing work in the Most Holy Apartment of the heavenly sanctuary (pp. 55, 56).