

Remembering your Creator

By David Cox © 2011

Sunday School Class Teens Series 2 Volume 1

Teacher's Help

Ecc1 12:1 *Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them;*

1. According to this verse, what will inevitably happen to everybody?

We will all grow to an age and situation in which we will not be pleased with how things are going in our lives. This is because of the problem of sin in our lives, even if we are saved. Sin causes problems, and eventually, "evil days" will come to us all.

2. What will be our attitude towards the end of our life?

We won't like some things that are going to be in our lives whether we want them or not. This means we will suffer disease, pain, suffering, and the consequences of many bad decisions during our life.

It is common for people to get so involved with that they "lose their bearings", that God their Creator has made them, and He has established them in this life for some purpose. In addition, these normal "things" of life will come to absorb all their interest, time, and energy, and they will totally forget about God. The true God is changed to elements of life (health, money, pleasure, fame, work, etc.) that we worship with spending our entire life on. What is the "God" of your life? What is the thing that affects you most in what and how you do what you do?

BIBLE READING: Mathew 13: 3-9, 18-23.

3. What is the difference between the seed by the side way, the seed on the stony ground, the seed among the thorns, and the seed in the good ground? Which or which ones represent the true saved ones, and why?

Seed by the side way – These are people who receive the gospel message, but without a thought, they reject it and don't have the time to even listen to it really.

Seed on the stony ground – These people listen to the gospel, but the elements of their life, their way of thinking, and in general, their desire to enjoy their sins take over their judgment process making their heart hard and unreceptive to the gospel.

Seed among the thorns – Even among the hardness of so many people, some people like these do receive the gospel at least superficially, and these are often in the church for some limited time. But these

people are just too busy; they have too many other things that are higher priorities in their life than a simple devotion to their God and Creator.

Seed in good ground – Note that the seed is the same in each case. The gospel is the same for everybody. The difference is the reception that each individual gives to the gospel that determines whether a person is saved or not. Also note that only the good ground allows the seed to grow until there is fruit. Apparently, being saved is the same as having spiritual fruit in our lives. This is not a works salvation, but a salvation based on believing Jesus Christ died on the cross for you, but being so real in your life, that these people will 100% of the time “produce spiritual fruit.” Not everybody is going to produce the same amount of fruit, because people are different. Both in themselves, they apply themselves differently to their relationship with God, and God gives different people different talents and resources that they can use for God to show forth their devotion to God. But note that each person gives much more than 1-for-1. The fruit is abundant in every case. If you truly believe in Jesus, then your life should abound with spiritual fruit.

What is “spiritual fruit” then? Spiritual fruit is simply evidences that you do have a real relationship with Jesus as your Savior. This means praying to him, and hearing him talk to you (reading your Bible, attending a good church where they read and explain the Word of God). Other fruit would be things like Gal. 5:22-23, where your life shows a deep spiritual quality, like real love versus false love. Real love is to love when you really get nothing back from it except a good warm feeling of having helped somebody else. Peace versus conflict. This is when maybe everything is stress and turmoil, and your life is turned upside down spiritually or emotionally (like when your parents get a divorce, one in your family dies, or somebody close to you is involved in an addiction), and even though a normal (unsaved) person would be really upset emotionally, you maintain a calm attitude, balancing your life on your relationship with Jesus. From that relationship, you get and live peace within yourself, no matter what is happening in your life actually.

Matt 13:19 *When any one heareth the word of the kingdom, and understandeth it not, then cometh the wicked one, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.*

Mark 4:15 *And these are they by the way side, where the word is sown; but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the word that was sown in their hearts.*

4. What does "do not understand" mean? How is it that the gospel is stolen from somebody?

The gospel is clear, and it is not hard to understand. You are a sinner, God sends all sinners into hell, and Jesus loves you so much that he paid that price (going to hell, bearing your sins on Him), and if you trust him with your eternal destination, embracing Jesus and all that He is, you will be saved. But here the elements become “hard.” First of all, many people refuse to accept that they are sinners. They refuse to accept the existence of a place of eternal torment, and much less a “loving God” would send

them there or even that a “loving God” would have created it or allowed it to exist. These things are artificial concepts that people build up in their minds, and these things are not really logical, nor do they represent the truth that God gives us in the Bible.

This “not understanding” is really a rejection of God telling us how things are. They presume to know better than God about how the truth of life and death is, and how they should live their lives. Big problem! God will make everything clear to their understanding in eternity, but then it is too late.

Matt 13:20 *But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the word, and anon with joy receiveth it;*

Matt 13:21 *Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.*

5. What does "he is offended" mean? What is "having root in himself"?

The idea of being offended is that you engage with somebody in conversation, business, or activity, and because of something in that, you no longer want to have anything to do with that person or activity or conversation. Many Christians “fall by the wayside” because they do not have real roots into Christianity. In other words, they “float” along in a Christian environment like church, but when it really costs them something, or costs them a lot, they dump God. They throw him and their relationship with Christ in the trash can. They no longer are good with spending time and energy, spending their life engaged in a relationship with Christ.

The “root” or having root in you mean to really love Jesus. You must truly trust Jesus and have faith and confidence in Jesus, in God, in God’s decisions, in God’s standards and norms that you are gladly willing to suffer any opposition, aggression, or persecution that may happen to you because of your engagement in a relationship with God. The early Christians were called upon by God to prove their love for him, and they died being tortured. **Fox's Book of Martyrs** tells of many of these brethren and their love for Jesus.

Matt 13:22 *He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.*

Mark 4:19 *And the cares of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lusts of other things entering in, choke the word, and it becometh unfruitful.*

6. How does one stop the thorns that cause this soil / person not to be saved? What is "the care of this world"? What is the deception of riches? What is "the lusts of other things"? Give examples of each one.

The soil with the thorns is simply other demands on our life that slowly choke and crowd out our real relationship with God. Many people love sports. But this thorny bush is one that so often will make

your spiritual life decline (not always, but often). How can you detect if you have thorns choking your relationship with God? Analyze your life. What are your priorities? What comes first, and what comes way down on the list? So often, we stay home from church to do homework. Yet somehow we know church comes on Sunday, and Saturdays we spend in doing all kinds of things that are even further down on our priorities list, but we elevate them so that we can enjoy them. It is not a matter of not doing homework, it is a matter of re-arranging our time and activities so that Sunday night, our homework is done, and we do not use it as an excuse for not fulfilling our obligations with God.

Note that it is God's will for you to go to school as it is for your parents to go to work. Don't think otherwise. But we have more time than just what we spend on that. This extra free time is where we need to be careful keep the focus on priorities. God first. Read your Bible every day. Pray to God daily and constantly. Don't let other things crowd out God to taking a second or third or fourth place in your life. You will regret it greatly over time.

Matt 13:23 *But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the word, and understandeth it; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty.*

7. What is the difference between this good ground and the rest?

The good ground is the only ground that truly represents a saved person. God is displeased with all the other grounds. Good ground means a person who lets his or her relationship with God grow up and produce spiritual fruit in their life. You are not saved just because your parents are Christians, because you go to church, nor because you were baptized. True salvation is clearly seen by the spiritual fruit that the person is producing because he or she is engaged in a serious love relationship with God.

Matt 16:23 *But he turned, and said unto Peter, Get thee behind me, Satan: thou art an offence unto me: **for thou savourest not* the things that be of God, but those that be of men.***

* "savourest" means to focus your life on.

8. What problem did Peter have that Jesus was rebuking here?

Jesus was telling the disciples that he was going to Jerusalem to die. "The movement" of Christ at that time was not really understood by these disciples. Peter personified probably what many or all of the disciples were thinking. That is, Jesus is God, and he will "save" them. They were Jews under the oppression of the Roman Empire. They wanted to return to the glory days of King David and King Solomon when Israel was at a pinnacle of glory in the entire world. The death of the person working this glory was not really understood by the common Jewish mindset at the time.

Peter didn't want Jesus to disappear from the scene in a violent death. He wanted Jesus to continue on as he was doing, gaining more and more popularity in the world. The disciples were "riding his coattails" in this of glory, and they liked it. But Peter totally missed the issues of sin and atonement

with God over our sins. Jesus came to do the work of God, which was to die on the cross for mankind, not be popular. Peter totally missed this, and was very short sighted in the process.

What are you here on earth for? God has a purpose for your life. What is it? Be popular? Be rich? Enjoy luxuries and spend a lot of money on your entertainment, luxuries, and have fun? God doesn't call people to that or put people on earth for their own entertainment, diversions, or "fun." God puts people on earth to do God's will, and do God's work (salvation of mankind).

*2Pet 1:5 And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; 6 And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; 7 And to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. 8 For **if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.** 9 **But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.***

9. Explain each quality that Peter exhorts us to have. Is there a relationship or progress from one to another of these qualities?

Faith – Trust in God and his decision making ability, and his decisions, standards and norms.

Virtue – Spiritual force to comply with what God lays out for us. Obey his commandments; avoid doing what displeases him (sin), and doing God's will.

Knowledge – Knowledge is like science; it is an understanding of how the principles of something work. Cardiology is the science of understanding how the heart works. How it beats, and how it regulates its own functioning. By pure facts, we begin building our knowledge, but true mastery of knowledge comes when you understand the principles behind the facts, that make things work the way they work.

Temperance – This is simple self-control. You do what you know you should do. This has to be after knowledge, because control has no guidance if there is not a mastery of knowledge. Salt increases your heart's pumping (blood pressure) and potassium decreases it. That fact goes nowhere if you do not know when and why your blood pressure should go up or down. A fuller understanding (mastery of knowledge) must guide your controlling of things.

Patience – Patience is the strength to not act precipitously in a situation but to wait until some point comes that demands that you should act. Patience means the enduring of things without getting discouraged.

Godliness – This character quality is being like God. This builds on the things that come before it, but it is really just good communion with God. You cannot have communion with God unless you are morally acceptable in his sight. You won't get into his presence with your life full of sin. But being holy makes you draw near to God and be like God morally. This is godliness.

Brotherly Kindness – This is a lower level of affection than love (what follows). You cannot understand loving somebody until you fully master being a friend to somebody. The word is described by “brotherly.” Like a brother with a brother, or a brother and sister, or two sisters that really get along together. Don’t think you are ready for a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship until you really can get along well with your our siblings, or with your own friends. The point here is that you must learn to not be a narcissist always putting yourself and your own interests and priorities ahead of others. When you learn to enter into the life of a friend or sibling, and make their life beautiful and happy without taking anything for yourself, then you are drawing closer to God.

Charity – Simply put, love. Charity means that you have such a relationship with somebody else, that you are willing to surrender your own life and desires in order to make somebody else’s life beautiful, happy, and fulfilling. Think a mother that is willing to die for her baby, or even less dramatic, get up at all hours of the night to take care of the baby when she has to work and is sick. This kind of love is selfless, but serves others greatly.

Ecc1 5:13 *There is a sore evil which I have seen under the sun, namely, riches kept for the owners thereof to their hurt. 14 But those riches perish by evil travail: and he begetteth a son, and there is nothing in his hand. 15 As he came forth of his mother's womb, naked shall he return to go as he came, and shall take nothing of his labour, which he may carry away in his hand. 16 And this also is a sore evil, that in all points as he came, so shall he go: and what profit hath he that hath laboured for the wind?*

10. In what sense is it wrong to be rich and have many things?

Riches are a blessing from God, but they are also a test from God. When God gives you good things, you should be very thankful for the good that enters your life. The lack of giving God the acknowledgement that all good things come from God is what is at issue here. Gratitude for what God does for us. This is very easy when there is a good and healthy relationship between us and God. It is difficult when the person is unsaved, or even unsaved pretending to be a Christian. Moreover, many people make these riches their god instead of Jesus, and this is seen by how much devotion, time, energy, resources, etc they give to this false god in their life, and what they do with Jesus actually.

The point of Ecclesiastes here is that enjoying life really doesn’t address where you came from, or what will happen when you stand before God to give an accounting of what you did with what God has given you in life. When you consider these things, and you consider that the norm here is to get all you can get, and spend it all on your pleasures and personal comfort and luxuries, you see why riches are not the blessing that so many believe them to be.

Ecc1 11:9 *Rejoice, O young man, in thy youth; and let thy heart cheer thee in the days of thy youth, and walk in the ways of thine heart, and in the sight of thine eyes: but know thou, that for all these things God will bring thee into*

judgment. 10 Therefore remove sorrow from thy heart, and put away evil from thy flesh: for childhood and youth are vanity.

11. Is it wrong that you entertain yourself with good things?

God does not want us to be unhappy. In fact, the entire matter of salvation is to provide for our eternal happiness. Even here on the earth, God does not want us have a depressive and sad attitude. God wants us to enjoy and be happy with the good things that God has provided and is providing for us.

God will judge everybody. Never let that slip from your decisions. God is watching. God is judging.

1Tim 4:12 *Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity.*

12. What spiritual values should youth seek?

We should follow the outline of what God sees as good and right. We should like a life that is an example of Jesus Christ.

Heb 11:24 *By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; 25 Choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; 26 Esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompence of the reward. 27 By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king: for he endured, as seeing him who is invisible.*

13. What noble and spiritual example did Moses give us?

Moses saw and maintained the vision of heaven in his mind and the matters of his life over the things actually happening in his life. He kept the spiritual center in his life even though his life was turned upside down at times. He left all to go to the backside of the desert.

1Thess 5:21 *Prove all things; hold fast that which is good. 22 Abstain from all appearance of evil.*

14. What attitude should a Christian teen have?

Analyze everything as to what God thinks about it. Keep the good, and ditch the bad, the evil, the “not good.” Don’t accept spiritually luke-warm stuff that really absorbs the time and energy of your life while returning nothing for eternity. This is vanity, things void of eternal value. Always seek eternal value things in your life.