

Lucan: It's time to begin. Bro. David, will you please offer an opening prayer?

Zahakiel: Almighty and loving Father in Heaven. We give you thanks for the many blessings that your people have received in the days of this past week. Bless our time together, and may our fellowship draw us ever nearer to the glorious appearing of your Kingdom, for we submit our requests before you in the holy name of Yahshua, Amen.

Pastor Chick: Amen.

Barb: Amen

Adriel777: Amen

Elyna: Amen

daphna dee: Amen

Lucan: Amen

Lucan: The first sermon Yah gave me to preach was in an Adventist church in Oklahoma, and it was on the victory message. Afterwards, an older woman came up to scold me to "be careful preaching sinlessness," because, she said, some young girl who she herself hadn't known, but was a friend of a friend somewhere, had committed suicide on realizing she couldn't be perfect. Like Satan himself, this professed Adventist threw the responsibility for such deception back on Yahweh and the promises He gave. This rather than on the church that failed their calling to properly explain and live those promises, or the soul who did not understand and grasp them to her (reported) destruction.

One of the most common misunderstandings that people project onto the true gospel is that of "holy flesh." Recently, Sis. Jody sent me a hard copy of Lessons on Faith, which I've preferred for highlighting over the electronic version on our website. There are some sections where highlighting seems necessary for the whole chapter, and my message tonight is adapted loosely from one called "Sinful Flesh." When reading it, my mind was brought back to that early encounter with an aged Adventist who was evidently unfamiliar with what their church had taught as early as 1888.

Without spending too much time on the error, the idea of "holy flesh" is that, once converted, the impulses of our flesh – our feelings, desires, and inclinations – become sanctified. The result of this idea is that we may do as we please, believing and accepting what the flesh tells us. This is the error of Lucifer, who reasoned that holy beings required no law beyond their own will. Early Adventists encountered a form of this in those who believed they were holy, and thus didn't need to obey Yah's actual instructions on the Sabbath.

There is a similar error, and that is to believe that as we become sanctified through putting away and overcoming sin, we may come to trust our own senses, judgments, and emotions – our flesh – more than at the start. Alternatively, when this does not happen, and the flesh proves itself to still be just as sinful as it ever was, some are inclined to discouragement.

The gospel is not a new flesh (until Yahshua returns), but a new Spirit that overcomes the flesh. If the flesh were any excuse for sin, Yahshua would not have needed to remain sinless while in sinful flesh. If mood, circumstance, opposition, hormones, or any other elements "in the flesh" are guiding our words or actions, are we not "living in the flesh?"

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors, not to the flesh, to live after the flesh. For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." (Romans 8:12-14)

The unconverted and the worldly Christian await a paradise where Satan is expelled and the flesh is made holy to live without sinning. This "easy gospel" only has power where there is nothing to test it. It is not a gospel of overcoming, but one of avoidance. What manner of Christ is this, that cannot exercise His power except in the absence of Satan and tempting flesh? Is Christ weaker than our flesh? Is His Spirit constrained by it, influenced by it, changed by it in any way?

"For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:" (Romans 8:3)

And what is the result of His condemning sin in the flesh?

"That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit." (Romans 8:4)

It is in us that the righteousness of the law is fulfilled, because Christ, who overcame the flesh once, does so again in us. We know He overcomes, because He overcame, and by Him we overcome. And what do we overcome, save for the flesh, and the tendencies and deceptions that dwell in it, in the same way as He did?

"For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit. But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his. And if Christ [be] in you, the body [is] dead because of sin; but the Spirit [is] life because of righteousness." (Romans 8:5, 9, 10)

Now here we have the root of the matter, and the cause for some potential deception as well. We know the flesh is "dead," but what does that mean? My body still lives; still breathes, eats, and grows. My flesh still encourages sin, false thoughts, and unholy desires, even as yours does, and Christ's did, and every one's flesh does – if any one tells you their flesh does not, they are not abiding in the truth.

The deception here is to think that because the flesh is "dead," and the dead know not any thing, that therefore the flesh can be ignored rather than overcome. If the flesh and its suggestions are not rejected firmly, we do not exercise "temperance," or self-control. We would then be adopting the "gospel of avoidance" rather than the "gospel of victory." We would then not follow the example of Paul, who wrote:

"Do you not know that those who run in a race all run, but one receives the prize? Run in such a way that you may obtain [it]. And everyone who competes [for the prize] is temperate in all things. Now they [do it] to obtain a perishable crown, but we [for] an imperishable [crown]. Therefore I run thus: not with uncertainty. Thus I fight: not as [one who] beats the air. But I discipline my body and bring [it] into subjection, lest, when I have preached to others, I myself should become disqualified." (1 Corinthians 9:24-27, NKJV)

Yet the body is "dead because of sin" – the sin, still in the body, is what causes it to be "dead" to us, and we to it. And it is dead in that it is reckoned dead, and remains dead; we give it no power, influence, or control over what we say and do. It is dead to us in our decisions, in our words, and in our actions; the flesh has no say over any of these, and its advances are firmly and consistently rejected as they are recognized. Thus we "fight, not as one that beats the air" and "bring the body into subjection."

"And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts. If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit." (Galatians 5:24, 25)

Upon what do we base our "affections and lusts," the things that we enjoy and accept and approve? Is it what "feels good," what seems best and truest to our senses? If the flesh and its affections are crucified, our affections and desires are not based on such things, regardless of what our flesh may cause us to feel.

"If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." (Colossians 3:1-3)

Further still, the word "affections" in Galatians seems rather the same as "lusts," or desires, in English. In Greek, "affections" here is a word meaning "deep passions," often unpleasant ones; a trial, a hardship, a suffering are all alternate translations. The flesh has its desires, and it has its difficulties through those desires.

Yet we who are Christ's have crucified it, with both its desires AND its hardships of emotion. It is thus that "life is easy living when self is dead."

Adriel777: Amen

Lucan: It is thus that, though we experience the sensations of the flesh, we refuse to allow them to dictate, influence, or control us in the least.

I will quote a portion from A.T. Jones here:

"And when it is decided and constantly maintained that the flesh of the converted person is still sinful flesh and only sinful flesh, he is so thoroughly convinced that in his flesh dwells no good thing that he will never allow a shadow of confidence in the flesh. And this being so, his sole dependence is upon something other than the flesh, even upon the Holy Spirit of God; his source of strength and hope is altogether exclusive of the flesh, even in Jesus Christ only. And being everlastingly watchful, suspicious, and thoroughly distrustful of the flesh, he never can expect any good thing from that source, and so is prepared by the power of God to beat back and crush down without mercy every impulse or suggestion that may arise from it; and so does not fail, does not become discouraged, but goes on from victory to victory and from strength to strength." – [A.T. Jones, Lessons on Faith]

Adriel777: Amen!

Lucan: To "beat back and crush down without mercy every impulse or suggestion that may arise" from the flesh is to do as Paul spoke of, to "keep my body under, and bring it into subjection" as it's written in the KJV.

Pastor Chick: Amen!

Lucan: "But we had the sentence of death in ourselves, that we should not trust in ourselves, but in God which raiseth the dead." (2 Corinthians 1:9)

Because we carry this sentence of death in ourselves, we do not trust in ourselves; our feelings, our senses, our own judgment, all are submitted to Christ and His Spirit.

"For we are the circumcision, which worship God in the spirit, and rejoice in Christ Jesus, and have no confidence in the flesh." (Philippians 3:3)

We see that it is not enough to merely ignore the flesh; no, if we do only this, we do not treat it with thorough distrust. Thus many are deceived into walking according to it. When we find ourselves inclined towards some action, or word, or lack thereof, it is then that we must examine our motivations – from where does this come? Is it from the flesh, or is it from the Spirit? If it is from the flesh, then we must positively reject the suggestion in spirit, word, and action; and we know we have the victory to unfailingly do so. If the flesh induces us to avoid an experience, it is our duty to "bring the flesh under subjection" and face the matter squarely and straight-on in the Spirit, trusting in Yah for the results.

Many excuses may be made to indulge the flesh, to justify the thing it desires, yet if it is not of the Spirit, it is not of Yah. We are of Yah, and walk according to the Spirit, not the flesh.

If the flesh inclines us to shrink from reproof or examination, it is our duty to "bring the flesh under subjection," and face the very thing Yahweh has for us, trusting in Yah for His vindication and cleansing.

If the flesh tempts us to variance with a brother or sister in the faith, it is our duty to "bring the flesh under subjection," and take the matter up to satisfaction, trusting in Yah for His one heart of unity to be revealed.

The flesh will never lead us in the paths of righteousness. Any and every excuse for the flesh is ultimately an excuse for sin, for which Christ died in the flesh. If Satan is seeking to cause us to do something, it is because Yah has a blessing for us or others in avoiding it. If Satan is seeking to cause us to avoid something, it is because Yah has a blessing for us or others in embracing it. If Satan is seeking to cause us to believe something, it is because Yah has a blessing for us or others in the truth that false belief would deny.

Shall we not "run, not with uncertainty" into the paths of safety and sanctification that Yah has laid out for us? Shall we not "fight, not as one who beats the air" to bring our flesh under subjection, being dead indeed unto sin?

"For to be carnally minded [is] death; but to be spiritually minded [is] life and peace. Because the carnal mind [is] enmity against God: for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be. So then they that are in the flesh cannot please God." (Romans 8:6-8)

Because "they that are in the flesh cannot please God," the testimony of Yahshua is entirely at odds with allowing the flesh to excuse, direct, or influence our words or actions. We know that Yahshua was sent in sinful flesh, yet He did not allow the flesh in the slightest, for "they that are in the flesh cannot please God." And, we know that He pleased God, for His testimony was "he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him." (John 8:29)

Yahshua perfectly overcame His flesh by faith, by reliance on His Father, and by "resisting the devil," which had access only through His flesh.

Pastor Chick: Amen!

Elyna: Amen

Lucan: It is thus through the flesh that Satan has any access to us, who have and walk in the Spirit of Yahshua. We also therefore "resist the devil," and perfectly "resist the flesh" through which he seeks to mislead us.

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me." (Galatians 2:20)

It is a notable aspect of crucifixion that, of all the ways one may commit suicide, they cannot crucify themselves. Even as Yahshua was put on the cross by choosing and allowing Himself to be by another, we are placed on the cross by choosing and allowing ourselves to be by Another. As the temptation for Yahshua to avoid the cross was fierce, so is the temptation for us to avoid the cross fierce. Yet because the flesh is dead, "he said to [them] all, If any [man] will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me." (Luke 9:23)

We overcome this temptation as Christ overcame, rebuking the flesh and submitting to the will of the Father; "not my will, but thine be done." Thus we are crucified with Christ, and the life we now live is by the faith of the Son of God, who lives in us, and works out His overcoming through us. Thus we "labor to enter into that rest," going from victory to victory.

We have in the New Moon a monthly reminder of not only who we were without Christ, but what our flesh would be without Christ. We are reminded of the necessity to examine and put away all that has its origin in the flesh, to search out and examine lest there be any way in which we "walk after the flesh" ignorantly. We are encouraged to seek out, not merely the pleasantries of fellowship with like minds and opinions, but the cleansing of fellowship, and those who love us enough to give a straight testimony.

It is our responsibility and joy as Christians to examine our thoughts and our motives, discerning whether they are from "the mind of Christ" and thus ours, or whether they are suggested by Satan. We know that Satan will provide thoughts and feelings to annoy and perplex even the best of men, for he did so to Yahshua Himself. We do this examination by deciding if our motives are from the flesh or from the Spirit. We do this by deciding if our thoughts are "true," "false," or if we "don't know." We do this by comparing our thoughts, feelings, and motivations against the Word of Yahweh, and exercising the faith of Yahshua to overcome even as He overcame. Those thoughts, feelings, and motives that are not of the Spirit are not of us, for we are not of the flesh, but of the Spirit. We therefore condemn, reject, and destroy them.

"Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with [him], that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin." (Romans 6:6, 7)

"But put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make not provision for the flesh, to [fulfil] the lusts [thereof]." (Romans 13:14)

We do not make "provision" for the flesh. This means we do not take forethought for the flesh; we do not take consideration for acting according to the flesh, we do not reckon it as any thing whatsoever.

By faith, it is an impossibility that we should "fulfil the lusts thereof," so why should an impossibility have any provision made for it? It is a dead body, an old man, crucified and laid in the tomb. If we shrink from that which the flesh finds unpleasant, do we not "make provision for the flesh?" Do we not thus plan according to its "affections and lusts?"

Just as Satan is a defeated foe that actively wages war, so the flesh is a dead body that actively wages temptation. Just as Satan vainly seeks to overcome those who by the Word of Yahweh "cannot commit sin," so the flesh vainly seeks to deceive those who by the Word of Yahweh are "dead indeed unto sin."

"Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: Whom resist stedfast in the faith, knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren that are in the world." (1 Peter 5:8, 9)

Let us resist the flesh "stedfast in the faith," knowing that Yahshua has experienced in infinitely greater degree every challenge, temptation, and desire that we may be called to experience and has overcome fully and perfectly. We therefore have our victory unto victory; we have our "righteousness by faith."

Let us have no confidence in the flesh, making no provision for it, but rather pressing against it, beating it down, and bringing it unfailingly into subjection to the truth of Yahshua in every particular.

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?" (2 Corinthians 13:5)

"(For the weapons of our warfare [are] not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds;) Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ;" (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5)

Are there any comments on the study tonight?

Adriel777: Amen

Zahakiel: C

Pastor Chick: HalleluYAH Amen!

Lucan: Go ahead

Zahakiel: Thank you for this study. I have always found Lessons on Faith to be a very clear exposition of the genuine Adventist faith. I would encourage all of us to read through it periodically and, if any are currently evangelizing others, family members, or others we know socially and sharing literature with them,

Elyna: (Amen)

Zahakiel: a well-chosen chapter of this book might prove as effective as Steps to Christ or other CSDA writings, especially if they already have some familiarity with the Scriptures or Adventism. End.

Pastor Chick: C

Lucan: Go ahead

Pastor Chick: In my opinion, Lessons on Faith is one of the best resources we have for the exposition of the Faith of Jesus, but not perfect necessarily. We have progressed in that Light which grows brighter unto "the perfect day." END.

Lucan: Are there any other comments? If not, I'll ask Pastor to offer a closing prayer.

Pastor Chick: Dear Father in Heaven. Thank You for bringing to us a clear refresher on the Faith of the Saints that we live in sinful flesh. We make no excuses, we have no complaints for what is set on our "tables", and if we knew the truth of every development, we would always choose OUR challenges over those of our brethren. Thank You for disciplining us via the law of cause and effect. May we always take full responsibility for our personal trials, knowing and keeping ever before us, that You never place more on our table than we can bear even if it requires a few nudges from our brethren. May this Sabbath be a renewal of our consecration to the faith lived out perfectly by our ONLY Example. In Yahshua's holy name, Amen.

Elyna: Amen.

Lucan: Amen

Barb: Amen

Adriel777: Amen

daphna dee: Amen

Nattiy: Amen.

Zahakiel: Amen.

Marie: Amen