

2-26-2016

**Barb:** PC: Dear Father in Heaven. Thank you for the Sabbath blessing and memorial of creation. We come before you seeking a fresh outpouring of your spirit, thanking you in advance for all we need for today. We give you full attention and expect your servant to speak your words. In Yahshua's holy name, Amen

**Zahakiel:** Amen.

**Barb:** B: Amen D: Amen

**Pete:** Amen

**Elyna:** Amen

**Adriel:** Amen

**Zahakiel:** Happy Sabbath to everyone. Tonight's study is called "The Growth of Character." A few weeks ago, a friend of mine posted a link to a study conducted by some sociologists, which concluded that children raised in religious homes tend to grow up to be meaner, and less sympathetic, than those raised in a secular environment. It might surprise my friend to know this, but I completely agree.

"Religion" is one of those things that must be done perfectly, 100% right, or else it is better for it not to be done at all. The Bible says it is better to be hot or cold than lukewarm, and sincerity notwithstanding, there are quite a lot of things that may be meant by a "religious home." From our perspective, most homes – and most Churches – are entirely unequipped to produce a people fit for Heaven, and this is because errors, misunderstandings and corrupted spiritual teachings have real consequences for the development of character in those who accept them.

In an age where "tolerance" is being lauded as a most positive virtue (even though those who praise it most loudly are not always the most tolerant themselves) it is very unpopular for an individual, or a group, to take a firm stand and say, "I am correct; therefore, obviously, others must be wrong."

But there is a reason for this; it is because of a new kind of idolatry... or at least, one seeing a renewed acceptance. Human judgment is held to be supreme – the ultimate object of modern worship – therefore one human being should not say that another is "wrong" as it invalidates the object of worship, the limited human mind.

In any compromise, both positions become more like the other; therefore, if it is true – as the Bible says – that there IS a Way that is righteous, any compromise would simply make it less righteous, more erroneous, and less able to lead souls to salvation.

My position, and I hope it is shared by those who spend this time together weekly, is that the CSDA religion is "correct." If this is true, then other faiths are not "equally valid." They are simply wrong, and therefore we see that "religion" is not what it ought to be. Those in error have misunderstood the character of Yahweh, the instructions He has given to

2-26-2016

humanity, the mindset we must adopt if we are to be called Christians, and the warnings and encouragements of His messengers. But even this falls short of describing the transformation, the entire change of person-hood, experienced by those who are born again. We may speak about doctrines with those who wish to speak about them, but the truth lies in the experience of coming to know Yahweh, and knowing that transformation first-hand.

And what has always impressed me about the things taught by such a transformed people, aside from the simplicity with which we view the Holy Scriptures, is the fact that there is no other Church, or faith, or organization of any kind upon the earth, that is genuinely focused on perfecting the character of its people after the pattern of Yahshua the Messiah. There are few enough Churches that speak about improving one's person at all.

When it comes to the practical aspects of the Christian life, they speak of forgiveness from sins, rather than avoidance of sins, as if it were somehow better to become guilty, so that God's mercy could be seen in His repeated acts of forgiveness to the same person over and over again. But this is not an intelligent God, who substitutes recovery for protection. Even humans have a saying, "Prevention is better than cure." Surely, One who is infinite in wisdom has figured this out already. Surely, we give our Father far too little credit, if we believe that He has not devised a better way to Salvation than through a path of many wounds.

But our Father surely has.

The way to Salvation indeed involves many wounds, but they were borne already for us by His Son. We are not required to suffer the guilt of sin. We are not required to fall under the dominion of death, that we must be resurrected time and again. There is one Cross, and one resurrection to everlasting life, and we are called to partake in that one, eternal, event, not to die and be reborn over and over again in the sin-repent cycle. Once raised to life, sin has no dominion over us; hell has no power to draw us back into the flesh, and thereby into the grave. But, this can only be appreciated, truly appreciated, by a people who expect to be ever-kept from falling.

**Adriel:** Amen

**Zahakiel:** True growth of character, toward everlasting life, can only be known by those who have that expectation. I know of no other people than my own, in which this expectation exists – and that, without fanaticism or mindless zeal. We are the one people I know that have truly taught:

2-26-2016

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." (2Cor 7:1)

If it was not possible, the Holy Spirit would never have inspired such false hope. But we shall not be punished for expecting the greatest things of our Father in Heaven, nor will He disappoint our highest expectations. If we ask Him for bread, He will not give us a stone. If we ask Him for the fulfillment of His promises, a life free – forever free – from sin and the suffering caused by guilt, who shall dare to say, "God will refuse this request?"

My Father will not. Your Father, as He truly is and knows Himself to be, will not. Victory over sin is proven in just those words, by pointing to the character of Yah. Those who say He would not grant such a request have not seen Him, neither do they know Him. It does not matter how many years they have been in ministry, or if they have a radio or TV program about the Bible, or if they pastor a church attended by thousands.

And you know, we have had people study with us from time to time... and they ask us, "What do you think of this preacher, or that?" And we answer honestly, diplomatically for some and directly for others, "They are teaching error." Often, they go away offended.

For us it is simple; if they do not believe that Yahweh gives a life free of sin to everyone who comes to Him in faith – because that is what the sinner needs – they have not seen Him, neither do they know Him.

As for us, we have things yet to learn about righteousness, and the time grows short. Yahweh is eager for His people to be caught up in His arms; He will not wait a minute longer than necessary to gather us to our Home, therefore the perfection of Christian character must be on our minds, on our lips, and reflected in our actions, always. We must understand what "character" is, and how it is perfected in the fear of Yahweh. We must fear Him in the sense of reverence, but not fear the Enemy, or his snares.

This brings up an important point, and one necessary for us to understand, if we are indeed to grow in stature with Yah, and be wonders to the on-looking angels...a practical point, I believe.

Several years ago now, during a camp meeting in Tennessee, Pastor Chick gave a study that has stayed with me ever since, that was called "The Seven Snares of Satan." It was a fairly simple study, as the best of them are, talking about thoughts that the Enemy can use to trick those who are seeking Heaven to turn away from the narrow path, and be re-ensnared by the world.

2-26-2016

One of those snares, perhaps among the more interesting, is the thought, "I forgot." Now, I believe I did do a study on this specific one of the seven snares before; but interestingly, I feel led to remind our people about some of its finer points in this context of the growth of character. I want us to see that, if it is true that we are really developing character, and not just adopting a set of memorized words and actions, we need never fear falling short because of forgetfulness.

"Is it fair," some may ask, "to hold one accountable for something that he or she may not remember? Can we truly blame someone for forgetting? "After all, some are advanced in age. Some are burdened with many responsibilities. "All of us, no matter how gifted, have been affected to one degree or another by the legacy of over 6000 years of sin."

These are good questions, and we must have a reply. But before we give one, we must show the standard to which the people of Christ Yahshua are held. In the CSDA Baptismal Vow, we pledge before Heaven and earth that through the grace of Yah, and the blood of Yahshua, we have overcome both inherited and cultivated defects of character.

Whatever within us, whether genetically or by environment, would tend to sin, has been cleansed away by the Faith of Yahshua that heals and purifies. And we must know, we must understand, the significance of "defects of character."

It is the character that often casts an action as sinful or righteous, and we are told this many times. We read, for example:

"I, Yahweh, search the heart. I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings." (Jer. 17:10)

"With the pure Thou wilt shew Thyself pure; and with the froward Thou wilt shew Thyself unsavoury." (2Sam 22:27)

"Unto the pure all things are pure; but unto them that are defiled and unbelieving is nothing pure; but even their mind and conscience is defiled." (Titus 1:15)

Now, these verses, particularly the last of the three, has been misused over the years. Some have said, "If we are pure, anything we do will be considered right." Or, with a somewhat different and specific take, "If we are pure, there is no such thing as clean and unclean meats."

But these are different contexts entirely. The Bible does, in both Testaments, speak of "sin," therefore it is not that all things become righteous. But... what the pure do is righteous because righteous things are what the pure do. In other words, the actions

2-26-2016

follow the faith. Because we have been given the gift of the Faith of Yahshua, we have overcome sin. Because we have overcome sin, we commit to perfecting character... and when we perfect character, we overcome sin. It is a cycle of blessing.

To the point, we need to make a distinction between forgetting some detail, some word or action, and forgetting what sin and righteousness are. With regard to character, we must know this as a people – Character is a part of our souls, ourselves, our persons. When we truly learn a right principle, it becomes a part of who we are, and we must never fear to forget this, because it cannot be taken from us by age, or defect, or anything else.

In Yahshua, the Word was made flesh. It is the same with us. When we come to know a "word" from Yahweh, in us it is made flesh. In a receptive human heart, the Gospel becomes personality, and doctrine becomes character.

When we teach doctrine, when we instruct others in righteousness, it is theory. It is "outside" of us at that point; but when it is accepted, when it is believed and received in faith, then it becomes more than just an idea or set of words that one has memorized, and that is the key here. That is the true "growth" of that character, not just a temporary lift.

Learning about Yah is not about memorizing Bible verses or proper practices. It is about becoming a person like unto the Person of the Father and Son. It is about being healed not only of one's sins, but of the condition of "sin" that has rested on us for thousands of years, so that we are restored to the likeness of the divine image. This is not something that may be "forgotten" any more than one may forget to drink when thirsty, or to eat when hungry, or to breathe. These things are a part of us because we are human, and righteousness is just as much a part of us because we are children of Yah, through repentance, faith and baptism, and His Seed remains in us.

To "forget" some common detail is not sin. To "forget" a principle of righteousness, however, is a different matter, as this has to do with character. It reflects that the doctrine had not become part of one's person - that the character had not been allowed to grow into the new light that had been presented.

The snares of Satan were presented to us, so that we may teach others to avoid them, and to rejoice that we have overcome them through Christ. They are not there to cause anxiety, but rather to give us a foundation for thanksgiving. For we know, we shall never be found excusing sin by saying, "I forgot to be righteous," or "That is just the way I am," or any of the other snares.

In seeing these things have been left behind, we go on into perfection, knowing that the promises of Yah to us are "Yea," and "Amen." We have Sabbath rest when we place our

2-26-2016

destinies in the capable hands of our Father. We have freedom from the "works of the flesh," and from the fear that thereby resides in the hearts and minds of those not yet redeemed. That is really the message all of Yah's holy messengers have had for His people:

"Fear Not."

In the study of any principle, fear not. In examining the doctrines and principles of our Father, all given to us for our good, fear not. In confronting your own defects of character, fear not. In putting away mistakes of the past, to live for Yah today and always, fear not. In facing the judgment, and purifying ourselves of all sin so we may stand before the Throne of Mercy, fear not. In all these things, we are loved by One infinite in power, and compassion, and knowledge. This we must never forget. This we must let call to our mind the often repeated words of the Father, the Son, and their various agents: Fear not.

Are there any comments or questions about tonight's study?

**Pete:** Amen.

**Adriel:** Amen

**Kim:** Amen

**Pete:** C.

**Zahakiel:** Go ahead.

**Pete:** I think that in Christendom today when the message of truth is being presented to the people or individuals, it is fear that has caused them to run from the truth that is before them because if they accept the truth then there will be changes in their lives and they do not know how they will deal with those changes. They have relied upon self alone so to give that will over to Yahshua is not something they are willing to do because of fear. They do not want to lose control so they reject the offer of freedom from fear in Yahshua. End.

**Zahakiel:** I think that is very true, yes... and it is the giving up of that control that is really the death of "self." Are there any others with thoughts to share?

**Lucan:** C

**Zahakiel:** Go ahead.

**Lucan:** I often have been tempted with fear of failure in various ways. In my mind, the sensation is usually like walking on a tight rope, and someone pointing out how high you are. It occurred to me recently that if there is a temptation to a fear of falling, it means the person is NOT falling, or why the thought? So, when the temptation arises, I consider

2-26-2016

it a blessing. It's a reminder of how Yahweh is keeping me up on a very high tight rope, and little else. 😊 <End.>

**Pete:** Amen

**Adriel:** 😊

**Zahakiel:** Thank you for sharing that 😊

**Kim:** Amen

**Barb:** PC: C

**Zahakiel:** Go ahead.

**Barb:** PC: For me, John 17:3\* speaks volumes. When we know Them, we know who we are. When you really know who you are, the enemy has no power to tempt regarding your relationship to Yahweh. To the world and nominal Christianity this can appear arrogant, but being "very sure" of your connection and calling can be nothing less. <End>

\*And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Yahshua the Messiah, whom thou hast sent.

**Adriel:** Amen

**Pete:** Amen.

**Zahakiel:** Right. 😊 Any others?

**Elyna:** C

**Zahakiel:** Go ahead.

**Elyna:** Amen to all those testimonies. I think this is good and providence that you talk about that this week. I was reflecting upon that this week. The Spirit spoke the same thing through you here to confirm. Fear seems to be at the root of every sin, and when we remember that our Saviour overcame every fear, then we too have nothing to fear, because we walk in Christ's footsteps. I have a wider testimony but it will come in time, in the near future. END.

**Pete:** Amen.

**Zahakiel:** All right, if there are no others, then I will ask Bro. Luke to close with a prayer.

**Lucan:** Dear heavenly Father. We thank you for making us perfect in love, and casting out all fear. We are blessed as we have the opportunity to go out into the world, bringing this great news to those we encounter. We ask that your Spirit go with us and prepare the way, that we may find those few souls who recognize the infinite value of your Gift. In Yahshua's name we pray, amen.

2-26-2016

**Elyna:** Amen.

**Barb:** B: Amen D: Amen PC: Amen

**Adriel:** Amen

**Pete:** Amen. 😊

**Naraiel:** Amen.

**Zahakiel:** Amen.

**Kim:** amen

**Ruth:** Amen.