

The Most Precious Message

“Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).

“As you empty the heart of self you must accept the righteousness of Christ. Lay hold of it by faith; for you must have the mind and spirit of Christ, that you may work the works of Christ.”—*The Review and Herald*, February 23, 1892.

Suggested Reading: *Steps to Christ*, pp. 71–75.

1. The Gospel Repeated in Our Times

- a. What special truth was given over 100 years ago to prepare God's people for holiness? Where did it originate? John 17:17; 2 Thessalonians 5:23.
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“The Lord in His great mercy sent a most precious message to His people. . . . This message was to bring more prominently before the world the uplifted Saviour, the sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It presented justification through faith in the Surety; it invited the people to receive the righteousness of Christ, which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God. Many had lost sight of Jesus. They needed to have their eyes directed to His divine person, His merits, and His changeless love for the human family.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 91, 92.

“The present message—justification by faith—is a message from God; it bears the divine credentials, for its fruit is unto holiness.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 359.

- a. **John 17:17** (17) Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.
1 Thessalonians 5:23 (23) And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

1. The Gospel Repeated in Our Times

- b. What truth is essential for our time—and what was required that we might have hope? John 1:29; Romans 5:10; 8:34.
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b. John 1:29 (29) The next day John seeth Jesus coming unto him, and saith, Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Romans 5:10 (10) For if, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life.

Romans 8:34 (34) Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us.

2. The Need of Justification

- a. What truth should each of us individually take to heart—and in what perspective, especially in these last days? Matthew 1:21.
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“The third angel’s message calls for the presentation of the Sabbath of the fourth commandment, and this truth must be brought before the world; but the great center of attraction, Jesus Christ, must not be left out of the third angel’s message.”—*Selected Messages*, bk. 1, p. 383.

“Messages bearing the divine credentials have been sent to God’s people; the glory, the majesty, the righteousness of Christ, full of goodness and truth, have been presented; the fullness of the Godhead in Jesus Christ has been set forth among us with beauty and loveliness, to charm all whose hearts were not closed with prejudice.”—*The Review and Herald*, May 27, 1890.

“The sweetest melodies that come from God through human lips—justification by faith, and the righteousness of Christ—do not call forth from [many unrepentant church members] a response of love and gratitude. Though the heavenly Merchantman displays before them the richest jewels of faith and love, though He invites them to buy of Him ‘gold tried in the fire,’ and ‘white raiment’ that they may be clothed, and ‘eyesalve’ that they may see, they steel their hearts against Him and fail to exchange their lukewarmness for love and zeal. While making a profession, they deny the power of godliness. If they continue in this state, God will reject them. They are unfitting themselves to be members of His family.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 426, 427.

- a. **Matthew 1:21** (21) And she shall bring forth a son, and thou shalt call his name JESUS: for he shall save his people from their sins.

2. The Need of Justification

- b. What does it mean to welcome Jesus into our heart as a heavenly Guest? Revelation 3:20. What happened when the message of Christ's righteousness was brought before church leaders in 1888?
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“Some who greatly need the precious truth that was presented before them, we fear did not receive its benefit. They did not open the door of their hearts to welcome Jesus as a heavenly Guest, and they have suffered great loss. There is indeed a narrow way in which we must walk; the cross is presented at every step.”—*The Review and Herald*, September 3, 1889.

- b. **Revelation 3:20** (20) Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

3. Our Individual Need of the Gospel

- a. What evidence reveals that God will not allow me to depend on others for my salvation? Ezekiel 14:20.
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“Character is not transferable. No man can believe for another. No man can receive the Spirit for another. No man can impart to another the character which is the fruit of the Spirit’s working.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 412.

“Let everyone who loves God consider that now while it is day is the time to work. . . . Now is the time for the careless to arouse from their slumber. Now is the time to entreat that souls shall not only hear the word of God, but without delay secure oil in their vessels with their lamps. That oil is the righteousness of Christ. It represents character, and character is not transferable. No man can secure it for another. Each must obtain for himself a character purified from every stain of sin.”—*Testimonies to Ministers*, pp. 233, 234.

“It is impossible for one Christian to impart character to another soul.”—*That I May Know Him*, p. 215.

- a. **Ezekiel 14:20** (20) Though Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, as I live, saith the Lord GOD, they shall deliver neither son nor daughter; they shall but deliver their own souls by their righteousness.

3. Our Individual Need of the Gospel

- b. How do we know that Jesus wants us to serve God with our own individuality? Can we drink the “water of life” for another? Matthew 22:37; John 7:37.
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“No one can serve God by proxy. There are so many who seem to think that there is someone in this world stronger than Christ, upon whom they can lean. And instead of coming right to Christ, just as they are, giving themselves unreservedly to Him, they reach out for human help. God wants us to have an individual experience. . . . I cannot work out a character for you, and you cannot work out a character for me.”—*Our High Calling*, p. 90.

“The gospel deals with individuals. Every human being has a soul to save or to lose. Each has an individuality separate and distinct from all others. Each must be convicted for himself, converted for himself. He must receive the truth, repent, believe, and obey for himself. He must exercise his will for himself. No one can do this work by proxy. No one can submerge his individuality in another’s. Each must surrender to God by his own act and the mystery of godliness.”—*Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 2, p. 423.

- b. **Matthew 22:37** (37) Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.
John 7:37 (37) In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink.

4. Closing the Door to Jesus Equals Suicide

- a. What deception were our people warned about in 1893 when the majority believed they were ready for heaven? How is this self-deception repeated today—and might we be affected? Isaiah 58:2-8; Revelation 3:15.
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“It is a solemn statement that I make to the church, that not one in twenty whose names are registered upon the church books are prepared to close their earthly history, and would be as verily without God and without hope in the world as the common sinner. They are professedly serving God, but they are more earnestly serving mammon. This half-and-half work is a constant denying of Christ, rather than a confessing of Christ. So many have brought into the church their own unsubdued spirit, unrefined; their spiritual taste is perverted by their own immoral, debasing corruptions, symbolizing the world in spirit, in heart, in purpose, confirming themselves in lustful practices, and are full of deception through and through in their professed Christian life. Living as sinners, claiming to be Christians!”—*Christian Service*, p. 41.

a. **Isaiah 58:2-8** (2) Yet they seek me daily, and delight to know my ways, as a nation that did righteousness, and forsook not the ordinance of their God: they ask of me the ordinances of justice; they take delight in approaching to God. (3) Wherefore have we fasted, say they, and thou seest not? wherefore have we afflicted our soul, and thou takest no knowledge? Behold, in the day of your fast ye find pleasure, and exact all your labours. (4) Behold, ye fast for strife and debate, and to smite with the fist of wickedness: ye shall not fast as ye do this day, to make your voice to be heard on high. (5) Is it such a fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his soul? is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the LORD? (6) Is not this the fast that I have chosen? to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burdens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? (7) Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh? (8) Then shall thy light break forth as the morning, and thine health shall spring forth speedily: and thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the LORD shall be thy rereward.

Revelation 3:15 (15) I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

4. Closing the Door to Jesus Equals Suicide

- b. What will happen to anyone who would spoil heaven by his or her character if he or her were ever allowed to enter there? **Matthew 22:12-14.**
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“In this life many have not entered into fellowship with Christ; therefore they know not the language of heaven, they are strangers to its joy. . . .

“Saddest of all words that ever fell on mortal ear are those words of doom, ‘I know you not.’ The fellowship of the Spirit, which you have slighted, could alone make you one with the joyous throng at the marriage feast. In that scene you cannot participate. Its light would fall on blinded eyes, its melody upon deaf ears. Its love and joy could awake no chord of gladness in the world-benumbed heart. You are shut out from heaven by your own unfitness for its companionship.

“We cannot be ready to meet the Lord by waking when the cry is heard, ‘Behold, the Bridegroom!’ and then gathering up our empty lamps to have them replenished. We cannot keep Christ apart from our lives here, and yet be fitted for His companionship in heaven.”—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 413, 414.

- b. **Matthew 22:12-14** (12) And he saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. (13) Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. (14) For many are called, but few are chosen.

5. God's Final Message To the World

- a. How will the knowledge of salvation enlighten the whole world?
Revelation 18:1; 2 Peter 3:12.
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“When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.”—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 69.

- a. **Revelation 2:1** (1) Unto the angel of the church of Ephesus write; These things saith he that holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks;
- 2 Peter 3:12** (12) Looking for and hasting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat?

5. God's Final Message To the World

- b. Name some good works that Jesus bids us to use in shining His light on our world. Matthew 5:16; 25:34–40.
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“We are to give food to the hungry, clothing to the naked, and shelter to the homeless. And we are called to do more than this. The wants of the soul, only the love of Christ can satisfy. If Christ is abiding in us, our hearts will be full of divine sympathy. The sealed fountains of earnest, Christlike love will be unsealed.

“God calls not only for our gifts for the needy, but for our cheerful countenance, our hopeful words, our kindly handclasp. . . . There are many from whom hope has departed. Bring back the sunshine to them. Many have lost their courage. Speak to them words of cheer. Pray for them. There are those who need the bread of life. Read to them from the word of God. Upon many is a soul sickness which no earthly balm can reach nor physician heal. Pray for these souls, bring them to Jesus. Tell them that there is a balm in Gilead.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 417, 418.

b. **Matthew 5:16** (16) Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Matthew 25:34-40 (34) Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: (35) For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: (36) Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. (37) Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? (38) When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? (39) Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

(40) And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What vital message, given to God's people over 100 years ago, welcomes Jesus into our hearts as a heavenly Guest?
2. Why is this message crucial to the world at this time?
3. Can we reach Heaven just because our parents or friends love Jesus?
4. How may I be in danger of missing Heaven through self-deception?
5. Will I ever enter Heaven if my character does not belong there?