



The Practical Gospel: Part 1

RTOP 2013

The Lord has opened up opportunities for me to travel to many countries to do missionary work. I am appreciative to God for granting me this privilege. I am nothing and I came from a very bad background and it makes me wonder why God would use someone like me. It has been a blessing and I have been really enjoying preaching Present Truth and about our foundations and our message in Adventism and what is happening in the Most Holy Place right now since 9-11. I really enjoy sharing these truths with people throughout the world.

But the more I travel and the more I interact with people, I am seeing more and more the same problem. No matter where I go, no matter what culture, what tongue, what race, no matter what people, I am seeing a starvation for how the Gospel works in practical life. It is causing me concern, the more I am in this message, the more I preach on these things, the more I am seeing a lack of practical Christianity in people's homes, people's lives, interactions with others. It seems like for a lot of us, the things we believe is all theory. It's a theory in our minds; in other words, a lot of us have come to a point where we can prove our positions from the Bible and Spirit of Prophecy point by point, and yet it is almost like talking about a mathematical equation rather than actually affecting the inner life, inner heart.

I am seeing this everywhere; so it is becoming much more of a concern in my mind and causing me to realize how it is important to me personally, and for my own personal family to have this overcoming Christian experience that we might truly be Christians in our hearts. A lot of people come to hear different prophetic truths, but I want to shift gears today and begin to read different quotes and talk about the practical Gospel and how we are to live as Christians.

Paul the great theologian who sat at the feet of the revered Gamaliel was a genius; we are told in the Spirit of Prophecy that he was a former member of the Sanhedrin; he was an excellent scholar; he knew several different languages; yet when he was converted he said this:

1 Corinthians 2:1 "And I, brethren, when I came to you, came not with excellency of speech or of wisdom, declaring unto you the testimony of God. 2 For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified. 3 And I was with you in weakness, and in fear, and in much trembling. 4 And my speech and my preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: 5 That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God."

The more I travel I find it is easy for us, and I include myself in all of this, what I am talking about today is something for every one of us. If anyone gets convicted or offended, take that up with the Holy Spirit Who convicts of sin, righteousness and judgment. Sometimes it seems that whatever we believe, we tend to put ourselves in little boxes, and we become very impractical in how to reach out to the saving of other souls. We tend to choose our little cliques and choose to only be around those who believe exactly like us. We tend to put ourselves in a box and have very little association with others that tend to not be like us; and especially to have no association with those who don't know Jesus at all.

Now I am not saying that we should associate and fellowship, just doing anything that the heathen do; but at the same time as a missionary I have to ask myself a question, and the question I have to ask myself more and more, the longer I live and the more I travel, is, "How will I introduce Christ to souls that are lost?" The more I travel and the more I deal with people, the more it is coming to my mind that, yes, I believe all these different truths and praise the Lord—God has obviously given them to us, but how do I introduce people to the basic essentials of the Gospel so that they can grow spiritually? And how do I do that also for people who do have a lot of head knowledge, but do not have the experience translated into their personal hearts and lives?

I am becoming more and more convinced that the ultimate question that we have to ask ourselves, and others are asking, is found in the book of Acts; because if this question is not asked, then it really doesn't matter what else you believe. Some people will use extreme thinking and say I am trying to deemphasize prophetic truth, but what I am saying is that the ultimate question to ask ourselves is found in Acts 16:30.

This is the famous story of Paul and Silas being thrown in prison. They were at Philippi and they cast out the demons from the slave girl and the owners got angry and had them beaten and cast them into the dungeon in the stocks. Then Paul and Silas began singing praises to God and the Lord shook the prison. When the prison shook, the chains fell off—there's a whole bunch of sermons right there in that story as well of the power of praise and prayer—but the point is that as the shackles fell off, the prisoners all stayed there, they did not escape. Then the jailer came in trembling and was going to kill himself because the death penalty back there in Rome was if you allowed a prisoner to escape you had to pay with your life. As he was about to kill himself, Paul cried, "No, no! Don't do that!" and the Jailer came trembling and the Bible says:

Acts 16:29 "Then he called for a light, and sprang in, and came trembling, and fell down before Paul and Silas, 30 And brought them out, and said, . . .

"Sirs, what must I do to understand the prophecies and the charts?" now some of you are going to say I am denying the prophecies and the charts—No, No! I teach this stuff; we have them all hanging up! But what I am saying here is that this is not the ultimate foundational question—you have to have a foundation first before you build on it. And the ultimate foundational question is:

. . .**"Sirs, what must I do to be saved?"** 31 And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house."

The more I look at justification by faith the more it convicts me individually that all the head knowledge that I have does me no earthly good unless it translates down into a personal experience in my own life. I am not denying a need for intellectual information, but what I am saying is, theory alone does not save.

"The rabbis counted their righteousness a passport to heaven; but Jesus declared it to be insufficient and unworthy. External ceremonies and a theoretical knowledge of truth constituted Pharisaical righteousness. The rabbis claimed to be holy through their own efforts in keeping the law; but their works had divorced righteousness from religion. While they were punctilious in

ritual observances, their lives were immoral and debased. Their so-called righteousness could never enter the kingdom of heaven.” DA 309.

Now we all recognize that Sister White spoke the English language and even though she only had a third grade education, her books are some of the greatest scholarly writings; she is the most translated woman in American history, up there with Earnest Hemingway and such. She has a command of the English language; therefore, when we look at these writings and she says, “The Greatest”, that means there is nothing greater.

“The greatest deception of the human mind in Christ's day was that a mere assent to the truth constitutes righteousness. . .

Just merely believing something is somehow going to save me, make me righteous and somehow separate me as special to God. This is a deception. Now it goes on, “In all human experience. . .” that means from the time of Adam, all the way down until at least the time she is writing this book. . .

“In all human experience a theoretical knowledge of the truth has been proved to be insufficient for the saving of the soul. It does not bring forth the fruits of righteousness. A jealous regard for what is termed theological truth often accompanies a hatred of genuine truth as made manifest in life. . .

What part of the human experience does theological truth affect? It affects the mind, the knowledge. So often times those of us who are jealous, this includes all of us, what we often times guard as theological truth often accompanies hating genuine truth. So there is a difference between theoretical truth and genuine truth? Can theoretical truth become genuine truth? Yes—but you can have theoretical truth apart from genuine truth, because you can have a hatred for genuine truth while professing to have theoretical truth.

You can have head knowledge and hate the heart knowledge. Therefore while turning ourselves to be jealous in what we regard as truth doctrinally, we can then hate genuine truth that is made manifest in people’s lives. Why did they hate Jesus? Was it because He preached lots of theoretical truth? He did preach theoretical truth; but they hated Him because of His life.

Remember how the Sanhedrin sent the Roman Guard to arrest Jesus in the temple and they came away empty handed? The leaders got very angry and said, “How come you did not arrest Him?” they replied, “Never man spake as this Man spake.” Sister White adds a thought to that, she says, “Because never a man lived as this Man lived.” They hated Christ because He lived out the truth that He believed.

“The darkest chapters of history are burdened with the record of crimes committed by bigoted religionists. The Pharisees claimed to be children of Abraham, and boasted of their possession of the oracles of God; yet these advantages did not preserve them from selfishness, malignity, greed for gain, and the basest hypocrisy. They thought themselves the greatest religionists of the world, but their so-called orthodoxy led them to crucify the Lord of glory.” DA 309.

Is this sermon for the Pharisees back then or for all of us today? What I am trying to get across to our brains today is that we, as Seventh-day Adventists are in the same danger.

“The same danger still exists. Many take it for granted that they are Christians, simply because they subscribe to certain theological tenets. **But they have not brought the truth into practical life.** They have not believed and loved it, therefore they have not received the power and grace that come through sanctification of the truth. **Men may profess faith in the truth; but if it does not make them sincere, kind, patient, forbearing, heavenly-minded, it is a curse to its possessors, and through their influence it is a curse to the world.** DA 309.

Practical is related to practice—something you actually practice in your everyday experience. If the truth we believe does not produce these fruit of the Spirit in our lives, then the truth that we have, becomes a curse. Let's repeat this:

“Men may profess faith in the truth; but if it does not make them sincere, kind, patient, forbearing, heavenly-minded, it is a curse to its possessors, and through their influence it is a curse to the world.”

That is a very solemn quotation! We are not playing church here; when you come out of the world there is no reason to play, you might as well be sincere or go back into the world and play. In church we have opportunity to be honest and discuss Biblical things. A lot of time when you are in church or reading something, you are thinking, “I sure hope so and so is hearing that! That sounds just like so and so!” Every one of us is in danger of being hypocritical Pharisees.

What is the Practical Gospel? Some folk come in here and say, “How come we are not hearing about the 2520 today? How come we are not hearing about the Daily and the 1335; or the Papacy and the 1260?” Notice what the pen of inspiration says:

“Teach How to Become Christians.--I wish you to distinctly understand this point, that souls are kept from obeying the truth by a confusion of ideas, and also **because they do not know how to surrender their wills and their minds to Jesus.** . .

She's talking to the evangelists, the ministers that are trained to preach doctrine. She is saying there are two dangers: one is a confusion of ideas—errors mixing in with truth; and the second one is, simply not understanding how to surrender their wills to Jesus.

“They [the people] want special instruction how to become Christians. The work done for Christ in the world is not made of great deeds and wonderful achievements. These will come in as needed. But the most successful work is that which keeps self as much as possible out of sight. It is the work of giving line upon line and precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; coming close in sympathy with human hearts. This is the service done to Jesus Christ that will be recognized at the last day.” --Letter 48, 1886. Ev 152.

Here in this discourse I want to talk about the special instructions regarding ***how to give our hearts to Jesus***. We do not know one another's hearts; but we do know she is inspired and she says that there are people in our congregations that are wanting special instruction on how to become Christians. They want to know, “How do I surrender my will to Jesus?”

“Sabbath Sermons for Visitors.--When learned men, statesmen, and so-called honorable men are present in a place of worship, the minister thinks he must give them an intellectual treat; but in attempting to do this he loses a precious opportunity of teaching the very lessons that were presented by the greatest Teacher the world ever knew. All the congregations in our land need to learn more of Christ and Him crucified. A religious experience that is not founded in Christ and Him alone is worthless. These men of intellectual powers need a clear, Scriptural presentation of the plan of salvation. Let the truth, in its simplicity and power, be presented to them. If this does not hold the attention and arouse the interest, they never can be interested in heavenly and divine things. . .

This is a very solemn issue! We have all these charts that are really interesting in all the details, but how often do we focus on the center—the Cross of Christ? How often do we spend that one thoughtful hour a day contemplating the Life of Jesus, that we might become more deeply imbued with His Spirit and love people? Or are we intellectual Pharisees?

“In every congregation there are souls who are unsatisfied. Every Sabbath they want to hear something definite explaining how they can be saved, how they are to become Christians. The important thing for them to know is, How can a sinner be presented before God? Let the way of salvation be presented before them in simplicity, just as plainly as you would speak to a little child. Lift up Jesus as the sinner's only hope.”--Manuscript 4, 1893. Ev 350.

In every congregation; in every church service; in every camp meeting; in every prophecy school; in every seminar; there are people simply wanting to know, “How do I give my life to Jesus Christ?”

I have heard many people over and over again say, “I can’t understand these truths, they just go right over my head,” because it is not practical. The second question I get a lot is, “How does this stuff apply to my personal life? Why is it important? It seems like a big mathematical equation.”

Revelation 14:12 “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.”

“We have been at work on the law until we get as dry as the hills of Gilboa, without dew or rain. Let us trust in the merits of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. May God help us that our eyes may be anointed with eyesalve, that we may see. God helping us, we will draw nigh to Him, and He says he will draw nigh to us. Do we believe? Will we come in God's appointed way? May the Lord help us and enlighten us, that we may go forth from this place as they went forth to proclaim the truth after the day of Pentecost; and there were souls converted; they could not resist the testimony.” (MR 900.17) 1SAT 137.

We don’t tend to emphasize how we can as sinners, be saved by the Blood of Christ; we emphasize the commandments, the law, and doctrine--prophecy. We don’t emphasize how to surrender your will to Christ. We are told that the Sealing, is a settling into truth both intellectually *and* spiritually that we might not be moved. It is a two-fold work; mind and heart.

The Danger of Theory Alone

“Theoretical discourses are essential, that all may know the form of doctrine, and see the chain of truth, link after link, uniting in a perfect whole. But no discourse should ever be delivered without presenting Christ and him crucified as the foundation of the gospel, making a practical application of the truths set forth, and impressing upon the people the fact that the doctrine of Christ is not yea and nay, but yea and amen in Christ Jesus.”

This is how Christ taught the people; the Bible is full of the parables where Christ took the truths of the Gospel and applied them practically to their everyday life.

“After the theory of truth has been presented, then comes the laborious part of the work. The people should not be left without instruction in the practical truths which relate to their everyday life. They must see and feel that they are sinners, and need to be converted to God. What Christ said, what he did, and what he taught, should be brought before them in the most impressive manner.”

John the Baptist is a type of the Elijah message for our day; he did not just preach theoretical truth.

Luke 3:4 “As it is written in the book of the words of Esaias the prophet, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be brought low; and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways shall be made smooth; . .

7 Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be baptized of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8 Bring forth therefore fruits worthy of repentance, and begin not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, That God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham. 9 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: every tree therefore which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. 10 And the people asked him, saying, What shall we do then?"

Basically they are asking the fundamental question; "What must I do to be saved?" because he just threatened them that the axe is going to cut them down and they be thrown into the fire.

11 "He answereth and saith unto them, He that hath two coats, let him impart to him that hath none; and he that hath meat, let him do likewise."

That is the strangest answer that many of us have ever heard to the question, "What must I do to be saved?" In Acts 16 Paul and Silas said, "Believe on Jesus and you will be saved". This is going to the practical application of what it means to be a Christian. He bypassed the answer and went right to the heart of the people who were being selfish. Same thing that Jesus did with the rich young ruler—"Lord what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus bypassed all the theology and went right to the heart of the problem that he had.

Luke 3:12 "Then came also publicans to be baptized, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? 13 And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. 14 And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages."

This is the 'Elijah' which was for to come to prepare the way of the Lord, for Jesus Christ, and the message was based on practical godliness; practical Christianity.

I don't care what you profess, but if you do not know how to be kind to your children, and to be kind to your spouse, and be kind to your neighbor, and be kind to someone you don't see eye to eye with—the theory is all in vain! We don't need to be carbon copies of one another, but we should be treating each other with courtesy, respectfully and lovingly.

"The people should not be left without instruction in the practical truths which relate to their every-day life. They must see and feel that they are sinners, and need to be converted to God. What Christ said, what he did, and what he taught, should be brought before them in the most impressive manner."

"The work of the minister is only begun when the truth is opened to the understanding of the people. Christ is our mediator and officiating high priest in the presence of the Father. He was shown to John as a lamb that had been slain, as in the very act of pouring out his blood in the sinner's behalf. When the law of God is set before the sinner, showing him the depth of his sins, he should then be pointed to the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. He should be taught repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ. Thus will the labor of Christ's representative be in harmony with the Saviour's work in the heavenly sanctuary."

I teach and believe that the investigative judgment of the living began on 9-11-2001 because of the Third Woe coming into Bible Prophecy; and yet, while teaching that theory are we leading people to Christ, the bleeding Lamb, and the officiating High Priest in the Heavenly Sanctuary? If we are not, we are causing people to go to hell and burn longer, because now they have more light that they are going to burn for, because it did not become practical in their life.

We people of prophecy have the most exalted truths ever given to man; I am not ashamed of what we believe. God has given us the unsealing of the Book; we are looking at the most exalted light and privileges humanity has ever had in this earth's history; and yet when we go to prophecy schools it is all theory. If all we are learning is theory and it does not translate into practical ways to be a self-supporting missionary to win souls and how to be a Christian, it does not matter what you believe.

“Ministers would reach many more hearts if they would dwell more upon practical godliness. Frequently, when efforts are made to introduce the truth into new fields, the labor is almost entirely theoretical. The people are unsettled. They see the force of truth, and are anxious to obtain a sure foundation. When their feelings are softened, is the time, above all others, to urge the religion of Christ home upon the conscience; but too often the course of lectures has been allowed to close without that work being done for the people which they needed. That effort was too much like the offering of Cain; it had not the sacrificial blood to make it acceptable to God. Cain was right in making an offering, but he left out all that made it of any value—the blood of the atonement. .

So in preaching prophecy, if we leave out the blood of the atonement, we are offering up the sacrifice of Cain. This is a very solemn issue!

We want to ask ourselves:

1. What are the essential truths of the Gospel?
2. How do I experience the Practical Truth of the Gospel? How can I surrender my will to Christ?
3. How can I continue to grow spiritually? How do I live the Christian life?
4. How do I witness to my family; my neighbors? How do I reach souls?

What are the essential truths of the Gospel?

“It is a sad fact that the reason why many dwell so much on theory and so little on practical godliness, is that Christ is not abiding in their own hearts . . .

If all we preach is theoretical truth, and so little on practical godliness, it is because we are not having that experience. You can only preach about what you are doing; if you are not doing it then when you preach it has no power to it.

Here is an example; a sister I know is a very sincere Christian; she is unmarried and has no children. She is a missionary. She came to our house several years ago, she was a medical missionary and was just in the area. She did not have a lot of direction in her life, just seeing if she could work in this or that ministry. She came to our home and we invited her to stay the weekend. As we were talking, we had our children down to sleep. This sister was talking and then she began to lecture us on child raising. This was not sharing thoughts, this was actually lecturing us on child raising and this sister is single and has no children. We are listening to her and she is telling us how to raise our children correctly and my wife and I looked at each other across the room and exchanged a glance. We just sat there and were listening and I waited politely until she got to kind of a stopping point.

Now this is a sister, in my home, telling me how to run my family. So when she got done, I said very courteously and nicely, “You know it is interesting that the people that tend to have the most advise on child raising and marriage are the ones that are single and without children.” She got the hint and became very quiet. I changed the subject and we went back into having a pleasant evening, but she decided the Lord had told her to leave the next morning; she had somewhere else to go. We are still friends by the way; but the point is, it is interesting how those with the least practical experience become the greatest specialists on your life.

I don't know you; I have never been in your home; I don't know the dynamics of your marriage; have no clue what is going on in your life but I am going to tell you to do what I myself am not practicing. The greatest missionary effort is living it yourself and being a shining witness and example to other people. The method of Christ alone is the only thing that can bring true success.

"It is a sad fact that the reason why many dwell so much on theory and so little on practical godliness, is that Christ is not abiding in their own hearts. They do not have a living connection with God. Many souls decide in favor of the truth, from the weight of evidence, without being converted. Practical discourses were not given in connection with the doctrinal, that, as the hearers should see the beautiful chain of truth, they might fall in love with its Author, and be sanctified through obedience. The minister's work is not done until he has urged home upon his hearers the necessity of a change of character in accordance with the pure principles of the truth which they have received." GW92 12-14.

The following refers to the issue of studying Prophecy and Revelation: it is important to study the Gospel of Revelation. The book of Revelation is actually called the Gospel; rather than having only four gospels, we actually have five.

"Our lesson for the present time is, How may we most clearly comprehend and present the gospel that Christ came in person to present to John on the isle of Patmos--the gospel that is termed "the Revelation of Jesus Christ"? We are to present to our people a clear explanation of Revelation. We are to give them the Word of God just as it is, with as few of our own explanations as possible. No one mind can do this work alone. Although we have in trust the grandest and most important truth ever presented to the world, we are only babes, as far as understanding truth in all its bearings is concerned. Christ is the great Teacher, and that which He revealed to John, we are to tax our minds to understand and clearly to define. We are facing the most important issues that men have ever been called upon to meet. The theme of greatest importance is the third angel's message, embracing the messages of the first and second angels. **All should understand the truths contained in these messages and demonstrate them in daily life, for this is essential to salvation.** We shall have to study earnestly, prayerfully, in order to understand these grand truths; and our power to learn and comprehend will be taxed to the utmost." 12MR 212.

"Paul wrote again, "It is a faithful saying: For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him: if we suffer, we shall also reign with Him: if we deny Him, He also will deny us: if we believe not, yet He abideth faithful: He cannot deny Himself. Of these things put them in remembrance, charging them before the Lord that they strive not about words to no profit, but to the subverting of the hearers." [2 Timothy 2:11-14.]

"Some who in Paul's day listened to the truth, raised questions of no vital importance, presenting the ideas and opinions of men, and seeking to divert the mind of the teacher from the great truths of the gospel, to the discussion of non-essential theories and the settlement of unimportant disputes. [We all need to be careful of this!] Paul knew that the laborer for God **must be wise enough to see the design of the enemy, and refuse to be misled or diverted.** The conversion of souls must be the burden of his work; he must preach the word of God, but avoid controversy.

"Study to show thyself approved unto God," he wrote, "a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of truth. But shun profane and vain babblings: for they will increase unto more ungodliness." [2 Timothy 2:15, 16.] GW 311, 312.

“The ministers of Christ today are in the same danger. Satan is constantly at work to divert the mind into wrong channels, so that the truth may lose its force upon the heart. And unless ministers and people practice the truth and are sanctified by it, **they will allow speculation regarding questions of no vital importance to occupy the mind.** This will lead to caviling and strife; for countless points of difference will arise.

“Men of ability have devoted a lifetime of study and prayer to the searching of the Scriptures, and yet there are many portions of the Bible that have not been fully explored. **Some passages of Scripture will never be perfectly comprehended until in the future life Christ shall explain them.** There are mysteries to be unraveled, statements that human minds cannot harmonize. And the enemy will seek to arouse argument upon these points, which might better remain undiscussed.

“A devoted, spiritual worker will avoid bringing up minor theoretical differences, and will devote his energies to the proclamation of the great testing truths to be given to the world. **He will point the people to the work of redemption, the commandments of God, the near coming of Christ; and it will be found that in these subjects there is food enough for thought.**

“In time past there have been presented to me for my opinion many non-essential, fanciful theories. Some have advocated the theory that believers should pray with their eyes open. Others teach that, because those who ministered anciently in sacred office were required, upon entering the sanctuary, to remove their sandals and wash their feet, believers now should remove their shoes when entering the house of worship. Still others refer to the sixth commandment, and declare that even the insects that torment human beings should not be killed. And some have put forth the theory that the redeemed will not have gray hair--as if this were a matter of any importance. . .

The point is the devil is constantly trying to bring up subjects to confuse the mind and unsettle the faith of souls.

“I am instructed to say that these theories are the production of minds unlearned in the first principles of the gospel. By such theories the enemy strives to eclipse the great truths for this time.

“Those who in their preaching pass by the great truths of God's word to speak of minor matters, are not preaching the gospel, but are dealing in idle sophistry. Let not our ministers spend time in the discussion of such matters. Let those who have any question as to what they should teach, any question as to the subjects upon which they should dwell, go to the discourses of the great Teacher, and follow His lines of thought. **The subjects that Jesus regarded as essential are the subjects that we are to urge home today.** We are to encourage our hearers to dwell upon those subjects which are of eternal moment. GW 312, 313.

“When at one time a brother came to me with the message that the world is flat, I was instructed to present the commission that Christ gave His disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations: . . . and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end." [Matthew 28:19, 20.] In regard to such subjects as the flat-world theory, God says to every soul, "What is that to thee? follow thou Me. I have given you your commission. Dwell upon the great testing truths for this time, not upon matters that have no bearing upon our work." GW 314.

This is dealing with all of us here; in traveling around I get this a lot—especially in other countries—but I find it very interesting when this debate about the flat world came up with Ellen White she was commissioned to tell them “Go to the world and preach the Gospel.”

I am sharing some things that have been impressed on my mind over the last several months. A lot of times when we first become Christians we get on fire for what we call ‘Present Truth’; we get on fire

about every reform; we get on fire about all the different prophecies; and that becomes our religion—our theoretical truth. I am not denying we need reform; I am not denying that we are to continue to walk in the light of reform and truth. However, often times we tend to make that the religion without learning how to practically apply it to [ourselves or] another human soul.

Notice in her account above, that she did not say this—she was instructed to tell this man something. I believe the reason that she was told to tell this man that was off on the flat-world theory to go and preach the Gospel is because you find out what is actually the truth to go to the world when you actually try to share it with the world. There is a lot of heresy in Adventism now—and this heresy can be stopped if these people with these theories were to go out and try to share them with the world.

[Note that this is also the reason why she told WW Prescott when he was all caught up with changing truth into error, to go and evangelize the cities! IF he would have done that, it would have brought his mind back to the basics of the Gospel and it would have been the saving of him!]

One of the greatest heresies out there that I meet time after time is dealing about the statutes and judgments regarding the Feast Days. People love to tie that in with the statutes and judgments of Moses and the Elijah message. They love to tie in Feast Days and the Sacred Name—which means you can't say the name of 'Jesus' and you can't say the word 'God' because it is Pagan. All we have to reply is to tell them to go and preach unto the world because you will find whether or not that is the topic of the Gospel if you try to share that with the world.

The reason that people get off on these tangents like Feast Days—and many souls are being destroyed by this—but the reason is, they do not have a practical experience in outreach. If you try to share some of these theories with the world, you will find out all of a sudden it becomes impractical. Try and go and preach to the world that you can't say the name of Jesus.

“When at one time a brother came to me with the message that the world is flat, I was instructed to present the commission that Christ gave His disciples, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations: . . . and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end." [Matthew 28:19, 20.] In regard to such subjects as the flat-world theory, God says to every soul, "What is that to thee? follow thou Me. I have given you your commission. Dwell upon the great testing truths for this time, not upon matters that have no bearing upon our work." GW 314.

What are the Great testing truths? The Law of God—in 1844 at the close of the 2520, God gathered a covenant keeping people; which means that He had to restore the Law of God which had been broken. In 1844 the covenant that was reestablished was the Sabbath. The Commandments of God, the Faith of Jesus, in the context of the First, Second and Third Angels' messages are the great testing truths to be given to the world because it opens up to view the heavenly sanctuary and the closing work of our High Priest, Jesus Christ and the blotting out of sin with His blood—the great Atonement.

The Great Testing Truths are the blood work of the atonement in the Heavenly Sanctuary in the closing work of the Third Angel's Message; especially when the Sabbath truth will be in conflict with the Sunday Law. This is the final issue, and the devil would love to get up inside of us and get us off on different theories because that is a fruit of not having a practical experience of trying to teach people the basic testing truths!

“Workers for God should not spend time speculating as to what conditions will prevail in the new earth. It is presumption to indulge in suppositions and theories regarding matters that the Lord has not revealed. He has made every provision for our happiness in the future life, and we are not to speculate regarding His plans for us. Neither are we to measure the conditions of the future life by the conditions of this life.

“To my ministering brethren I would say, Preach the word. Do not bring to the foundation wood, hay, and stubble,—your own surmisings and speculations, which can benefit no one. Subjects of vital importance are revealed in the word of God, and these are worthy of our deepest thought. But we are not to search into matters on which God has been silent.

“When questions arise upon which we are uncertain, let us ask, What saith the Scripture? And if the Scripture is silent upon the question at issue, let it not be made the subject of discussion. **Let those who wish for something new, seek for that newness of life resulting from the new birth.** Let them purify their souls by obeying the truth, and act in harmony with the instruction that Christ has given.

“The only question asked in the judgment will be, "Have they been obedient to My commandments?" Petty strife and contention over questions of no importance has no part in God's great plan. Those who teach the truth should be men of solid minds, who will not lead their hearers into a field of thistles, as it were, and leave them there.

“The sacrifice of Christ as an atonement for sin is the great truth around which all other truths cluster. In order to be rightly understood and appreciated, every truth in the word of God, from Genesis to Revelation, must be studied in the light that streams from the cross of Calvary. I present before you the great, grand monument of mercy and regeneration, salvation and redemption,—the Son of God uplifted on the cross. This is to be the foundation of every discourse given by our ministers.” GW 314, 315.

The central truth of the Gospel is the Great Atonement. We are also warned to avoid discussing things of which we are unclear. If all of us were to discuss and debate our various theories we would have the longest running argument in human history—we would argue until Jesus comes and we'd all be lost and destroyed!

Point 2: How do I experience the Practical Truth of the Gospel? How can I surrender my will to Christ?

In the start of this study we learned that there are many people in the congregation that are asking that very question—“How do I actually give my life to Christ?” but unless you know how to do it yourself, you cannot tell someone else how to do it.

I started out as a Bible worker, giving Bible studies and I have had many experiences where someone would answer the door and they were drinking or they were having family problems going on—fights—and they ask this question, “How do I do it? How do I actually give my life to Christ?” A lot of times we just answer people —“Give your heart to Jesus.” If you have a problem—easy—give your heart to Jesus. It is not wrong to tell someone to give their hearts to Jesus, but you need to tell them how to do it! Otherwise it is only a theory.

“Many are inquiring, "**How** am I to make the surrender of myself to God?" You desire to give yourself to Him, but you are **weak in moral power**, in **slavery to doubt**, and **controlled by the habits of your life of sin**. Your promises and resolutions are like ropes of sand. [How could you climb up a rope of sand? Impossible!] You cannot control your thoughts, your impulses, your affections. The knowledge of your broken promises and forfeited pledges weakens your confidence in your own sincerity, and causes you to feel that God cannot accept you; but you need not despair. . .

I have had the experience that I would keep stumbling and falling into a particular sin. I would say, “Lord, maybe I should not even ask forgiveness anymore.”

“What you need to understand is the true force of the will. This [the will, the power of choice] is the governing power in the nature of man, the power of decision, or of choice. Everything depends on the right action of the will. The power of choice God has given to men; it is theirs to exercise. You cannot change your heart, you cannot of yourself give to God its affections; but you can choose to serve Him. You can give Him your will; He will then work in you to will and to do according to His good pleasure. Thus your whole nature will be brought under the control of the Spirit of Christ; your affections will be centered upon Him, your thoughts will be in harmony with Him.”

“Desires for goodness and holiness are right as far as they go; but if you stop here, they will avail nothing. Many will be lost while hoping and desiring to be Christians. ***They do not come to the point of yielding the will to God.*** They do not now choose to be Christians.

“Through the right exercise of the will, an entire change may be made in your life. By yielding up your will to Christ, you ally yourself with the power that is above all principalities and powers. You will have strength from above to hold you steadfast, and thus through constant surrender to God you will be enabled to live the new life, even the life of faith.” SC 47, 48.

But there is still the question, “How?” Have you ever had the experience that you read the Bible or the Spirit of Prophecy and you agree with it but you have no clue how to apply it? “I agree with all these principles, Lord, but how do you do it? I wasn’t raised in a Christian home—how do you do it?” I have had to get on my knees and pray, “Lord I am frustrated—not at You because You love me and give me counsel, but I have no idea how to practically apply this!”

Continued in Part 2: