

FREEDOM FROM FEAR OF THE JUDGMENT!

by Herb Montgomery
Director | Speaker



Now, little children, abide in Him, so that when He appears, we may have confidence and not shrink away from Him in shame at His coming.—1 John 2:28

Last month, I had the chance to interact with a young man who was quite distraught. He had heard so much about faith—about God's mercy, love, and grace—but it had made no difference to him in a practical way. His fear, or rather his lack of assurance, was still

rooted and grounded. His statement to me was, "Yes, all that is fine and good, but I'm still going to be judged by my works."

I immediately understood his dilemma. And, yes, you cannot deny the plain, clear teaching of the scriptures that "we will all stand before the judgment seat of God" (Romans 14:10). And, yes, Paul is clear: "Each one of us will give an account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12). And, yes, "We must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may be recompensed for his deeds in the body, according to what he has done, whether good or bad" (2 Corinthians 5:10).

My friend was also quick to quote this well-known statement: "The condition of eternal life is now just what it always has been—just what it was in Paradise before the fall of our first parents—perfect obedience to the law of God, perfect righteousness. If eternal life were granted on any condition short of this, then the happiness of the whole universe would be imperiled. The way would be open for sin, with all its train of woe and misery, to be immortalized" (Ellen White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 62).

Where my new friend failed was in the fact that he did not continue reading on to the next paragraph, which states, "It was possible for Adam, before the fall, to form a righteous character by obedience to God's law. But he failed to do this, and because of his sin our natures are fallen and we cannot make ourselves righteous. Since we are sinful, unholy, we cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness of our own with which to meet the claims of the law of God. But Christ has made a way of escape for us. He lived on earth amid trials and temptations such as we have to meet. He lived a sinless life. He died for us, and now He offers to take our sins and give us His righteousness. If you give yourself to Him, and accept Him as your Savior, then, sinful as your life may have been, for His sake you are accounted righteous. Christ's character stands in place of your character, and you are accepted before God just as if you had not sinned" (White, p. 62, emphasis added).

Did you catch that? Yes, the judgment is based on works, but whose works would you rather be standing in, yours or Christ's? It is not your own righteousness that saves you, but the righteousness of Christ which saves you both now and in the judgment. This is exactly why eternal

life is a free gift given to all. Jesus has given His righteousness, the condition of eternal life, to all.

Jeremiah is clear:

"In His days Judah will be saved, And Israel will dwell securely; And this is His name by which He will be called, 'The LORD our righteousness'" (Jeremiah 23:6).

"In those days Judah will be saved and Jerusalem will dwell in safety; and this is the name by which she will be called: the LORD is our righteousness" (Jeremiah 33:16).

Paul unequivocally states, "We shall be saved by His life" (Romans 5:10). Not by our own. On that day, whose life would you rather answer for—the one you've lived or the life that Jesus lived and has given to every man, woman, and child as a gift? There is not the slightest reason why each and every person should not pass through the judgment with all hope and joy, save the single fact that they themselves would not have it that way. Christ's "works" have been given to all, but whether or not a person receives them as his or her own is another question.

Be at peace, my friend, you've learned the fear of God, now learn to love Him. Begin to see yourself not as you are, in and of yourself, but according to what you are in Christ. This is His gift to you.

"By this, love is perfected with us, so that we may have confidence in the day of judgment; because as He is, so also are we in this world. There is no fear in love; but perfect love casts out fear, because fear involves punishment, and the one who fears is not perfected in love. We love, because He first loved us" (1 John 4:17-19). †

Thoughts to Ponder—

"The words of God are the wellsprings of life. As you seek unto those living springs, you will, through the Holy Spirit, be brought into communion with Christ. Familiar truths will present themselves to your mind in a new aspect, texts of Scripture will burst upon you with a new meaning as a flash of light, you will see the relation of other truths to the work of redemption, and you will know that Christ is leading you, that a divine Teacher is at your side."

(Ellen White, *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, p. 21)

MINISTRY UPDATE

Sounds of Rain

Sunset Oaks Seventh-day Adventist Church – Rocklin, CA

Give ear, O heavens, and let me speak; and let the earth hear the words of my mouth. Let my teaching drop as the rain, My speech distill as the dew, as the droplets on the fresh grass, and as the showers on the herb.—Deuteronomy 32:1-2, NASB

Twelve months of planning, over three hundred decisions for Jesus, one weekend in March.

In the scriptures, God's extravagant love and grace is again and again represented as showers of rain that God desperately desires to pour over the thirsty ground of our hearts. And this is exactly what took place this past March at the annual youth revival hosted by Sunset Oaks Seventh-day Adventist Church and conducted in partnership with Renewed Heart Ministries.

It is truly amazing to watch the adult congregation "give up" the use of their entire facility for one whole weekend, once a year, to be used entirely by and for the purpose of reaching our young people. It's a weekend during which young people can feel safe. They're not going to be judged on their differences. The burden is simply that they experience a deeper encounter with Jesus over the course of the weekend than prior to their arrival. There's



lots of energy, and a power-packed combination of prayer, worship, and Bible study. It is truly electrifying to witness.

This year, each session seemed to usher the young people into a fuller encounter with God's character of love and a commitment to letting His grace become the compelling agent in their lives. The weekend culminated with a very personal and powerful presentation on the love of God revealed through the cross of Christ. The result? Over three hundred young people got out of their seats and came forward to answer the call for full surrender to Jesus.

The greatest impact, though, was observing the leadership of the church—who had invested their time, energies, and talents—and seeing tears well up in their eyes as they realized that, for these three hundred plus young people, it was all worth it! There was rejoicing at that moment in heaven for sure, but the visual of seeing everyone who had put so much effort into this event witnessing the fruits of their labor was a memory that will not quickly fade.

God has promised through Isaiah, "I will pour out water on the thirsty land And streams on the dry ground; I will pour out My Spirit on your offspring And My blessing on your descendants; and they [your offspring] will spring up among the grass like poplars by streams of water" (Isaiah 44:3,4). Through Zechariah, He says, "Ask from Me rain at the time of the spring rain, and I, the Lord, who makes the storm clouds will give them showers of rain" (Zechariah 10:1). Certainly, these promises found a fulfillment through the Divinely blessed efforts of





Sunset Oaks this March. In the greater Sacramento area, and in the hearts of the young people who attended, there was heard . . . sounds of rain.

Manchester Korean SDA Church Long Island City, NY

In early March, I was privileged to share with one of my favorite cultures within the Adventist Church—the Koreans. Each of the area churches came together for worship, Bible study, and good food (Sorry, I had to throw that last part in—I love Korean food!). What I will take with me is the look in the eyes of so many as we encountered the cross on Sabbath morning. Many had never pondered the things discussed. The wheels were turning, lights were coming on, hearts were being touched, and lives were being changed. Surely, we experienced the deep movings of the Holy Spirit as we encountered the light that ever streams from the cross of Calvary to and upon all.

Life Unlimited—NOW ON DVD! Woodside SDA Church Sacramento, CA

Or at least it will in be an about two more months. The filming is complete, and now the editing has commenced. It is an evangelistic series like none other! And, soon, it will be available to either order through our website or simply watch online. I would like to extend a special thank you to White Horse Media, as well as to the Woodside SDA Church, for partnering with Renewed Heart Ministries in the filming of these seventeen revolutionary, life-changing, one-hour presentations. Many expressed that they had never experienced God and His

character like they had during these ten days. One dear sister expressed that she was a fifth generation Adventist, had been in the church all her life, and, yet, only over the course of these last ten days had she gained the assurance that Jesus' death was for her and that she will be in the Kingdom. Praise God! Thank you, thank you, thank you for your help in making the visual recording of this series a reality. †

“With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. And if God should do this, Satan was ready to carry out his plan for securing to himself the allegiance of heavenly beings. He had declared that the principles of God’s government make forgiveness impossible. Had the world been destroyed, he would have claimed that his accusations were proved true. He was ready to cast blame upon God, and to spread his rebellion to the worlds above. But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it. Though corruption and defiance might be seen in every part of the alien province, a way for its recovery was provided. At the very crisis, when Satan seemed about to triumph, the Son of God came with the embassy of divine grace. Through every age, through every hour, the love of God had been exercised toward the fallen race. Notwithstanding the perversity of men, the signals of mercy had been continually exhibited. And when the fullness of the time had come, the Deity was glorified by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled.

Satan was exulting that he had succeeded in debasing the image of God in humanity. Then Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. He came to lift us up from the dust, to reshape the marred character after the pattern of His divine character, and to make it beautiful with His own glory.”

(Ellen White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 37)

TESTIMONIES . . .

"I'll never forget when I first started listening to Herb 3 years ago at _____. My first reaction was, 'Where did they pick this kid up from?' I was about to leave until he told his story...I couldn't get enough after that. I knew where he was going, and I wanted to go there...I wanted the lies about my Heavenly Father erased, and that is how this ministry has blessed me over and over—by slowly removing the lies and lifting the darkness that are so deeply embedded. I have to keep listening over and over to get it; I seem to be a slow learner. But I am so grateful for this ministry! Thank you, Herb, for allowing God to bless us through you."—K

"I work in a greenhouse and have been listening to the WISE week downloads that you did at CUC. You have probably heard this so very many times that it must almost be boring and predictable to you, but so much is making sense and shattering everything I have been taught. Just this evening, it dawned on

me that I'm no longer afraid of God! I am a faithful, churchgoing, head elder's wife, and a tithe paying adventist who has been afraid of God—really afraid. I can't thank you enough for being willing to share this message.

I want so much to tell EVERYONE...I want so much to DO something to show people...God bless you, Herb. Your willingness to preach has changed my life—here, now, and forever after."—D

***"...Jesus did something
in my heart through that
sermon..."***

"I am enjoying listening to the other messages on your website; they are just what I need right now. Thank you. —L

"You're the first preacher I've ever connected with. Thank you."—Anon.

"I have listened to a lot of speakers, but I could listen to your materials all day long and never get tired."—Anon

"I've been going through a rough spot with Jesus these past four or five weeks. It's been a process, but he is slowly starting to heal my heart. I wanted you to know that whenever I seem to hit a rough spot I get on to your site and listen to your sermons. God speaks through you so much. Today was another hard day and I listened to your "Tut, Tut, It looks like rain" sermon. I definitely haven't been going through anything like what you talked about, but the Love that you described that Jesus had towards Mary really made my heart crave that too. Jesus did something in my heart through that sermon and I just wanted you to know how much you have blessed my life. I just wanted to say thank you for listening to God and reaching out to a lost world."—CR †

CALENDAR

April 1-5, 2008

Armona Union Academy
Armona, CA
559.582.4468

April 18-27, 2008

Marlinton SDA Fellowship
Marlinton, WV
304.651.0732

May 2-3, 2008

Christian Men's Retreat
Leoni Meadows Retreat Center
Grizzly Flats, CA
209.951.3693

May 9-10, 2008

Durant SDA Church
Durant, OK
580.924.4019

May 25, 2008

Mt. Vernon Academy Graduation
Mt. Vernon, Oh
740.397.5411

May 31, 2008

Glenview Adventist Academy Graduation
Glendale, AZ
623.931.1846

June 1-8, 2008

Iowa/Missouri Camp Meeting
Centralia, MO

June 13-22, 2008

Weaverville / Trinity Lake / Hayfork
Hayfork, CA
530.623.5037

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