

Jesus and You

Message for June 2018 - 7

International Missionary Society

Seventh-Day Adventist Church

Reform Movement

YOUTH DEPARTMENT OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

Dear youth:

I greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and ask that His blessings, love, and direction be upon you abundantly.

Adam and Eve were to be like God in justice and holiness

Six thousand years ago God decided to create this planet and place the human being in it. This was the highest work of creation, because man was created in the image and likeness of his Maker. What a privilege! It means that when leaving the hands of the Creator, the physical, mental, and spiritual nature of Adam and Eve had the likeness of God. Each physical, mental, and spiritual faculty were perfect. His mind was prepared for a continuous cultivation, “expansion, refinement, and noble elevation, for God was his Master and the angels his companions.” *Review and Herald*, February 24, 1874.” God’s purpose was that the longer the human being lived the more fully he would reveal that image; the more fully he would reflect the glory of the Creator.

They enjoyed the highest pleasures of their holy existence. God’s plan was for the earth to be filled with homes similar to Eden, so that eventually the whole earth would be occupied by Edenic homes, where the Word and the

works of God were studied, so that the students would reflect more and more the image and likeness of its Maker.

The image and likeness destroyed

There was one who was not satisfied with human beings carrying the divine image and likeness; he drew a plan to make them fall into sin. Unfortunately, he managed to make the first human couple sin. Sin destroyed the image and likeness of God. What does our character bear the of divine image and likeness? We take pleasure in sin, but we hate sinners. We make wars, the world is full of violence, children suffer, there exists abortions, delinquency, disease, hatred, death... What remains of the image and likeness of God?

What remains of the image of God in those young people who are degraded in the pleasures of drugs, of corrupted sex, of alcohol, of a life without purpose? What about the image of God in those husbands who beat their spouse or abandon their children? And even more, what about God in us Christians when we treat our brethren unjustly and harm them in some way? "Lo, this only have I found, that God hath made man upright; but they have sought out many inventions." Ecclesiastes 7:29.

Satan had also lost the divine likeness as a result of his rebellion against God. Someone who falls has the mentality to take others with him. It seems that in this way the pain is less: "As soon as the Lord through Jesus Christ created our world and placed Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, Satan announced his purpose to conform to his own nature the father and mother of all humanity, and to unite them with his own ranks of rebellion. He was determined to efface the image of God from the human posterity, and to trace his own image upon the soul in the place of the divine image." *Christ Triumphant*, pg. 13.

Referencing needs

Before sin, Adam and Eve could contemplate themselves in their Maker, find in Him their example, their reason for being. Their spiritual growth was not limited; they could continue to grow in wisdom and holiness.

After sin, direct communication with God was broken; the holy nature of the first human couple was transformed and in its place was introduced the human moral-corrupted, sinful nature that we have in our days. The physical faculties of man were weakened, his mental capacity diminished, his spiritual vision darkened, and now he was left subject to death.

Satan had guaranteed Eve that—if she ate the forbidden fruit—she would enter a new state of greater knowledge, power, and happiness. But the only thing that happened after the transgression was the opposite. Why? As we read in the previous testimony, what happened is that Satan carved his own image in the soul instead of the divine image, this is what Peter says in his epistle: "While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of

corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.” 2 Peter 2:19.

As irrefutable proof of this assertion, we only have to look at this world that’s controlled by the prince of darkness (John 14:30, 2 Corinthians 4:4). According to the World Health Organization, some 3,000 people take their lives daily, and for every successful suicide, there are 20 more who try and fail. Suicide is among the three leading causes of death in the world. and predominately occurs in people aged 15 to 44, which tells us that many young people end their lives. According to projections, for the year 2020 it is estimated that the figure will increase to more than 4,100 people per day. It is known that among young people, despair is the factor that most relates to this act. If we add to this statistic the number of wars that have taken place in this world, daily acts of violence, assassinations, robberies, rapes, and many more, we will conclude that the human being forfeited the image of God and acquired that of his tempter: the devil.

Is there any hope for this world? Yes, yes! Thank God! The human being was not left alone after the fall, but was given a promise of restoration: Although he would have to suffer the terrible consequences of sin, one day his Savior would come to this world, that dying on the cross, he would again open the door of paradise, so that any human who believes in Him could return to his Edenic home (Genesis 3:15, John 3:16). This is the explanation of why we cannot change ourselves, why our world is becoming more and more degraded, because our sinful nature is subject to the power of the evil one. You cannot alone, dear youth, change your character, your tendencies, your nature: “Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil.” Jeremiah 13:23.

But we need to change. We cannot settle for this sinful nature. What can you do, dear youth? Who can you imitate on this earth? What human references can you choose to be your example? Our parents have flaws, our relatives have flaws, our friends and siblings also. The greatest men have flaws. There is no one who serves to be our model, because all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23).

The only example to follow

The only example you can imitate, dear youth, is Jesus Christ. Jesus came “that he might destroy the works of the devil.” 1 John 3:18. Jesus had to come in the same nature as the human being in his fallen state to become his example: “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us...” John 1:14. “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.

Jesus came to this earth with His divinity, but it was veiled in humanity. He was one hundred percent God and one hundred percent man: “Divinity and humanity were **mysteriously combined**, and man and God became one.” *Our Father Cares*, pg. 66. “The incarnation of Christ is the mystery of all mysteries.”

In Heavenly Places, pg. 41. As we have already seen, Jesus had a mission: **to undo the works of the devil** (1 John 3:8). For this reason he had to take our nature and show that every youth and adult in his fallen state can obey the Law of God with the help of the Holy Spirit, that Adam had less of a reason to yield to temptation and if he sinned it was because he wanted to.

Jesus confronted the devil on the same ground that Adam had fallen, and won. He conquered sin completely and absolutely. He did not sin in thought, in word, or in action. His victory is now at your disposal. Through the grace He imparts to us, we can resist the enemy and overcome temptation.

The childhood, adolescence, youth and adulthood of Jesus

The childhood of Jesus, his adolescence, youth, and adulthood, were a perfect example to imitate both for adults and the youth. Little is known about Jesus' childhood; we have little information but enough: "And the child grew, and waxed strong in spirit, filled with wisdom: and the grace of God was upon him." Luke 2:40. "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man." Luke 2:52.

In these texts we can understand that there are three important areas in which the youth must grow: Physical, spiritual, and social. Jesus grew and strengthened not only in the physical aspect, but also in the spiritual aspect. That is why He was filled with wisdom, and grace was always operating in Him and through Him in men. It can also be so with you, dear young person, that you grow and strengthen yourself in the faith, that as you relate to Jesus, you can be filled with wisdom and His grace will transform you into an instrument of salvation.

We find another important insight regarding the adolescence of Jesus: "And he went down with them, and came to Nazareth, and was subject unto them." Luke 2:51. Jesus also learned to be subject to his parents. This is an important fact. We owe respect and honor to our parents (Exodus 20:12). Remember, dear youth and child, that God has given you parents to respect and love. One day they will no longer be with you; the time to express your tender obedience, love, and respect is while they live. For the flowers that they take to the grave are of no avail.

Jesus has shown you, youth, that he loves you in a deep, tender, and unbreakable way. Look at when He blessed the children, look at when He blessed and made Joseph prosper, when He was with Daniel and his three companions in Babylon, when He used the young woman who served in the house of Naaman the Syrian; when He was with Timothy and used him to preach the Gospel. The image and divine likeness can again be implanted in you, dear youth, by the work of the grace carried out by the Holy Spirit, if you accept Jesus as your personal Savior, confess your sins, and turn away from them.

“Though the moral image of God was almost obliterated by the sin of Adam, through the merits and power of Jesus it may be renewed. Man may stand with the moral image of God in his character; for Jesus will give it to him....

“By the transforming agency of His grace, the image of God is reproduced in the disciple; he becomes a new creature.” *God’s Amazing Grace*, pg. 246.

Jesus loves you, dear youth, more than you can imagine. He knows everything about you: your failures, your defeats, your most remote thoughts, and yet he loves you. He desires you to see His image reflected in you, because the character is the only thing that you can take to heaven. I want to ask you a question: What does Jesus mean to you? You can discuss this together with the other young people at the moment that you meet to read and study this writing. God bless you.

José Vicente Giner
*Pastor and Director of the Youth Department
General Conference*

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