

Let's Talk About the Health Message

Part 1:

The Health Message and Faith

Part 2:

The Health Message and “The Great Principle”

Part 3:

The Health Message and the Three Angel's Messages

INTRODUCTION

I'm grateful for this opportunity to share something with you that's very valuable to me. I'm going to share what I've learned about the health message. I'll begin by sharing a little bit about myself and about how I came to value the health message as I do.

I've had some serious struggles with food. God has delivered me from disordered eating. My specific ailment was bulimia. That's where people binge and purge. I used to eat until I would feel physical pain, then I would take laxatives to purge. I would drive to McDonald's and order a big meal to go, then I'd drive to A & W and order another meal to go, then I'd drive to Wendy's and get another meal, and I would eat three meals at once, plus some candy and desserts, and finally be done. Not a pretty picture, I know, but salvation comes close to us in our degradation, thank the Lord.

I would do this for a time, and then I'd get so disgusted with myself that I'd restrict. I'd starve myself and exercise like a fiend. I remember eating half an apple, calling it a meal, and saying to myself, "It's amazing how little we can eat and still function." I'd eat hardly anything, and then run for hours in the woods, and cycle for another couple hours later in the day. And I loved the hills, anything to make me work harder. Or I'd go to aerobics for an hour, then go to the gym and run on the treadmill for another 40 minutes, then do weights, then swim in the pool. I exercised, strenuous exercise, for about 5 hours a day, while eating less than a one full meal. This would lead to me getting sick. I'd start fainting, and then start eating again, and start bingeing again, and on went the cycle.

Disordered eating has been the most difficult sin for me to overcome, other than pride, that I'm aware of, anyway. When God showed Himself to me, I WAS healed. My relationship with God was restored, and this is the healing that I needed, but I had some learning to do, before being set free from bulimia.

When I came to the church, I heard that Seventh-day Adventists follow certain health practices. All that I heard was in the context of do's and don'ts. I heard little details here and there about what I should and shouldn't be eating, and I did stop eating the junk, and I did stop eating the meat, but that's all the health message was to me for the longest time.

I started becoming aware of more when my husband and I were in Tennessee in 2012. We were volunteering with Mission TV, and a health series by someone named Peter Carston was being filmed. That was my first introduction into the vastness of the health message and eating, but this information still remained in the realm of do's and don'ts. The depth of the do's and don'ts just got a whole lot deeper, overwhelmingly deeper. I was still struggling with bingeing, although I had given up purging some time ago, and my bingeing was less frequent, and not nearly as extreme.

We moved on to Belize, where we volunteered with MOVE Missionary Outreach, and my husband happened to be reading a book called, "The Christian Experience of the Medical Missionary in the Remnant Church," by Julius Gilbert White. This is an excellent book, and I recommend it for everybody. And I had two pamphlets in my hands. One was called "Principles and Keys of Biblical and Prophetic Interpretation," which is a compilation of Ellen White's Writings. This pamphlet placed what we eat as a crucial part of being able to properly understand the Bible and prophecy. The other pamphlet was

called, "The Place of Health Reform in Character Development," and this pamphlet placed health reform as a necessary element of reflecting the character of Christ. I'd never heard these things before. Nobody I had come in contact with in the church seemed to know these things either, and if they did they certainly didn't share it. So it was with these three literary resources that I entered into the bigger picture of health reform. I had learned that it was connected to understanding, and I wanted understanding, so I wanted to follow the health message. I wanted my mind healed. Not only had I physically harmed myself with my eating habits, but drug addiction is another sin I've overcome, and all the drugs that I did harmed my brain and my thought processes. I wanted healing. And I wanted understanding.

As my husband and I talked about these things, we found that we both wanted to learn how to be medical missionaries, meaning we wanted to learn all about biblical health and sharing the gospel. We returned home to Canada to work at a small home health center in Barriere, British Columbia. Here we got a hands on introduction to medical missionary work. From there, we moved to Onoway, where we stayed with another couple who used to run a home health center and are now starting up a missionary health center in Tobago, in the Caribbean. So we got yet another perspective. And now we're in Edmonton.

I've struggled a lot in the Seventh-day Adventist church trying to find support to follow the principles of biblical health. And I'll tell you, I still haven't found it. The big picture didn't start making sense to me in a way that could deliver me from disordered eating until a year ago. The turning point was entering into an examination of my faith. 2Corinthians 13:5 says, "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves."

God orchestrated an experience for me where I found myself standing alone, in a controversy, needing to give a reason for my faith, and to defend the divinity of my Lord, and I was lost. The evidence that I thought was air-tight had proved to be evidence of nothing. This was a call to a diligent study to prove what I believed, to test what I believed. I searched the scriptures trying to find the proof for what I thought I believed, but what I found instead is that I was believed an error. What I accepted as truth actually denied the divinity of Christ. But the Word of God corrected me.

This examination of my faith was crucial to understanding the gospel and the health message. It was the key that made the gospel very real. It was the key to accessing, by faith, the strength of the Lord that could deliver me from bulimia.

So, my sharing about the health message will be in two presentations. This first one, today, will focus on the health message and faith. Because I haven't heard the message preached like I needed to hear, and because I see plenty of evidence that the health message is not embraced by all of us here, I want to give you what I needed. I want to give you a strong grounding for biblical health, which is faith. I don't want you to get caught up in thinking that the health message is all about do's and don'ts. It's not. It's about faith. Having a strong grounding in faith, we'll be ready to move on to next week's presentation.

Next week's presentation will focus more on the details. We'll look at some of the do's and don'ts, but we'll find their basis in the Bible, which will bring out biblical principles to guide our choices. Hopefully,

this'll give us solid, indisputable reasons for making choices that will be meaningful, and that will be balanced and rational and lasting, and that will be in line with our counsel on the health message, and that will include the power of God.

5 HOPES

There are 5 things that I hope you will understand from this presentation. I have goals for myself. Because I am in control of my choices, I have goals for myself that I want to reach with this presentation. But because I can't control your choices, I have hopes for you, 5 of them, and within each hope is a truth. There is a truth imbedded in each hope. I'll show you what I mean.

FIRST HOPE

My first hope for you is that you'll come to value the health message as precious light from God.

The truth in this hope is that the health message IS precious light from God. It is a gift of God's love and mercy for mankind.

SECOND HOPE

My second hope is that you will want to know more.

And the truth in this hope is that consecrated Christians are eager to know how they can please God. The health message is light from God, and the consecrated Christian will want to know all about it. I hope that you are consecrated Christians, and that you will be eager to seek out all the light we have been given on health reform.

THIRD HOPE

My third hope for you is that you will take action. I hope that while seeking to know more, you'll be fuelled by the intention of obeying the counsel that you find.

The truth in this is that as you seek to obey, you need to be firmly grounded in faith. True obedience comes ONLY by faith.

FOURTH HOPE

My fourth hope for you is that you'll understand the significance of biblical health.

And the truth in this is that there are consequences to your choices, both now and eternally. If something is of great significance, then there are corresponding consequences. There are desirable consequences to following the health message, and there are undesirable consequences to not following the health message. These consequences reach into eternity.

FIFTH HOPE

And my fifth hope for you is that at the end of this presentation you will be on the road to being better prepared to do our appointed work.

And the truth in this is that the 3 Angel's messages and health reform are inseparable.

THE 5 TRUTHS

So, to sum it up, the hopes that I have for you are based in truths that will be addressed in this presentation, namely 5 truths:

1. The health message is light from God;
2. Consecrated Christians will be eager to know more about health reform;
3. Making health reform change is about faith;
4. The health message comes with consequences;
5. The everlasting gospel and the health message are inseparable.

PRESENTATION OUTLINE

I've divided today's presentation into three main parts:

1. Health reform and faith;
2. Health reform and living by "The Great Principle";
3. Health Reform and the 3 Angel's Messages.

A COMMON STATEMENT

Before I begin, there's something I want to address right away. There is a statement that I hear often, and I want to address it right at the beginning. Maybe you have heard it? Maybe it has influenced you? Maybe you have used it? The statement I've heard is this:

"We are not saved by the health message."

I've only ever heard this statement used in a defensive manner. It seems to roll off the tongue of people who are offended by others who talk about the health message and talk about the need for reform. What are people saying when they say this? They're actually letting us know that they have trouble understanding the place of works in salvation. They're saying, "We're saved by faith, not by works, so leave me alone. Don't tell me what to eat. It's not as important as you're making it out to be. It's all about Jesus, not about what I eat." They're saying that making health reform is "works," and because it is "works," it is not as important as faith.

Are they right?

Yes, they're right that there isn't anything that we can "do" to be saved. It is all about Jesus. But they're wrong to dismiss the importance of biblical health and the need to reform our diet.

What does James say?

"Even so faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone." James 2:17

And,

"Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?" James 2:21, 22

Abraham's faith wrought with his works. Abraham's faith WORKED WITH his works. Faith and works work together. It was by Abraham's works that his faith was made perfect. And so it is with us. Our faith is made perfect by works. Faith that doesn't want works is dead. In fact, faith without works is not faith at all. It is presumption. Faith is both shown by our works, and made perfect by our works. And as I'll show you in this presentation, the actions of following the health message are the outworking of solid, biblical faith.

This is why I'm beginning my talk on the health message with faith. So let's talk about the health message and faith.

PART 1: LET'S TALK ABOUT THE HEALTH MESSAGE AND FAITH

What is the faith that overcomes? There is only one faith that overcomes.

1John 5:4, 5 tells us:

“For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, even our faith. Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?”

There are some important connections in this passage that tell us about the faith that overcomes:

1. Being born of God = overcoming
2. Being born of God = overcoming = victory
3. Being born of God = overcoming = victory = faith
4. Faith = believing that Jesus is the Son of God.
5. Being born of God = believing that Jesus is His Son.

We can read 1John 5:4, 5 this way: “For whatsoever is born of God overcomes the world, which is victory over the world, which is our faith. So who is it that has this overcoming, victorious faith? It is that person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.”

Only those people who believe that Jesus is the Son of God are born of God. Only those people who believe that Jesus is the Son of God overcome, are victorious, and have the faith that overcomes, which is “our” faith.

If you don't believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, you will not be victorious. Worse, than that, if you don't believe that Christ is the Son of God, what does the Bible call you? If you deny that Jesus is the Son of God, you are denying the truth. What are people called who deny the truth?

“Who is a liar but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? He is antichrist, that denieth the Father and the Son.” 1Jn 2:22

Here we have another important connection: If anyone denies that Jesus is the Christ, they are denying the Father and the Son. By extension, to believe that Jesus is the Christ is to believe that there is a Father and a Son. The fact that Jesus is the Christ IS the fact that the Christ is the Son of God. And if Christ is the Son of God, then God must be the Father. If you deny these things, the Bible calls you a liar. And even worse still, whoever lies about Christ being the Son of God and says that it isn't so, and whoever lies about the Father, saying that God is not the Father of the Son, is here named “antichrist”. They are working against Christ.

So let me ask you a question: Was there ever a time when Christ was not the Son of God?

Was there ever a time when Christ DECIDED to become a Son? There are people in the Seventh-day Adventist church who will tell you that there was a time when Christ was not the Son of God. They'll tell you that a decision was made in heaven where Christ "decided" to become the Son of God in order to carry out the plan of salvation. If someone tells you this, what are they saying? They're saying that the true identity of Christ is not a Son. If He "decided" to be the Son, what was He when He made that decision? What was He BEFORE He became a Son? He had to be something other than the Son.

There are also people in our church who will tell you that the word "Son" doesn't mean what it seems to mean. They will tell you, and some have even written Seventh-day Adventist books about this, that the word "Son", and the word "begotten" are symbolic, and we shouldn't take them at face value to mean what the plain meanings of those words mean. What are these people doing? These people are denying that Christ is the Son of God. If they say that we can't trust the word "Son" to mean what it obviously means, then they're saying that Christ is something other than what a Son plainly means, which is something other than a Son.

What do you believe? Have you thought deeply about it? Have you laid out the details and nuances of your own belief and examined it?

2Corinthians 13:5 says,

"Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?"

We are commanded here in the word of God to examine ourselves to see if we truly are in the faith, which means, as we saw earlier, to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Have you examined your belief in all its details and nuances to know whether or not you are in the faith? Maybe there is a way that your belief denies that Christ is the Son of God. This is what I found, even though I said I believed that Christ is the Son of God.

There can be no other question to ask ourselves as important as this one, because without the faith, we have absolutely nothing. Without THE faith that Jesus Christ is the Son of God everything we do will lead to death.

Ellen White reveals to us, in Counsels to Writers and Editors, that

There are many in the church who take it for granted that they understand what they believe, but, until controversy arises, they do not know their own weakness. When separated from those of like faith, and compelled to stand singly and alone to explain their belief, THEY WILL BE SURPRISED TO SEE HOW CONFUSED ARE THEIR IDEAS OF WHAT THEY HAD ACCEPTED AS TRUTH...

God would have all the bearings and positions of truth thoroughly and perseveringly searched, with prayer and fasting. BELIEVERS ARE NOT TO REST IN SUPPOSITIONS AND ILL-DEFINED IDEAS OF WHAT CONSTITUTES TRUTH. CW 40.2

Believers are not to rest in suppositions and ill-defined ideas of what constitutes truth. Do you know what a supposition is? It's a hypothesis. If you suppose something is true before you have the evidence to prove it, then you are resting in a supposition. If you believe something, but don't have the proof, or if you believe something before you have the proof, then you're resting in a supposition. It's the conclusion, without the body of evidence that supports the conclusion.

Do you believe what you believe because it's included in the Fundamental Beliefs of our Church? Do you trust that all the evidence is there because there are a lot of biblical references that seem to prove the belief? If this is what you rely on, then you're resting in suppositions. If subtle heresy comes into the church, are you prepared to stand against it for the truth? Will you recognize the heresy, or will someone have to tell you about it, and then will you trust them, or will you trust the word of God because you have searched it out for yourself? Will you accept what they give you, or will you search? Will you accept everything that David Assherick tells you? What about Doug Bachelor? What about Stephen Bohr? What about Ty Gibson? What about the BRI? Do you know how to search for yourself? Do you know how to examine your own beliefs?

I think that many of us are lost when we need to sit with the Bible and search it out for ourselves. Our minds are dulled, and not practiced at hard thinking, or critical thinking. We don't know how to really study the Bible. The health message can actually help with this.

We all have a first work to do. Before anything else we need to examine ourselves to see if we're truly in THE faith, the belief that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. This is the only faith that will deliver from sin, and allow us to follow the health message according to the principles of holiness.

PART 2: LET'S TALK ABOUT THE HEALTH MESSAGE AND "THE GREAT PRINCIPLE"

What is a principle?

According to the Google Dictionary, a principle is "a fundamental truth that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning. So a principle, then, is a truth that forms the foundation for beliefs, behaviors, or/and reasoning. A principle is like a root that all other things stem from.

The "Great Principle" of Christianity is the same principle that is the foundation of the health message. So, what is the "Great Principle" of Christianity? What is the TRUTH of Christianity that forms the FOUNDATION for all our other BELIEFS, all of our BEHAVIORS and all of our REASONING?

We find "The Great Principle" in Matthew 16:13-18.

¹³ When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

¹⁴ And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

¹⁵ He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

¹⁶ And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

¹⁷ And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.

¹⁸ And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus said, "Upon this rock I will build my church." This is the Christian foundation. How does this truth, that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God become a principle that we can apply practically to every belief, behavior, and process of reasoning?

In 1Corinthians 1:30 we read what Christ is to us:

"But of him (God) are ye in Christ Jesus, who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption..."

Because of God and what He has done (and what has God done? John 3:16. Because "God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him shall not perish but have everlasting life."), because of God and what He has done, and because we BELIEVE, we are in Christ

Jesus, who God has made to be for us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. We are Christians, and these themes are now the beautiful, governing reality of our lives. We are in Christ. We live and breathe and move in Him. We live and breathe and move in the wisdom, the righteousness, the sanctification, and the redemption of Christ. We are in Him.

And what is the culmination of all this? What is the point of being in Christ? Where does it peak? There is a word; there is one word that I'm looking for that expresses the perfection of Christ and His wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. This word is the practical principle that is found in the truth that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God, and this word expresses the truth that is the basis of the health message that we are to practice. What is that word?

That word is "sacrifice", "self-sacrifice."

When we answer Jesus' question, "But who do you say that I am?" When we reply, "Jesus, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God," we are acknowledging and confessing all that God has given to humanity in His Son: wisdom, righteousness, redemption, and sanctification. We are confessing the love of God for us, which is pure, untainted self-sacrificing love. This is what it means to us to say, "Jesus, you are the Christ, the Son of the living God. And, hopefully, as this confession of truth leaves our lips and brightens the world, we allow its roots to reach deep into our hearts, to enlighten our minds, and to transform our lives according to the holy principle of self-sacrificing love.

Jesus, you are the Christ, the Messiah, the anointed One, my Saviour, the Son of the living God. It is my decision and delight to live and breathe and move through this world in you, according to the principle that actuates you. You sacrificed your life for me, and I will gladly sacrifice my life to live in you. I want nothing but the wisdom, the righteousness, the sanctification, and the redemption that are found only in Jesus Christ. I want to exemplify a life of living faith, which is perfected by works. I want to live out in my life, the perfection of Christ's wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, which is a life of self-denial, a life of self-sacrifice for the salvation of my fallen brothers and sisters of this earth. I want to be like Jesus.

Now let's bring this into the health message with 1Corinthians 6:19, 20.

"What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price: therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.

We are bought with a price. The sacrifice of Christ did something very real. The sacrifice of Christ gave us life. We were once sons and daughters in Adam by creation, but that life was lost. The life that we now have is by redemption. The life that we have now is ONLY because Christ died for us. Brothers and sisters, who do we owe our lives to? We owe our lives to Christ. For THIS reason we are to glorify God in our BODIES. We belong to Him. What a comfort! We need to humble ourselves and accept the good news that we are not our own. We have not been left to our own life-destroying ways. We have been redeemed with the divine life of the Son of God. Our lives have been bought for a very great price. We

have been plucked out of the pit of destruction, and because we believe and love our Redeemer, our Father in heaven will re-create His holy character in us that we may once again live as He intended us to live.

God has given His Spirit of HOLINESS to dwell in us. Our bodies are a habitation for HOLINESS. Let that sink in. Our bodies are living temples of the holy Spirit of God that comes to us through Christ Jesus. Therefore, the question for us is this, "How shall [we], claiming to be Christians, treat the habitation God has given us?" 6T 369.3. If the holy principle of selfless love, the holy principle of self-sacrifice, lives in us, then what kind of choices will we make regarding the care of the bodies that we have been given at the great cost of our Redeemer's life?

When we choose our food and drink what is our consideration? Is it, "What would I like to eat?" or is it, "How can I glorify God?" Is it about us? Or is it about God? If it's about us and our desires, then we are operating from Satan's principle of selfishness. If it's about glorifying God, then we are operating from the Christian principle of self-sacrifice. Believe it or not, a piece of cake is about the choice of life or death: the principle of life, or the principle of death. Brothers and sisters, what do you want? What is your choice?

In 1Corinthians 10:31 we read,

"Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

If we can glorify God in our eating and drinking, then, it stands to reason, that we can dishonor God in our eating and drinking also. So, now, this is about our character – we will either glorify God or we will dishonor God. Eating and drinking IS about our characters. And thus we enter into the great conflict. We are not able, of our own selves, to glorify God. We are sinners whose ways are the ways of degradation and death. We must choose. We must choose between our ways, or God's holiness that dwells in us. And in order to choose God's ways, even in our eating and drinking, we must die to self by the power of Christ, and become familiar with, and practiced at, self-denial.

I guarantee you there is something for each one of us in the health message that will be challenging, that will bring us to our knees in the fearful realization that we are unable to please God in our eating and drinking. Or it might be that we realize that we just don't want to. We will see our own selfishness and pride and our rebellion that is presently unknown to us. We will see our degradation in our willingness to sell our birthright for a meal, like Esau. We will watch ourselves fight the absurd battle between life, and a piece of cake, or a bit of cheese, or a can of pop. Our shame will be revealed. We will discover our need. We will repent, and receive forgiveness, and God will open the storehouses of heaven to us so that we may overcome our selfish, unholy desires. If our faith is grounded and alive in the truth that Jesus is the Christ the Son of the living God, we WILL overcome. If we know Him aright, we will overcome.

This is what the health message is to us: It is divine counsel that flushes out our hidden selfishness and pride with the requirements of such utterly practical and consistent self-denial. What an opportunity for

character development. Brothers and sisters, this is what we want. These are challenges that we need. We can put the principle of self-sacrifice into action every time we eat and drink, and every time we make the choice not to. Biblical health and the required denials are a gift to us to aid in our character purification. What a blessing!

But does it stop here? No, it doesn't even stop here. The blessings are even more than this.

Earlier, I asked you for a word. What was that word? That word was "self-sacrifice," self-sacrificing love. It is the perfection of the Christian. It is the foundational principle of our faith in Jesus Christ that characterizes all of our beliefs, all of our behaviors, and all of our reasoning. It is the culmination of all that Christ is to us: wisdom, righteousness, redemption, and sanctification.

Now I'm going to ask you for another word. It's another way to say "self-sacrifice." What is another way to say "self-sacrifice" in one word?

Service. Self-sacrifice = service.

Did the Son of God sacrifice Himself for His own benefit? No. Christ gave Himself to death in service to us.

We'll gain much by following the health message: we'll be stronger; we'll have more energy; we'll prevent disease; and we'll correct disease; we'll have clearer minds to grasp the beauty of truth; and being healthier, we'll be happier. But why? Our victories in self-denial can't solely be for our benefit. If our victories are for our benefit, then we have lost the principle of sacrifice. Our victories have to be like Christ's. They have to climax in service to our fallen brothers and sisters of this earth. Biblical health gives us strength, energy, freedom from disease, understanding of truth, and a happier disposition in order that we may be better able to work for God's cause. It's about service. We owe Him who died for us nothing less. It is a wholly reasonable expectation, and should be our eager delight to reform our lives in order to carry out the most excellent service we are able to give:

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service. Romans 12:1

It is a wholly reasonable thing to expect that we will bring our bodies before God in a condition that honours the great price of His Son. This cost has made us too valuable to be degraded and weakened by habits in eating and drinking that tear us down and destroy the image of God in us. It is a wholly reasonable thing to expect that we would treat our bodies as temples of the holy Spirit. How much reverent care went into building and preserving the earthly temple where the Shekinah glory dwelt with the people of Israel? A great deal, and our bodies demand the same level of reverent care in order that we honour the holy Spirit that dwells in us. If the Israelites had allowed the temple get run down, if they allowed unholy things to enter into it, would God have been honoured or dishonoured?

SUMMARY

1. Those who are born of God, who overcome the world, who are victorious, who have true faith, are only those people who believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Without this faith, without believing that Jesus is truly the Son of God, we have nothing. It is our first work to examine ourselves to ensure that we are in this faith, THE faith, otherwise we will fail. All of our efforts will be in vain. Our efforts to follow the health message will be dead works that are based in a false faith.
2. Christ has built His church on the truth that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Within this truth is "The Great Principle" of Christianity, which is self-sacrificing love, which is seen in service. This is the same principle that is the foundation of health reform. The reason for reforming is to honour God in our food and drink, and to present our bodies a living sacrifice capable of accomplishing the most excellent service to others.

PART 3: LET'S TALK ABOUT THE HEALTH MESSAGE AND THE THREE ANGELS' MESSAGES

As we turn, now, to our God-appointed work, our service to man, I'm going to show you how serious a matter it is that we fully embrace health reform without delay. I'm going to show you that it is a matter of your identity as a Seventh-day Adventist. I'm also going to indirectly expound on Romans 12:1, by showing you the inseparable connection between presenting our bodies a living sacrifice that is holy and acceptable to God, and service.

As Seventh-day Adventists, we are all familiar with the 3 angel's messages in Revelation 14:6-12.

⁶ *And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,*

⁷ *Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters.*

⁸ *And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, because she made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.*

⁹ *And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand,*

¹⁰ *The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb:*

¹¹ *And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.*

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

Who is proclaiming this message? There is a verse in the above passage that identifies those people who are giving this message. What verse identifies these people who are giving the 3 angels' messages?

Revelation 14:12 describes a people who are obedient to God's laws by the faith of Jesus.

"Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus."

This is us. We are these messengers declaring this solemn message to the world, while keeping the commandments of God by the faith of Jesus.

How do you think the health message fits into this? What does eating have to do with Revelation 14:12 and proclaiming this message to the world?

Philippians 3:18, 19 says,

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”

We see from these verses that it is possible to make a god out of our own bellies. And we see that if we do make a god out of our own belly we will be destroyed, our end is destruction.

Is idolatry a sin? Yes, idolatry is sin. Then making a god out of our belly is sin. Exodus 20:1-3 says,

“And God spake all these words, saying, I am the Lord thy God, which have brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. Thou shalt have no other gods before me.”

If we turn our bellies into our god, then we are placing our belly before the only true God, and we become idolaters and violate the first commandment.

Revelation 22:14, 15 says,

“Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city. For without are dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.”

Those that do God’s commandments are welcomed into the city of God, and are given the right to the tree of life. Idolaters are left without the city, and are not given the right to the tree of life. If we turn our bellies into a god, then we are transgressors of God’s holy law, idolaters, and we will be left without the city. Our end is destruction.

Let’s return to Philippians 3:18 and 19.

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”

Those whose god is their belly mind earthly things. Rather than minding the things of God, they mind earthly things. What does the word of God say about that?

Romans 8:5 says,

“For they that are after the flesh do mind the things of the flesh; but they that are after the Spirit the things of the Spirit.”

If we mind earthly things, which group of people do we belong with in Romans 8:5, those who are after the flesh or those who are after the Spirit? We belong in the group that walks according to the flesh. If we make a god out of our bellies, and we mind earthly things, or the things of the flesh, then we are not minding the things of the Spirit. If we are not minding the things of the Spirit, but rather the things of the flesh, then we are out of harmony with the character of God, and of Christ. If we are idolaters, having made a god of our belly, by walking according to the flesh, and reflect a character that is not in harmony with God and Christ, then do we belong with those people described in Revelation 14:12?

No. We do not.

Anybody can say the words, but only those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus are actually doing our appointed work. If we talk the 3 angel’s messages, without actually doing the work, then what are we?

Philippians 3:18, 19 says,

“For many walk, of whom I have told you often, and now tell you even weeping, that they are the enemies of the cross of Christ: Whose end is destruction, whose God is their belly, and whose glory is in their shame, who mind earthly things.”

If we make a god out of our bellies, even though we may speak the words of the 3 angels’ messages and believe we are doing the work, we are in reality, enemies of the cross.

I hope you are beginning to understand the significance of biblical health. I hope you’re beginning to understand our need of Christ, and the overcoming, victorious, faith in the Son of God.

Revelation 14:6, 7 says,

“And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him...”

We are a people raised to glorify God in all that we do. We not only proclaim, “Fear God and give glory to Him,” but, by faith, we actually do glorify God in all that we do, even in our eating and our drinking.

We each need to answer this question honestly: Are you a Seventh-day Adventist who is called to a specific work in these last days, or are you an idolater, an enemy of the cross of Christ?

If you have found that you are an enemy, if you have the pangs of guilt because you know that your life has in some way echoed the statement, “We are not saved by the health message,” and you have removed the reverent care for your body from the gospel of faith, there is great hope for you and help. All that is required of you is repentance, and reformation. Christ will receive you. And He will give you the strength and power to make the changes that need to be made to worship God above your belly.

Now I want to check in with you. I want to ask you, are you willing to have a deeper look into health reform? Are you willing to see where you might be dishonouring God in your choices of food and drink, which might not be visible right now? Are you willing to make the appropriate changes that naturally need to follow?

Ellen White, in *Counsels of Health*, page 39, paragraph 1, says,

“The agitation of the subject of health reform in eating and drinking will develop character and will unerringly bring to light those who make a god of their bellies.”

Two things will happen when the subject of health reform is agitated. One, it will develop character. And two, it will bring to light those who make a “god of their bellies.”

What does it mean to agitate? It means to stir things up. It means to disturb the tranquility in your mind. The health message has the effect of disturbing your peace. It will show you changes that need to be made, and you will either make those changes and develop character, or you will not make those changes and prove yourself to be an idolater.

Do you see the significance of health reform and the consequences that are attached? Our identity is at stake. Who we are can be determined by the choices we make in our eating and drinking. Do we belong with the people described in Revelation 14:12 who are keeping the commandments of God by the faith of Jesus? Or do we belong with idolaters, who prefer the dictates of the belly over the dictates of God?

I’ll conclude with Acts 24:24, 25.

“And after certain days, when Felix came with his wife Drusilla, which was a Jewess, he sent for Paul, and heard him concerning the faith in Christ. And as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled, and answered, Go thy way for this time. When I have a convenient season, I will call for thee.”

When Paul preached the faith of Christ to Felix, what did he teach? He taught temperance. Paul reasoned temperance. Do you know what temperance is? It is the virtue of self-control. It is especially applied to mastery over the sensual appetites. It is defined by Thayer’s Lexicon as the virtue of someone who “masters his desires and passions, especially his sensual appetites.”

What is a sensual appetite? We have senses: touch, smell, sight, hearing, and taste, and our senses have appetites. There are things that we desire in order to satisfy our senses. Taste is a sensual appetite.

There are certain things that we like to taste. There are two kinds of sensual appetites, natural and unnatural. Natural appetites are sensual desires that are in harmony with God's work of life. Unnatural appetites are sensual desires that are in harmony with Satan's work of death. Because we are fallen beings, we tend to confuse the appetites. What seems natural to us is actually unnatural. What often seems good and healthy to us is actually harmful and life-destroying. We can't rely on ourselves or the world to discern the difference. We need to learn this discernment from the word of God. By relying on the Word of God, we can be truly temperate and have the mastery over our unnatural sensual appetites. This is relevant to the faith in Christ. This is what Paul preached concerning the faith in Christ.

Will you follow the example of Felix, and tremble, and delay, and say, I'll look into this when it's more convenient for me, when it's more pleasing for me? Or will you be like Paul and die-to-self daily being strengthened by mastery over your sensual appetites, and acquiring the ability to teach about temperance and the appropriate reforms with the integrity gained from applying these principles to your own life?

Who are you?

Before I close and send you on your way, I would like to take a quiet minute for silent prayer, so we can each talk with God in the name of Christ before we talk to each other and go back to the distractions of life. I ask that you bring the thoughts of your heart to God before moving on to anything else, and before you share your thoughts with any another soul.

Please kneel for a minute or two of silent prayer, and when we rise I will close.

I hope that you'll all deeply consider the place of eating and drinking in the gospel of faith. And I hope that you'll all prepare your hearts for next week by beginning an examination of your faith. If you don't know how to do this, let's talk about it. I'm available, and I'll make time for you. I want us to all be ready for next week when we start taking a look at our habits and the changes that we have the opportunity to make.

We're planning to reach out into the community as a church and speak, and give classes, on health as a means of reaching the people and teaching them about the faith of Jesus Christ, like Paul did with Felix. We need to be prepared to do this work. We need to have the experience of practicing what we preach if we are going to be effective, compassionate, and truly edifying to others.

I hope that you have a better understanding of the relationship between three angels' messages and health, also of the significance of biblical health for your life and identity. I hope that you are ready for next week because now you see that God has given us counsel regarding eating and drinking, and therefore, you are ready to learn more and to make the necessary changes in your own habits and practices.

God bless you and thank you for your time.

Let's have our closing prayer.

