

Summary of God and Evil, Episode 8

God Is Always With Us | Luke 15 Explained By Emanuel Swedenborg | Does God Love Us?

—God offers a constant invitation for us to participate in goodness.

—We get to freely consent, and when we do accept it, we start working on the team with God and all angels to dispel darkness, and bring our world more and more into an eternal light.

—God never stops loving us, wanting the best for us, or actively working in our lives to help us.

Reflection exercise:

Meditate on someone you care about. It can be a relative, a friend, a child, a pet. You know they are not perfect, and yet you truly want them happy and loved. Now try to imagine that feeling multiplied beyond comprehension - God's tender, unconditional love and goodwill. Imagine that feeling focused on you, loving you, wanting nothing but the best for you. Then imagine that same divine love and goodwill focused on anyone else that comes to mind. See God as someone who never stops wanting to lead you and every person on a journey toward the most possible happiness, and who never stops thinking about and implementing how to go about that in the most effective way. Open up your heart to that endless source of divine love and goodwill. Let it saturate you with warmth and light. Let it melt away blockages and pockets of coldness and despair. Imagine it flowing to your fingertips and out into actions in life. Take with you into your day the confidence of God's unceasing presence, compassion and wisdom, and let that flow through you to impact the world.

Related videos to check out on YouTube

Why Jesus Was Born - Swedenborg and Life

Why Did Jesus Suffer and Die? - Swedenborg and Life

How to Create Heaven on Earth - Swedenborg and Life

Quotes from this lesson in fuller context:

True Christianity 74:1-3

The third memorable occurrence. Far away I saw a large crowd of people wearing hats. Some had hats covered in silk; they belonged to the ecclesiastical class. Some had hats whose rims were decorated with golden bands; they belonged to the class of ordinary citizens. Both groups were educated and scholarly. I also saw some people wearing caps; they were uneducated.

I moved in the direction of these people and heard them talking with each other about limitless divine power. They were saying, "If divine power followed laws that were created as part of the divine design, it would be limited, not unlimited. It would be power, but not all power. Anyone can see that no compulsion by law could force omnipotence to act this way and not that way. When we think about omnipotence and at the same time about laws of the divine design that omnipotence would be obliged to follow, our preconceived ideas about omnipotence are jarred, like a hand on a broken walking stick. "

[2] When the crowd noticed me nearby, some members of it hurried over and asked me quite forcefully, Are you the one who has confined God in laws like chains? The outrage! You have ripped apart the belief on which we base our salvation. At the heart of our belief we place the justice of the Redeemer. On top of that is the omnipotence of God the Father. As an appendix

we add the actions of the Holy Spirit and its effectiveness in the spiritual arena, where we are completely powerless. It is enough, then, to mention the absolute justification that our faith entails because God is omnipotent. I have heard, though, that you see emptiness in our belief because you see nothing of the divine design for human response in it.

When they finished I opened my mouth and spoke in a loud voice, saying, "Learn what the laws of the divine design are, and then investigate the full ramifications of your belief. You will see a great wasteland and a long, twisted leviathan there with nets wrapped around it in an inextricable knot. Do what we read Alexander did when he saw the Gordian knot. To undo its bends, he drew his sword, cut the knot in two, threw it on the ground, and crushed its fibers with his heel. "

[3] When the people in the crowd heard this, they were biting their tongues. They wanted to give me a tongue-lashing, but they did not dare, because they saw heaven open above me and heard a voice out of it that said, First control yourselves and learn about the divine design and the laws of that design that God Almighty follows in his actions. God created the universe from himself as the design; he created it according to the design, for the sake of the design. He created human beings in a similar way and built the laws of his divine design into us. Because of those laws we were created as images and likenesses of God. In brief, the laws are that we must believe in God and love our neighbor. The more we do these two things with our earthly power, the more we make ourselves a vessel for the divine omnipotence, and God connects himself to us and us to himself. As a result, our faith becomes living and effective for our salvation. Our action becomes goodwill, again in a form living and effective for our salvation.

"It is important to know, though," the voice continued, "that God is always present, constantly at work and making an effort in us. He even influences our free choice. He never violates it, however, because if he did, we would lose our dwelling in God; there would remain only a dwelling for God in us, as there is for all things on earth, all things in heaven, and even for the things that are in hell. From God we get our power, our will, and our ability to understand. There is no reciprocal dwelling for us in God, though, unless we live by the laws of the divine design given in the Word. Then we become images and likenesses of him; then paradise is given to us for a possession, and the fruit of the tree of life for food.

"The rest of us gather around the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, speak with the serpent there, and eat. Later we are expelled from paradise. Nevertheless God does not abandon us; we abandon God. "

Divine Providence 295

Evil people are constantly leading themselves into evils, and the Lord is constantly leading them away from evils. It is easier to understand how divine providence works with good people than to understand how it works with evil people. Since this latter is our present concern, I shall proceed in the following sequence. (a) There are countless elements in every evil. (b) Evil people are constantly and intentionally leading themselves deeper into their evils. (c) For evil people, divine providence is a constant permission of evil with the ultimate goal of constantly leading them out. (d) The Lord does this leading out of evil in a thousand ways, some of them quite mysterious.

Divine Providence 337

The reason that everything divine providence does is done out of pure mercy is that the divine essence is pure love. This is what is working through divine wisdom, and this working is what we call divine providence.

The pure love is pure mercy (a) because it is at work with everyone in the whole world, and by our nature we are all incapable of doing anything on our own; (b) it is at work with the evil and the unjust and with the good and the just alike; (c) it is leading people who are in hell and rescuing them from it; (d) it is constantly struggling with them in hell and fighting for them against the devil, that is, against the evils of hell; (e) that is why it came into the world and underwent temptations even to the final one, the suffering on the cross; (f) it is constantly at work to make the unclean clean and the insane sane, so it is constantly laboring out of pure mercy.

Secrets of Heaven 5992:3

Above all, angels call on the goodness and truth we harbor and use it to block the evil and falsity stirred up by evil spirits. We stand in the middle and discern neither the evil nor the good. Being in the middle, we are free to turn toward one or the other. These are the kinds of ways angels from the Lord lead and safeguard us, which they do every moment and every fraction of a moment. If they stopped for only a second, we would plunge headlong into evil from which we could never again be led away. In doing this work, angels are motivated by love they receive from the Lord. Nothing gives them more pleasure and happiness than removing evil from us and leading us to heaven. Luke 15:7 shows that this is a joy to them. The Lord, then, takes utmost care of us, constantly, from the first rudiments of our life to its end and beyond to eternity; but hardly anyone believes it.

True Christianity 530

The question then is, How are we to repent? The answer is, we are to do so actively. That is, we are to examine ourselves, recognize and admit to our sins, pray to the Lord, and begin a new life.

The fact that repentance is not possible without examining ourselves was shown under the previous heading [526-527]. And what is the point of examining ourselves unless we recognize our sins? What is the point of that recognition unless we admit that those sins are in us? What is the point of all three of these steps unless we confess our sins before the Lord, pray for his help, and then begin a new life, which is the purpose of the whole exercise? This is active repentance.

[2] The fact that this is the sequence of actions to take is something we are all capable of realizing as we leave childhood and become more and more independent and able to reason for ourselves. We can see this from thinking of our baptism. The washing of baptism means regeneration; and during the ceremony our godparents promised on our behalf that we were going to reject the Devil and all his works. Likewise thinking of the Holy Supper, we have all been warned that in order to approach it worthily we have to repent from our sins, turn ourselves to God, and start a new life. We can also think of the Ten Commandments - the catechism that

is in the hands of all Christians. Six of the ten simply command us not to do evil things. If we do not remove these evils through repentance, we are unable to love our neighbor and even less able to love God, even though the Law and the Prophets, that is, the Word and therefore salvation, hinge on these two commandments [[Matthew 22:40](#)].

[3] Repentance becomes effective if we practice it regularly - that is, every time we prepare ourselves to take the Communion of the Holy Supper. Afterward, if we abstain from one sin or another that we have discovered in ourselves, this is enough to make our repentance real. When we reach this point, we are on the pathway to heaven, because we then begin to turn from an earthly person into a spiritual person and to be born anew with the help of the Lord.

Love in Marriage 525

It is impossible to consign the good of one person to another.

The evidence of this can also be seen one thing at a time, like this:

(a) Every human is born with evil. (b) The Lord leads him into good through rebirth. (c) This is done through a life according to His teachings. (d) So the good implanted this way cannot be consigned to someone else.

(a) It is well known in the church that every person is born with evil. They say that this evil is inherited from Adam, but it is from your parents. You get your disposition, which is your inclination, from them. Reason and experience persuade that this is so, for similarities to parents in face, talents, and behavior come out in their near and distant descendants. Many people know families by this and form opinions about their minds. So the evils that the parents themselves have built up and implanted in their children by passing them on are the ones that people are born with. People think that Adam's sin is etched on the whole human race because few look into any evil in themselves and come to know it by that means. Therefore they suppose that it is so deeply hidden that only God sees it.

(b) The Lord leads a person into good through rebirth. It is clear from the Lord's words in [John 3:3, 5](#) that there is regeneration and that you cannot march into heaven without being remade. It can be no secret in the Christian world that rebirth is purification from evils and thus a renewal of life, for reason sees this, too, when it accepts that everyone is born with evil and that evil cannot be washed away and wiped off with soap and water like dirt, but must be cleansed with repentance.

(c) The Lord leads a person into good by life according to His teachings. There are five teachings about rebirth (seen above, no. 82). Among them are: avoid bad acts because they are the devil's and are from the devil, and do good acts because they are God's and are from God, and approach the Lord so that He can lead people to the doing of those things. Anyone can consider in his own mind and decide if man has good from anywhere else.

And if he does not have good, he does not have salvation.

(d) When this good is implanted it cannot be consigned to someone else. Consigning means transferring one person's good to another. It follows from the things said above that by rebirth a person is totally renewed in spirit, and this happens through a life according to the Lord's

teachings. Who cannot see that this new beginning can only be done with time and in time, hardly different from the way a tree roots and grows from a seed and becomes a full - grown tree? People who see rebirth any other way know nothing about the human condition, and nothing about bad and good - that these two are totally opposite and that good can be implanted only so far as evil is removed. Nor do they know that so long as someone is preoccupied with evil he has his back turned to any good that is good in its own right. So if someone's good were transferred to anyone preoccupied with evil, it would be like tossing a sheep to a wolf or tying a pearl to a pig's nose.

From all this it is clear that transferring good is impossible.

Secrets of Heaven 1419

The symbolism of “and make your name great” as glory can be seen without an explanation.

On the surface, making a name implies something worldly, as does glory, but in an inner sense it implies something heavenly. The heavenly equivalent is not the effort to become greatest but to become least, the servant of all, as the Lord said in Matthew:

It shall not be this way among you, but anyone among you who wants to become great will have to be your attendant. And anyone who wants to be first will have to be your slave. Just as the Son of Humankind did not come to be served but to serve others, and to give his soul as a ransom for many. ([Matthew 20:26-27](#), [28](#); [Mark 10:43](#), [44](#), [45](#))

[2] What makes love heavenly is not the desire to have anything for ourselves but to share with everybody; so it is the desire to give everything that is ours to others. This is the essence of heavenly love. Because the Lord is love itself, or the essence and living power of the love that everyone in heaven has, he wants to give everything that is his to the human race. That is what is symbolized by his declaration that the Son of Humankind had come to give his soul as a ransom for many people.

This demonstrates that the inner meaning of a name and glory is something entirely different from the surface meaning. Anyone in heaven who is obsessed with becoming big and important is rejected, because this goes against the essence and vitality of heavenly love, as given by the Lord.

From this it also follows that nothing is more opposed to heavenly love than self-love. See more on this, from experience, in §§[450](#), [452](#), [952](#).

Luke 15

Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

So he told them this parable: “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. And when he comes

home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.' Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

"Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.' Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Then Jesus said, "There was a man who had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.' So he divided his property between them. A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. But when he came to himself he said, 'How many of my father's hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands."' So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. Then the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.' But the father said to his slaves, 'Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!' And they began to celebrate.

"Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. He replied, 'Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.' Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. But he answered his father, 'Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!' Then the father said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.'"