

Sabbath School Today
With the 1888 Message Dynamic

The Holy Spirit and Spirituality
Lesson 11. Grieving and Resisting the Spirit

The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines grief as a sense of being pressed heavily upon, as with a weight; to burden; or to vex through hostile action. To grieve someone is to offend them, cause mental pain or distress, to cause deep sorrow.

Can God experience these emotions?

Since the Fall in Eden, when humanity's mind became distorted through Satan's influence, we have been vexing God through our enmity and hostility. "For the mind-set of the flesh is hostile to God because it does not submit itself to God's law, for it is unable to do so" (Rom. 8:7, HCSB*).

Our God is a living Being who is love (1 John 4:8). As our Creator and Redeemer, the Godhead has poured out upon us a self-sacrificing love that lays itself bare, vulnerable, open to wounding. We grieve Him when we neglect Him, or show ingratitude and resist His plea to repent.

Throughout the Old Testament we read of God's grief caused by ancient Israel's resistance to His will. From the beginning of their experience at Sinai God would say, "Forty years long was I grieved with this generation!" (Psalm 95:10). Paul tells us that God was grieved "because of their unbelief" (Heb. 3:10, 17–19).

Could it happen again? Can this terrible sin of rejecting God's call to righteousness be repeated?

In 1901, Ellen White said, "We may have to remain here in this world because of insubordination many more years, as did the children of Israel." [1]

In the message to the Laodicean church, Christ reveals His misery. Heart-sick with love for His reluctant bride, He complains, You think you have everything, but without Me you have nothing! Your childish self-righteousness makes Me so sick I want to vomit! (Rev. 3:14–19).

At the Minneapolis General Conference in 1888, we behaved "just like the Jews" in rejecting the light and power the Holy Spirit desired to pour out upon us. "In Minneapolis God gave precious gems of truth to His people in new settings. This light from heaven by some was rejected with all the stubbornness the Jews manifested in rejecting Christ." [2] "I know that at that time the Spirit of God was insulted." [3] "I stated that the course that had been pursued at Minneapolis was cruelty to the Spirit of God." [4] "The Holy

Spirit has been insulted, and light has been rejected. ... If men would only give up their spirit of resistance to the Holy Spirit.” [5]

As a result of our resistance to yield up our preconceived opinions for the last 129 years, the “disappointment of Christ is beyond description ... Christ is humiliated in His people.” [6] The humiliation continues because the plea of the True Witness for us to repent has not been heeded.

“If we place ourselves in a position that we will not recognize the light that God sends or His messages to us, then we are in danger of sinning against the Holy Ghost.” [7]

By saying, “His messages to us” Ellen White was referring to “the most precious message” that “the Lord in His great mercy sent” through “Elders Waggoner and Jones.” The message of Christ and His righteousness “is the message that God commanded to be given to the world. It is the third angel’s message, which is to be proclaimed with a loud voice, and attended with the outpouring of His Spirit in a large measure.” [8]

“Many say, ‘If I had only lived in the days of Christ [or, ‘if I had been at Minneapolis in 1888’], I would not have wrested His word, or falsely interpreted His instruction. I would not have rejected and crucified Him as did the Jews’; but that will be proved by the way in which you deal with His message and His messengers today.” [9]

During that 1888 conference and since that time it has been individual persons who rejected the message, but “there is also a corporate dimension involved ... While everyone is responsible for his or her own decisions, we also have a corporate responsibility” (*Quarterly*, regular ed., p. 89). The *Quarterly* teaches us to “encourage one another” to follow truth, but the opposite can also happen. Through our continued unbelief, we encourage one another to continue to resist the work of the Holy Spirit, and thus we continue to delay the latter rain.

“The reason is that the sins of the fathers get ingrained into us, except for specific knowledge and repentance. Even though we were very few in number in 1888, the character of that unbelieving impertinence has been propagated throughout the worldwide body like a spreading virus. The disease must run its course until repentance can eradicate it. Until then, each new generation absorbs the same lukewarmness. ... Sin has been propagated ever since Eden ‘through the medium of influence, taking advantage of the action of mind on mind, ... reaching from mind to mind’ (*Review and Herald*, April 16, 1901).” [10]

“Pentecost has inspired God’s people for nearly 2000 years. What made those grand results possible? The people believed the portrayal of their corporate guilt [see Acts 2:22, 23; 3:14, 15; 5:30; 10:39; 13:27–29, 45, 46] and frankly confessed their part in the greatest sin of all ages [see Acts 2:37, 41], which their leaders had refused to repent of [see Acts 7:54, 57, 58]. Pentecost was an example of laity rising above the spiritual standard of their leaders. The final outpouring of the Holy Spirit in the latter rain will be an extension of the Pentecost experience.” [11]

We look forward to the second coming of Christ, proclaim its nearness to the world, but until God's people have received the seal of righteousness in our foreheads, He cannot finish His work of cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary. "When Laodicea comes to understand her alienation, her subtle pride and unconscious sin, then she will 'know' her wretchedness, her enmity against her Saviour, and she will repent and be healed." [12]

—Ann Walper

*HCSB: Holman Christian Standard Bible.

Endnotes [1–9 Ellen G. White]:

[1] *Spalding and Magan Collection*, p. 202.

[2] *The Ellen G. White 1888 Materials*, pp. 517-518.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 1043-1044.

[4] *Ibid.* p. 360.

[5] *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*; p. 393.

[6] *Review and Herald*, December 15, 1904.

[7] *1888 Materials*, p. 608.

[8] *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 91, 92

[9] *Review and Herald*, April 11, 1893.

[10] Robert J. Wieland, *Corporate Repentance*, pp. 129, 130; http://www.gospel-herald.com/wieland/corporate_repentance/corporate_repentance_chapter12.html

[11] *Ibid.* p. 96; http://www.gospel-herald.com/wieland/corporate_repentance/corporate_repentance_chapter9.html

[12] Donald K. Short, *Then Shall the Sanctuary Be Cleansed*, p. 45; <http://www.gospel-herald.com/short/sanctuary/sanctuary-ch5.html>

Notes:

Pastor Paul Penno's video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://youtu.be/FUozHf9sXI0>

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