

Sabbath School Lesson #2 – Teach us to Pray – 6-12 January 2024

Christ taught His disciples how to pray. “And it came to pass, that, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, one of His disciples said unto Him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples” (Luke 11:1). Despite the title of this Lesson, it does not delve into how to pray, for that you do well to find and read the booklet entitled “Lord Teach US To Pray,” available on the website below under the library tab.

Sunday: Fostering the Use of the Psalms in Prayer – We are admonished to read the psalms, engaging in simple reflection and then pray. The question is then asked: What does it mean to “let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Col. 3:16)? Why is reading the Bible the first and most crucial step for that experience? The sun is the great healing agency. The ordinary rays of the sun will of themselves alone heal many diseases; many persons if they were only brought out doors and given plenty of fresh air and sunlight, would be healed. The ordinary rays of the sun will in a comparatively short time destroy any disease germ that lives. It is common science that the influence of light upon bacteria is such that adequate daily exposure to direct sunlight is sufficient to destroy them. A child living in sunlight takes up the life-giving rays in its blood, by which it gets rosy cheeks, sparkling eyes, sturdy limbs, and a cheerful spirit. The difference between a child who lives in the sunshine and one who lives altogether in the shade is manifest to every one who sees them. The child of the shade cannot by an occasional run into the sunlight gather up a supply of sunshine in its hands and pockets to distribute to others. There is no other way of carrying sunshine than in the blood. Even so it is with the light of the Word of God. We cannot carry it in our hands, nor in our pockets, or even in our mouths. Light is life and there is no way of carrying it except in the life. “Out of the heart are the issues of life” (Proverbs 4:23); “These words which I command thee this day shall be in thine heart” (Deuteronomy 6:6). “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly” (Colossians 3:16). When the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness are received and absorbed into the life, there will be no difficulty in carrying them to others. Of Christ it is said, “In Him was life, and the life was the light of men” (John 1:4). The life of Christ is the only true light, for He says, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). Since there is no light except the light of Christ, it is most evident that no man can carry that light except by having the life itself. So, Jesus says, “He that followeth Me, shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life.” We may “walk in the light as He is in the light,” and not only so, but we ourselves may be lights. Indeed, we are expected to be lights. “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord; walk as children of light” (Ephesians 5:8). Also, “Do all things without murmurings and disputings, that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:14-15). The sun shines without an effort, because it is light. Christ shines because He is light itself. His life is light, and His word is life. Therefore, whoever receives that word into his heart and life, will shine with the same light, and with no more conscious effort than the sun itself makes. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.”

Monday: Trust in Times of Trouble – In the context of Psalm 44, how can drawing on past times, when God’s presence felt very real, help you deal with the times in which troubles make you think that God is far away? “Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee, our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance” (Psalm 90:8). Is this a matter for joy, or for sorrow? for gladness, or for despondency? Doubtless the most of those who read it do so with a feeling of fear and dread. To appreciate this, let us take that wonderful blessing that God commanded Aaron and his sons to pronounce upon the children of Israel: “The Lord bless thee, and keep thee; the Lord make His face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace” (Numbers 6:24-26). So, there is grace in the shining of the face of the Lord. And what does grace do? The grace of God bringeth salvation (Titus 2:11). “By grace are ye saved” (Ephesians 2:9). And the practical help afforded by the light of the Lord’s countenance is thus set forth: “We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work Thou didst in their days, in the times of old. How Thou didst drive out the heathen with thy hand, and plantedst them;

how Thou didst afflict the people, and cast them out. For they got not the land in possession by their own sword, neither did their own arm save them; but Thy right hand, and Thine arm, and the light of Thy countenance, because Thou hadst a favour unto them” (Psalm 44:1-3).

Tuesday: A Psalm of Despair – In the context of Psalm 22, how can we learn to see beyond our immediate trials and, thus, trust in God’s goodness, whatever we face now? The words Jesus spoke in Matthew 27:46, were recorded in Psalm 22 approximately a thousand years before He spoke them, in what is often called the Psalm of the Cross. At the cross, when Jesus spoke these words, the Jews should have recalled Scripture, they should have recalled Psalm 22, but unfortunately, they had long lived in apostasy so much that they were indifferent to the prophecy being fulfilled. Jesus hang on the cross for six hours, of which three were darkness. In all the emotions and pain that He went through, we find that Jesus resolved in His mind to declare the glory of God: “I will declare thy name unto my brethren: in the midst of the congregation will I praise thee” (Psalm 22:22). Seemingly hopeless on the cross, against hope, seemingly without feelings of hope, yet He declares faith in God, for the sake of His brethren, for He wants us to see God as a loving God. Having declared faith in God, still hanging on the cross, Jesus begun to see the rewards of His suffering: “The meek shall eat and be satisfied: they shall praise the LORD that seek him: your heart shall live for ever” (Psalm 22:26). If you were meek without the cross you would still be lost. Because of the cross, the meek shall eat and be satisfied. We are told this: “He shall see of the travail of his soul, and shall be satisfied: by his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many; for he shall bear their iniquities” (Isaiah 53:11). At the cross, He sees the travail of His soul, but He is satisfied because we can be saved. In the last verse, Jesus saw a remnant people: “They shall come, and shall declare his righteousness unto a people that shall be born, that he hath done this” (Psalm 22:31). Jesus saw beyond the cross the remnant church finishing the work. He breathed His last with the hope that His remnant church, the faithful seed, will carry the three angels messages to the world (Revelation 14). When you see what Jesus went through to save you, when you understand the resolve of Jesus when He was hanging naked on the cross, what is your resolve? Paul says, “For I determined not to know any thing among you, save Jesus Christ, and Him crucified” (1 Cor 2:2). What is your resolve?

Wednesday: From Despair to Hope – In the context of Psalm 13, how can your trials draw you closer to God? Why, if you are not careful, can they push you away from Him? But many are tempted in times of trials to think that God is a far off from them. In times of trials, we do well to read the Psalms to see how similar temptations were overcome. In Psalm 13, the psalmist starts off by mistakenly thinking that God had forgotten him. By the end of the chapter, he recalls that God had helped in the past, he says “I will sing unto the Lord;” sing in remembrance of what He has done formerly; though I should never recover the peace I have had, I will die blessing God that ever I had it; He has dealt bountifully with me formerly, and He shall have the glory of that, however He is pleased to deal with me now; I will sing in hope of what He will do for me at last, being confident that all will end everlastingly well. But he speaks of it as a thing past, “He hath dealt bountifully with me,” because by faith he had received the earnest of the salvation and he was as confident of it as if it had been done already. Elsewhere in psalms we read: “It is better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in princes” (Psalm 118:8). “Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.” “Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for its help, whose hope is in the Lord his God, which made heaven and earth, the sea and all that therein is; which keepeth truth for ever” (Psalm 146: 3, 5-6). What is a god good for, that cannot save in times of trouble? Strange that men who profess to be Christians, who pity the poor heathen who worship gods that can do nothing, will, when danger threatens, act as though the God whom they profess to serve were like the gods of the heathen. That is just when God’s power is seen at its best, for we read: “God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble” (Psalm 46:1).

Thursday: Oh, Restore Us Again – Read Psalm 60:1–5. For what occasions do you think this psalm would be a suitable prayer? This would be suitable in time of repentance and seeking God’s mercy that we be reconciled back to Him. Having acknowledged that it is our sins that have separated us from God, we may use this Psalm to trust that He is merciful to hear our prayers, “That thy beloved may be delivered,” for in Christ we are God’s beloved.