

## Sabbath School Lesson #9 – The Second Missionary Journey – 25-31 August 2018

**C**hrist promised to be with us always, and this is demonstrated in the words He spoke to Paul in his second missionary journey: “Then spake the Lord to Paul in the night by a vision, Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city” (Acts 18:9-10).

Sunday: Back in Lystra – Paul came to Lystra. One lesson here is that Paul’s missionary journey was led by the Holy Spirit. Many want to do like Paul, but they ask not first to be filled with the Holy Spirit; by default they be filled with an evil spirit “transformed into an angel of light” (2 Corinthians 11:14). It is therefore important that, like Paul, who in his mission was led by the Holy Spirit, we truly seek the same leading of the Spirit of God. When Paul had gone “through Syria and Cilicia, confirming the churches” (Acts 15:41), and had come “to Derbe and Lystra,” and “had gone throughout Phrygia and the region of Galatia,” he was “forbidden by the Holy Ghost to preach the word in Asia, After they were come to Mysia, they assayed to go into Bithynia: but the Spirit suffered them not.” Then, “passing by Mysia,” Paul “came down to Troas.” Being at the sea, as far as he could go forward by land, and forbidden by the Holy Spirit to preach the word anywhere in the region behind him, there the Spirit opened the way before him. “And a vision appeared to Paul in the night; There stood a man of Macedonia, and prayed him, saying, Come over into Macedonia, and help us” (Acts 16:1-10). These verses show Paul understood the importance of Spirit led mission.

Monday: Philippi – Paul came to Philippi. One lesson here is that Paul had learnt to trust the leading of the Lord that in whatever circumstance he did not complain. Of his attitude, Paul says, “I have learned; in whatsoever state I am, therewith to be content.” And again, “I have all, and abound” (Philippians 4:11, 18). At his visit to Philippi, Paul was cruelly beaten, and thrust into the inner prison, and his feet made fast in the stocks; yet when he was released the next morning, he went direct to the brethren, and comforted them (Acts 16:40). Not a complaint did he have to make. This is a lesson every missionary ought to learn.

Let us reflect here on the question that the keeper of the prison asked Paul and Silas: “What must I do to be saved?” (Acts 16:30). There is but one answer: “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved.” “By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. Not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus.” But one may say, ‘I do not feel as I ought to; I cannot feel that I am saved.’ If you have never been saved, how do you know how you ought to feel? You do not know how a saved man feels. If you depend on feeling, you will never know whether you are saved or not, for you will never be sure that you have the right feeling, especially since one’s feelings change from day to day, and even in a moment. Can you feel a thing that you do not take hold of? Feeling is touching. If you want to feel that you are saved, the most sensible thing to do is to lay hold on salvation, and that is done only by faith. “Fight the good fight of faith; lay hold on eternal life.” “Faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God.” The Word of God gives life to the dead; and life is salvation. But a dead man cannot feel anything. The Word awakens him to feeling; but a live man does not by any means always have the same feeling. You therefore receive the living Word of God, and you will find life. Then no matter what your feeling may be, you will *know* that you are saved. Jesus saves! That is what His name means. “I even I, am the Lord; and beside Me there is no Saviour” (Isaiah 43:11). “Look unto Me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth, for I am God, and there is none else” (Isaiah 45:22). Thank God for salvation that depends not on our fitful feeling, but on His eternal, almighty power! “If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised Him from the dead, thou shalt be saved.” Do it, then, do it!

Tuesday: Thessalonica and Berea – It is interesting to notice Paul’s method of preaching. He “reasoned with them out of the Scriptures, opening and alleging that Christ must needs have suffered” (Acts 17:3). He did not use a single text as an excuse for reading a learned essay, or delivering an eloquent oration, but he preached the Bible itself. The Bible was his text-book, and he studied it with his congregation. And he did not present his views in an

apologetic manner. He knew what the Bible taught, and believed it; and there was no guess-work about the matter. He presented the truths of God's word as facts. It is this sort of preaching that wins souls if anything will, and it was so in this case. The Gentiles believed: "and of the devout Greeks a great multitude, and of the chief women not a few" (Acts 17:4).

But envy had possession of many of the Jews, so that facts had no weight with them. They attempted to do by force what they were unable to do by legitimate argument. They "took unto them certain lewd fellows of the baser sort" (verse 5) and made an uproar, trying to destroy Paul and Silas. "And when they found them not, they drew Jason and certain brethren unto the rulers of the city, crying, These that have turned the world upside down are come hither also" (verse 6). When Paul and Silas were forced to leave Thessalonica, they came to Berea, where also there was a congregation of Jews, of whom Luke says: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they receive to the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the Scriptures daily, whether those things were so" (Acts 17:11). Here we have true nobility, according to the Bible standard. It is now considered a mark of wisdom to criticise the Bible and pick flaws in it; but God decides differently. "Fools despise wisdom and instruction." The words "more noble" mean literally "of better birth"; so those who with meekness receive the word of God into good and honest hearts are of far higher birth than those who despise it, since they are the sons and daughters of God.

Wednesday: Paul in Athens – When Paul came to Athens, his spirit was stirred, agitated powerfully, because he saw the city wholly given to idolatry. Athens was then the metropolis of the world, the seat of all learning and art. It no doubt had more in it to attract the eye than all the rest of the world. Paul was educated and refined; he doubtless had an eye for the beautiful, both in nature and art. But his was the true culture and refinement – the culture that comes from an acquaintance with God. The vanities of Athens had no attraction for him. He could think only of the one thing – that all these were leading from God. How many Christians are there at the present time who, like Paul, are agitated over the wickedness that abounds, rather than attracted by and lost in admiration for the splendour that is often only a covering for vice? In this age of the world especially the Christian has something far greater to attract the attention than mere sight-seeing. We should not fail to notice the adroitness and skill with which Paul introduced his subject. The philosophers had said, "He seemeth to be a setter forth of strange gods" (Acts 17:18). Now the Athenians were very jealous of the worship of their gods. It is thought that they greatly surpassed all others in their zeal for religion. It was dangerous for anyone to speak against their idol worship. About 400 years before, Socrates, one of their own philosophers, the wisest and most highly esteemed of any among them, had been put to death because they thought he was unsettling the minds of the young, and teaching disrespect for the gods. Now if Paul had introduced this subject bluntly, it is doubtful if he would have been allowed to speak at all. Thus he would have defeated his own purpose. So he took them on their own ground. He said, "I perceive that ye are somewhat superstitious" (verse 22). The word "superstitious," as used here, means 'excessively religious.' He had seen an altar with the inscription, "To an unknown God;" so he said, "Whom therefore ye ignorantly worship, him declare I unto you." They could find no fault with him for teaching them more perfectly concerning a god whom they professed to worship. But this means he was able to preach to them further, "Jesus and the resurrection." Paul showed on this occasion the wisdom of the serpent, in winning souls to Christ, as the apostles had been commanded. Those who labour in these last days would do well to learn a lesson from the preaching of Paul. Yet, how many are there who would not compromise the truth should they be placed in Paul's circumstances, and attempt to do this as he did?

Thursday: Paul in Corinth – Sending Paul to the wicked city of Corinth, the Lord said, "be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace: For I am with thee, and no man shall set on thee to hurt thee: for I have much people in this city" (Acts 18:9-10). With most of the world's population living today in the cities, the Lord calls us to preach the warning message to the cities. Must Seventh-day Adventists live in wicked cities in order to preach? We must practice country living to preach the cities. "The cities are to be worked from outposts. Said the messenger of God, 'Shall not the cities be warned? Yes; not by God's people living in them, but by their visiting them, to warn them of what is coming upon the earth'" {CL 30.2}.