

Sabbath School Lesson #10 – Little Times of Trouble – 1-7 June 2019

Christ would have us live in peace with each other. The apostle's admonition is: "Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath" (Ephesians 4:26). What is the meaning of this text? It gives us permission to be angry, provided we do not sin. Anger that is not sin is allowable, for nothing is forbidden except sin. 'But how can we be angry without sinning?' When we have a righteous indignation against sin, which springs from zeal for the glory of God, and not the common human anger prompted by self-love or self-pity. 'But how can we know we have the right anger?' The only safe course for us to pursue is to refrain from getting angry, until we are sure that we know how to be angry without sin. He who does this, will learn the meaning of the text as soon as it is necessary. 'But what if we realise that our anger has been the sinful type?' Then follow the latter part of the text: let not the sun go down upon your wrath – when you are tempted to self-justification and speak or act sinfully, do not go to sleep before making right that which bruised the soul. Further, as soon as you realise your sin, kneel and pray to God until you find rest in Christ.

Sunday: Conflict – Christians are fellow-servants of one common Lord. We are not taught that it is a matter of indifference whether or not we keep the commandments of God – quite the contrary, since we are all to appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and be judged by them – but we are taught that in those things concerning which the law of God does not speak particularly, one man's ways are as good as another's. "Let us therefore follow after the things which make for peace, and things wherewith one may edify another" (Rom 14:19).

Peace is a characteristic of heaven. Those who are connected to heaven must follow the things which make for peace. Conflict is actuated by selfishness, which never causes peace. On the contrary, selfishness is always the cause of conflict, and inevitably produces war if it is persisted in. Therefore the subject of heaven must always be ready to sacrifice his own desires and ideas in behalf of others. The unselfish person will give up his own ways whenever they interfere with the peace of another. But do not forget that the kingdom of God is righteousness as well as peace. Righteousness is obedience to the law of God; for "all unrighteousness is sin" (1 John 5:17), and "sin is the transgression of the law" (1 John 3:4). Therefore, although by the laws of heaven one must necessarily give up his own wishes in order not to interfere with the feelings of others, by those same laws he is precluded from giving up any of the commandments of God. Obedience to the law of God is that which makes for peace, for we read: "Great peace have they which love thy law" (Psalm 199:165). "O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! Then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea" (Isaiah 48:18). Therefore he who is so "charitable" as to give up any portion of the law of God because some people are displeased with it, is not following the things which make for peace. On the contrary, he is rebelling against the kingdom of Christ. Avoid conflict, practice Christian courtesy and helpfulness.

Monday: Some Principles for Marriage – The Lesson writer counsels spouses to accept they are "married to a sinner" and says, "Get used to it. Accept your spouse's faults." Let us not go further than accepting our human limitations and condone faults. The infirmities of our fallen natures are manifested at almost every step, and the tendencies of sinful flesh and confirmed habits have, in unguarded moments, often unconsciously marred the work we were doing for the Master. God accepts the work because it is wrought in love, through grace, by a heart which is set to do the whole will of God; but He does not condone our faults. These we are to "mortify," "crucify," "keep under," "put off." The graces are to "increase," the love to "abound more and more." There will be growth till imperfection reaches perfection, till the babe in Christ is a fully-developed man. Then with Paul let us say, "Forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

The Gospel of peace is a principle in marriage and in life. We recall two verses quoted above: "Great peace have they which love Thy law; and nothing shall offend them." "O that thou hadst hearkened to My commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea." "The law is spiritual," and "to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 7:14; 8:6). Those who through the Gospel keep the law are kept in

perfect peace, because it is in the Gospel of peace that the righteousness of God – the law – is revealed (Romans 1:16-17). Such ones are not “desirous of vainglory, provoking one another, envying one another.” “For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.” “Love worketh no ill to his neighbour; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” “He that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.” It is only where men, by departing from the Gospel of Christ, transgress the law, that they bite and devour one another, and are consumed of one another. The fruit of the Spirit, against which there is no law, because it is the perfection of the law, is “love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance.” As he admonished the Galatians, the apostle Paul admonishes us: “Brethren, even if a man be overtaken in any trespass, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of meekness; looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted. Bear ye one another’s burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ. For if a man thinketh himself to be something, when he is nothing, he deceiveth himself” (Galatians 6:1-3).

Tuesday: The Role of Anger in Conflict – perhaps by this subtitle the ‘anger’ in question is common human anger often prompted by self-justification. Such anger has no good role in resolving conflict. Pray this to avoid such anger: “Lead us not into temptation.” This is a part of the Lord’s prayer, which it is well for us often to think upon, so that we may earnestly pray it from our hearts every day, and keep it in our minds. For this will help us to remember our own weakness and how impossible it is for us to meet temptation and overcome it in our own strength. There are some who think that they are strong enough to endure temptation, so they do not try to keep away from it, but even sometimes place themselves in the way of it. Such are sure to fall into the very temptation that they thought they were strong to resist. For our greatest weakness is to trust in ourselves, and think that we are strong. But our greatest strength is to know that we have no strength whatever, for then we shall cling always to the mighty arm of Jesus our Saviour, and hide under His wing for shelter. So “Let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.” But when, without our seeking it, or running into it, we meet temptation and trial, then we may pray with trust and confidence to our Heavenly Father, “Deliver us from evil.” He is able to keep us from failing and is even more anxious to keep us spotless than we are to be kept from sin. There is only one way that we can overcome temptation, and be delivered from evil. Jesus tells us the only way, when He says: “Overcome evil with good.” Yet in us “dwelleth no good thing,” so of ourselves we have no “good” with which to “overcome evil.” For “there is none good but one, that is, God,” and everything that is good must come from Him. So we may read this in its true meaning, “Overcome evil with *God*.” It is just what His Word tells us to do; for “He gave *Himself* for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world.” God has given us Himself in giving us His only begotten Son. Have you received the wondrous gift? and do you know His power to keep you? If so, you may sing the beautiful Psalm: “Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me.”

Wednesday: Conflict, Abuse, Power, and Control – Marriage, as the Sabbath, was given by God in Eden before sin corrupted man. Due to sin, men break the Sabbath and break their marriage vows. Abuse in marriage is common, sadly even among those who profess to be Seventh-day Adventists. The Bible is clear as to how husbands ought to treat wives in order to keep marriages pure. “Husbands, love *your* wives, and be not bitter against them.”

Thursday: Forgiveness and Peace – As Christians, you are to “let the peace of God rule in your hearts” (Colossians 3:15). For this reason we are to “follow peace with all men, and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord” (Hebrews 12:14). In Romans 12 we are instructed, “If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men.” That does not mean that we are to live peaceably with all men just as long as we can endure their provocation, and when that gets unendurable, that we are at liberty to have it out with them in a regular quarrel. But, it does mean that “if it be possible, as much as *lieth in you*,” you are to live at peace with all men. How far now, is it possible for the Christian to live at peace with all men? It is possible for him to be at peace with all men, as far as he himself is concerned, all the time. For, he is dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto Christ. Christ dwells in his heart by faith, and Christ is the Prince of peace. Then there are no circumstances under which the Christian is justified in losing his temper and declaring war against brethren or other souls.