

Sabbath School Lesson #13 – Living by the Word of God – 20-26 June 2020

Christ bids us to be hearers and doers of the word. “But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves” (James 1:22). “Not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Romans 2:13). “Take heed therefore how ye hear” (Luke 8:18). “For if any man be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass; for he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed” (James 1:23-25).

Sunday: The Living Word of God and the Holy Spirit – The Spirit of Christ is the only source of our strength. “For 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 unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8-10). Christ says: “Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine; no more can ye, except ye abide in Me. I am the vine, ye are the branches; he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit; for without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:4-5). Paul prayed: “Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ” (Hebrews 13:20-21). Not only are we dependent upon God for the good that may be manifested in our lives, but also for the very desire to do good. “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:12-13). When Adam sinned, the plan of salvation provided not only a way of escape from sin, but the desire to escape. And so God said to the serpent, “And I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed” (Genesis 3:15). God has implanted in the soul of every man some natural desires for the right; and whenever a man gives himself wholly to sin, he does so only by resisting the strivings of the Spirit of Christ. We are indebted to Christ for every good. So it is that Christ is the “true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world” (John 1:9). Thus it is that Christ is made unto us, the very “wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption” (1 Corinthians 1:30). And so the true child of God, while patiently continuing in well-doing, will ever exclaim, “God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world” (Galatians 6:14). And when all the redeemed stand at last before the throne of God, their whole ascription of praise will be “unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood” (Revelation 1:5).

Monday: Learning From Jesus – Jesus “went about doing good; for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). He Himself said, “I can of Mine own self do nothing” (John 5:30). “The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works” (John 14:10). Jesus said, “Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go unto My Father” (John 14:12). But if there is unbelief even in the slightest degree, certainly no works at all will be done; for “this is the work of God, that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent” (John 6:29). Whatever good works one has come from God; for that which was true of Christ must most certainly be true of us, “I can of Mine own self do nothing.” “The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works.” Since “it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure”, it is not necessary for us to know *how*. Our part is simply to yield as instruments of righteousness.

But many Seventh-day Adventists go about doing things without learning from Jesus. They do not ask what would Jesus do? For example, on 25 May 2020, was a tragic death of George Floyd (a black African-American who died of a knee on his neck by a white police officer), as protestors in America and in the UK and in many other countries took to the streets to protest racial injustice, Adventists voiced advocating for civil reform without asking the question: what would Jesus do – would Jesus grab a sign and square off against police or write letters to politicians or advocate for civil reforms? Ellen white tells us what Jesus

did: "The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses, – extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart" {DA 509.3}.

Tuesday: Jesus Versus Scripture? – Many Jews had the scriptures, but did not believe in Christ, so are many professed Christians without Christ. The preaching of the cross is foolishness to them as much as it ever was to the Greeks, although they may not scoff at it. When Christ appeared in the flesh the great body of the Jewish nation rejected Him. Even so He has told us that when He comes the second time faith will be a rare thing on the earth. But we must remember that the reason why the Jews rejected Christ was because they did not believe the sacred Scriptures, just as the reason why the Son of man when He comes will scarcely find faith on the earth, will be because of the growing skepticism in regard to the Bible. To those unbelieving Jews Christ said: "Do not think that I will accuse you to the Father; there is one that accuseth you, even Moses, in whom ye trust. For had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me: for he wrote of me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:45-47). Taking a more general view, we learn that not only Moses but all the prophets taught the facts concerning Christ and His work. Peter says that the prophets "prophesied of the grace that should come onto you; searching what, or what manner of time the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow" (1 Peter 1:10-11). If like the prophets of old, "the Spirit of Christ" be in us, we will know that scriptures testify of Him.

Wednesday: Quiet Times With the Word of God – Quiet times calls for us to silently listen to the word of God! "The Lord is in His holy temple; let all the earth keep silence before Him" (Habakkuk 2:20). Why keep silent? – Because *He speaks*, and we need to hear. "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken" (Isaiah 1:2). "Be still, and know that I am God" (Psalm 46:10). There is a good reason why people as a general thing find it so difficult to understand the Word of the Lord, and that is, that they do not keep still long enough to hear what He says. If when a teacher began to speak, all his hearers should at once fall to disputing with one another, and to questioning and contradicting him, no one would wonder at their not understanding him; and none would be warranted in saying that he spoke so indistinctly or in so obscure a manner that he could not be understood. If they should make this complaint, they would merit the retort, 'If you would but keep still, and listen, you would have no difficulty in understanding.' This is exactly the way it is when the Lord speaks. No sooner is a word uttered, than people begin to clamour; without giving quiet consideration to His Word, or even waiting to hear what He has to say, they begin, 'I do not see how that can be; yes, but then how about this?; That does not harmonise with the other statement; what do you think of that?; 'what is your opinion about this matter?; it cannot mean that; this is what it means; and so on without limit. No wonder they do not understand. If a learned professor should begin to speak upon his special subject, all sensible persons would respectfully and attentively listen, because they would consider that the only wise thing to do is to listen when one wiser than they speaks; and they would strain their ears not to miss a word, so that they might understand. Should we not much more silently listen when the Lord of the universe, "the only wise God" (Romans 16:27; Jude 1:25), speaks?

Thursday: Memory and Song – "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord" (Colossians 3:16). "In everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18). God has given us "oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness" (Isaiah 61:3); and though you may never have studied music, and your voice never heard in the congregation, you shall surely involuntarily be "speaking to yourselves in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody in your heart to the Lord; *giving thanks always for all things* unto God and the Father, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 5:18-20).