

Sabbath School Lesson #3 – Seeing People Through Jesus’ Eyes – 11-17 July 2020

Christ would have us learn the lesson of how He wishes men to obey His call to follow Him. Simon and Andrew were fishers. Jesus said, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matthew 4:17). Not a moment did they hesitate, but “straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him” (Mark 1:17-18). Peter and John were also fishers. They were in their boat mending their nets, which had been broken by the great number of fish that they had just taken (Luke 5:6). Jesus called them, “and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after Him.” “And after these things He went forth, and a publican, named Levi, sitting at the receipt custom, and He said unto him, Follow Me. And left all, rose up and followed Him” (Luke 5:27). There are two great difficulties that confront people when they are asked to follow Christ. That is, most people are confronted by one or the other of them. One of them is the poverty of the one called, and the other is the wealth. One man hesitates because he has hard work to make a living, and he does not know how his family will be provided for if he obeys the Lord. Another man has so extensive a business on his hands that it is impossible to leave it, at least until he had time to arrange his affairs. Both these classes of people are represented in the above calls, but they took no account of the difficulties. We know that Peter had a family, and, being a humble fisherman, could not have been wealthy. Yet he did not stop to consider how he should supply his family if he obeyed the voice of Jesus, but left his nets, and went with Him. Levi was wealthy, for the office of publican was a very lucrative one; yet he left his business at a moment’s notice, when Jesus called to him, “Follow Me.” So it was with Paul. He says, “when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother’s womb, and called me by His grace, to reveal His Son in me, that I might preach Him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood” (Galatians 1:15-16). That is the way the Lord wishes men to obey His voice. He reveals Himself in the Sabbath of the fourth commandment – the seventh day (Exodus 20:8-11) – and says to them, “Follow Me.” Many hesitate. With some it is their poverty that stands in the way. They do not see how they can live if they keep the Sabbath, forgetting that people who do not keep the Sabbath also die, and forgetting that it is the Creator of the heaven and the earth who calls them, forgetting that He who calls them to obey Him, says, “The silver is Mine, and the gold is Mine” (Haggai 2:8), and also, “The earth is the Lord’s, and the fullness thereof” (Psalm 24:1). Of His power to provide for His followers, we have a striking proof in the wonderful draught of fishes that the disciples took at His word. The more wealthy are still more inclined to hesitate to obey the call which Jesus sends them in the Sabbath, because the Sabbath is the best day for business. They do not reflect that it is He who gives them power to get wealth (Deuteronomy 8:18), and that He is just as able to give wealth to those who obey Him as He is to give it to those who disobey Him; and that, after all, “a man’s life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth.” Men cannot be too slow to follow strange and doubtful voices; they cannot be too cautious about moving when God has not spoken; but they cannot be too quick to obey the voice of the Lord. In Psalm 119:60, David said, “I made haste, and delayed not to keep Thy commandments.” And then king David declared that he would run in the way of the commandments of God. God’s will is to be done on earth as it is in heaven; and in heaven the angels “do His commandments, hearkening unto the voice of His word” (Psalm 103:20).

Sunday: The Second Touch – In Mark 8:22-26 we find a blind man that Jesus healed, and upon the first touch the man could see men like trees walking. We do well to reflect on the application of this by Ellen White to many in our church: “I write this because many in the church are represented to me as seeing men like trees walking. They must have another and deeper experience before they discern the snares spread to take them in the net of the deceiver. There must be no half-way work done now. The Lord calls for staunch, decided, whole-souled men and women to stand in the gap, and make up the hedge. ‘And they that shall be of thee shall build the old waste places, and raise up the foundations of many generations, and thou shalt be called, The repairer of the breach, The restorer of paths to dwell in. If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy pleasure on my holy day: and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honorable; and shall honor him, not

doing thine own ways nor finding thine own pleasure, nor speaking thine own words; Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord; and I will cause thee to ride upon the high places of the earth, and feed thee with the heritage of Jacob thy father: for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.' [Isaiah 58:12-14.]" {12LtMs, Ms 185, 1897, par. 12}. "There is a decided testimony to be borne by all our ministers in all our churches. God has permitted apostasies to take place in order to show how little dependence can be placed in man. We are always to look to God. His Word is not Yea and Nay, but Yea and Amen" {12LtMs, 1897, par. 13}.

Monday: A Lesson in Acceptance – In John 4 we learn the lesson of how the Lord had compassion upon the Samaritan woman. The same compassion He had always extended to Israel and He extends to us. Israel's course was like the fluctuation of the sea. They progressed to retrograde and "they ceased not from their stubborn way." Upon settling in Canaan, the Lord had promised to drive out their enemies if they would walk in His ways, but later He declared, "I also will not henceforth drive out any from before them of the nations which Joshua left when he died." But, even in this stern and just sentence, runs a thread of divine compassion, for He added, "That through them I may prove Israel, whether they will keep the way of the Lord to walk therein" (Judges 2:19-22). The Lord could not give them up. Bad as they were, He saw in them the possibility of purity through the infinite merit of His grace. He would use the nations as scourges to chasten His people, that they might return to Him who could cleanse their sins, and redeem their lives from destruction. It is thus He deals with us in our apostasy; but the day of His patience is fast hastening to its close. Says the prophet: "Behold, the day of the Lord cometh, cruel both with wrath and fierce anger, to lay the land desolate: and He shall destroy the sinners thereof out of it" (Isaiah 13:9-11). Now is the time to tear down the idols, for soon a selfish but bitter cry will sound from the idolaters and liars, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and I am not saved" (Jeremiah 8:20).

Tuesday: Begin Where You Are – Whilst to begin where you are can mean to begin with your neighbours, and preach to them the gospel, we do well, especially Adventists who are still dwelling in the cities, to begin with moving our families out of the cities. Lot begun where he was, in Sodom, and preached the gospel where he was, but he neglected to start by moving his family out of Sodom, and he lost them. If Covid-19 global pandemic with its far-reaching lockdown has taught Adventists who are still in the cities anything, it is to take their flight out of the cities as soon as the lockdown eases, lest like Lot they will not be able to save their families. Begin where you are, even in the cities, but not by dwelling in the cities, rather begin in your family by moving them out of the cities. "When iniquity abounds in a nation, there is always to be heard some voice giving warning and instruction, as the voice of Lot was heard in Sodom. Yet Lot could have preserved his family from many evils, had he not made his home in this wicked, polluted city. All that Lot and his family did in Sodom could have been done by them, even if they had lived in a place some distance away from the city. Enoch walked with God, and yet he did not live in the midst of any city, polluted with every kind of violence and wickedness, as did Lot in Sodom" {CL 30.5}. Let us be wise.

Wednesday: Dealing With Difficult People – The Lord meets men just where they are. He has "compassion on the ignorant, and on them that are out of the way" (Hebrews 5:2). He is always and everywhere seeking to draw all men to Himself, no matter how depraved they are; and therefore when He discerns even the faintest glimmer of a willingness or desire to serve Him, He at once nourishes it, making the most of it He can to lead the soul to greater love and more perfect knowledge. We find in scripture many examples where the children of Israel proved difficult to save, worked to frustrate the work of the Lord for their salvation, and often when they attempted to return to the Lord they sought to do so in their own human effort, yet the Lord took advantage of their expressed willingness to serve Him.

Thursday: Sensing Providential Opportunities – The Lord would have us use every opportunity to spread the gospel. We may even use the opportunity presented itself in the rising tensions of racial discrimination. As the gospel is based on a principle that there is no difference in men, it is absolutely essential that the gospel worker should recognise the fact, and always keep it in mind. God "hath made of one blood all nations of men for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17:26). Not only are all men of one blood, but they are also of "one kind of flesh" (1 Corinthians 15:39). The gospel is to reach all tongues and all peoples.