

## Sabbath School Lesson #11 – Sharing *the Story of Jesus* – 5-11 September 2020

**C**hrist comprises everything. Our life must find rest in Christ in order for us to be able to effectively share His story. The Christian life is a life of rest even in toil. “These things have I spoken unto you, that in Me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation; but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world” (John 16:33). This rest is found in Christ, – in His life. But His life is eternal life, which He gives to as many as receive Him. “These things have I written unto you, that ye may know that ye have eternal life, even unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God” (1 John 5:13). The Gospel – story of Jesus – has to do with eternal things, but eternal things in the present time. The trouble with many people is that they regard eternity as only future, whereas eternity is past, present, and future. It has been, is, and is to be. But specially is it *now*, God “inhabiteth eternity” (Isaiah 57:15), but His name is I AM. Eternity with Him is always present. Likewise He desires us to live the life eternal, but always in the present. He who truly believes in Christ, passes from death unto life, from the temporal to the eternal, from the unreal to the real.

**Sunday: Jesus: The Basis of Our Testimony** – There is nothing made more clear in the Bible than that no man is justified by works, but that justification is wholly by faith. Thus wrote Paul, “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” (Ephesians 2:8-9). “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another. But after that the kindness and love of God our Saviour toward man appeared, not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour; that being justified by His grace, we should be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:5-7). “For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23). “The carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be” (Romans 8:7). “We are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags” (Isaiah 64:6). “Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood, to declare His righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God.” “Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law” (Romans 3:24-25, 28). These texts show plainly that no works of man have any effect in securing his justification. But do they discredit the law? – Not by any means. “Do we then make void the law through faith? God forbid; yea, we establish the law” (Romans 3:31). The law is the only standard of justice; because, “not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified” (Romans 2:13). Christ’s righteousness is perfect obedience to the law, which was within His heart (John 15:10; Psalm 40:8). Christ dwells in the heart by faith (Ephesians 3:17), and it is His presence in the heart that justifies us, as we by faith take His life instead of our own. So we are justified by faith, because faith brings Christ and His obedience into the heart and life. Thus Jesus is the basis of our testimony.

**Monday: The Transformative Power of Personal Testimony** – The transforming power of our Lord can be learnt from the calling of His disciples. There were twelve of them, but of only a few have we any particulars. We know that Peter and Andrew and James and John were fishers. Fishing is not the most refined and gentle occupation in the world, and we are given glimpses of the character of James and John, which show that they were not very gentle by nature (Luke 9:54). They, as well as Peter, were ready to fight anyone who offered them or their Master insult. When Peter was brought into a place where his life seemed to be endangered through his acquaintance with Christ, his fears gained the mastery of him, and he denied his Lord. Not only so, but he did it with curses and swearing. Now we cannot suppose that Peter was in the habit at that time of using profane language but we know that men who in their lives are not accustomed to use such language, do not break forth into profane expletives on any occasion, no matter how much they are taken unawares. But a man who in former days has been in the habit of swearing, but who through association with Christ has abstained from it for some time, may very easily relapse into the old way when

sudden temptation assaults him while away from the Lord. Indeed, no matter how long a man has been master of an evil habit, the moment he loses his connection with the Lord, that moment he begins to sink back into the old slough. So the fact that when Peter was frightened into denying Christ, he did it with cursing and swearing, shows that in the old days before he knew the Lord, he had been a rough, profane fisherman full of generous impulses. Judas was another of the men whom Jesus called. He was the one who betrayed the Lord, selling Him for thirty pieces of silver. His besetting sin was covetousness. When the funds of the little company of disciples were placed in his keeping, he became a thief. Yet we must not forget that he was called by the Lord to be an apostle, and as one of the twelve was sent out with "power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of disease and all manner of sickness," and was given the commission, "Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers, cast out devils" (Matthew 10:1-8). Even up to the very moment when he delivered the Lord into the hands of the mob, there was no one but the Lord Himself who could distinguish any particular difference between him and the other disciples. Judas was outwardly as correct in his deportment as they; and there is nothing to indicate that in the beginning his nature was any worse than theirs. Indeed, from what the Bible teaches of the nature of all men, we know that when the disciples were called, Judas was as promising a subject as any of them. What then made the difference at the last? Simply this, that the eleven yielded themselves to the influence of the Lord, and were drawn out of their old lives, and transformed by His Spirit, while Judas, however much he may have been attracted at the first, clung to his own way, stubbornly resisting the transforming power of the Lord, and so became more and more hardened. Judas shows what any man may come to if he resists the Spirit, while Peter, James, and John, together with many others, reveal to us what the grace of God can do for anyone who submits to it. It is by the grace of the Lord Jesus, that such men, taken from such surroundings, could develop into such giants in spiritual stature.

**Tuesday: Telling the Story of Jesus** – We read of the demoniac in Luke 5:15-20. After Jesus freed him from demons, the former demoniac asked if he could follow Jesus, but Jesus told him to go home and witness to his friends. It would certainly have been more pleasant for the restored man to have remained with Christ; but great blessings bring great obligations. As Christ had released him from the bondage of Satan he became Christ's servant, and it was therefore his duty to do Christ's work. Jesus told him to "go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee." This he cheerfully did, and the result was that those who would not accept Jesus in person because they did not know Him, listened with wonder as He was lifted up in the life and testimony of the restored demoniac. There is no testimony so powerful as that which comes from a heart which has been cleansed from sin by the power of Christ. Let us always ever remember that Christ calls us and cleanses us for service.

**Wednesday: Testifying With Assurance** – We can testify with assurance only because we have Christ. Christ did not go through the pangs of death for nothing, nor did He give His life to us for the purpose of taking it away again. When He gives us His life, He designs that we shall keep it forever. How do we get it? By faith. How do we keep it? By the same faith. "As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in Him" (Colossians 2:6). His life can never end, but we may lose it by unbelief. For let it be remembered that we have not this life in ourselves, but "this life is in His Son." "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life" (1 John 5:11-12). We keep the everlasting life by keeping Christ. Now it is a very simple proposition that if we have been reconciled to God by the death of Christ, – if His life has been given to us for the remission of our sins, then we shall much more be saved by that life since He has risen from the dead. Many say that they can believe that God forgives their sins, but they find it difficult to believe that He can keep them from sin. If there is any difference, the latter is easier of the two; for the forgiveness of sins requires the death of Christ, while the saving from sins requires only His continued life.

**Thursday: Something Worth Testifying About** – May we, by the grace of God, learn to surrender daily, every moment in life, that like Paul we may say: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me" (Galatians 2:20).