

## Sabbath School Lesson #8 – Free to Rest – 14-20 August 2021

**C**hrist would have us be free to rest in the assurance of our salvation. “The Lord is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? the Lord is the strength of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?” (Psalm 27:1). The one message for this and all time is that “God is light, and in Him is no darkness at all” (1 John 1:5). He is the light of the world – all the light there is. His light is “the light of life.” This is why the light is the greatest healing agency known; there can be no life where there is no light; but it has been discovered that light can penetrate everywhere, and that light shines forth from even the most opaque bodies. God, however, is all light, and therefore He is the Saviour, the Healer. Having Him, there is no room to question if we shall be saved; we are already saved, because He is our salvation.

**Sunday: Healing Rest** – We find the story in Mark 2:1-12. Compare with the parallel passages in Matthew 9:1-8 and Luke 5:17-26. Jesus had returned to Capernaum, and had entered the house where He was accustomed to stay when He was in the city. It was quickly noised abroad that He was at home, and soon the house was filled to overflowing with people anxious to hear Him speak, and a great crowd gathered round the door, eager to get within the sound of His voice. These people were not alone from the town, but “there were Pharisees and doctors of the law sitting by, which were come out of every town of Galilee and Judea, and Jerusalem” (Luke 5:17). So we see that “this thing was not done in a corner” (Acts 26:26). “The redemption that is in Christ Jesus” (Romans 3:24) was that day made known throughout all the land. There was “the power of the Lord was present to heal” (Luke 5:17). Whether any of those who were sitting by availed themselves of this opportunity to be healed, or not, we are not told; but there were some who were determined not to let the chance go by. While Jesus was teaching, four men came bearing a fifth on a stretcher, seeking to get near to Him. The fifth man was a paralytic, utterly unable to help himself. But the crowd about the door was impenetrable, and no one would move, to give place to the new-comer. The faith of the five, however, was not dampened; mounting with difficulty to the flat roof of the house, they tore off the tiles, and let the man down directly in front of Jesus. They were bound to attract His attention, and would not be thwarted. Such faith could not be ignored. To the palsied man, Jesus said, “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee” (Mark 2:5). Then, when those sitting by began to murmur, and to talk about blasphemy, Jesus asked them which they thought was easier, To forgive the man’s sins, or to make him arise and walk. Without waiting for an answer, He turned again to the man, and said, “Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.” Immediately the palsied man arose, took up his bed, and went his way glorifying God, while the people said, “We have seen strange things to-day, the like of which we never saw before,” and they glorified God, who had given such authority to man. That is the whole story; what lessons may we now learn from this story?

**Monday: Root Treatment** – One lesson we learn from the story of is man’s chief need. The first thing that is every man’s chief need, no matter what his condition, is forgiveness of sins. The Lord always does the most important thing first, and the first thing He did for this man was to make known to him the forgiveness of his sins. This is man’s chief need, for, as we see in the story, it includes everything else. “Sin came into the world, and death by sin” (Romans 5:12). As sin has brought every misery and woe with it, the remission of sins removes every other ill. We learn also that the palsied man was more troubled over his sinful condition than over his illness of body. Read the words of the Lord: “Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.” This shows that the man was sad and despondent, and that his sadness was over his sins. All that was needed to make him of good cheer, in spite of his helpless condition, was to know that his sins were forgiven. The words of Jesus brought peace to the troubled heart, and the man felt that now he could be content to die. He had wished for healing, that he might ‘live a different life.’ How many have longed for ‘another chance,’ not knowing that without a new life from the Lord they could not live any different life from that which they have been living. But now the man’s sins were forgiven; the words announcing the fact came with such positive assurance that he could not doubt it. He believed, and was at peace, for “being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Romans 5:1). While the paralytic himself believed, the others doubted.

**Tuesday: Running Away** – In Elijah’s conduct, after the triumph on Mount Carmel, is seen the manifestation of human weakness. He who had boldly faced an apostate nation, the wrath of the king and the malice of the priests of Baal, now flees for his life before the anger of Jezebel. God had vindicated His own name in sending fire from heaven, and Elijah, as His faithful servant, had shared the glory which thereby came upon the worship of Jehovah. Israel, at his command, had risen against their false prophets and slain them all; yet to Elijah it seems that the cause is lost, evil had triumphed, and death would be a welcome end. We do well to trace the parallel between Elijah’s times and ours. Today a message is given in the spirit and power of Elijah, calling men to forsake modern Baal and return to the worship of the true God – call made even in our Seventh-day Adventist Church. Still, as back then, God uses men as His instruments, and now, as ever, men are but dust.

**Wednesday: Too Tired to Run** – For those Seventh-day Adventists who believe in the true God and in His Son, circumstances are before us which will try us to the utmost, and will, unless we profit by the Scriptures which are written for our learning, desolate our souls and wring from us Elijah’s cry, “It is enough; now, O Lord, take away my life” (1 Kings 19:4). How then shall those who fear God, and serve Him, declare His message fearlessly as did Elijah, and yet escape the bitterness of his despair? Does not Elijah’s self-accusing plaint, “for I am not better than my fathers,” suggest the cause of his sudden weakness? It seems so difficult for men to allow God to work through them without taking to themselves some credit for the power manifested. Those who feel their utter need of all things, and in whose weakness the strength of God is made perfect, are yet tempted, when a great work is done, to forget that all they have contributed to it was nothing and less than nothing; for “verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity” (Psalm 39:5). So they flatter themselves that they must be better than our Adventist pioneers. The awakening from this delusion is a painful experience, but an absolutely necessary one. Together with the “spirit and power of Elijah” (Luke 1:17) must go the spirit displayed in John the Baptist, to whom was committed the same work, “He must increase, but I must decrease” (John 3:30). So shall we be saved from painful and humiliating falls, and our continued usefulness be secured. The food given to Elijah, by which he was sustained for forty days and forty nights on his journey to Horeb, showed that the strength in which he was to go was in no wise dependent upon himself, and its apparent insufficiency for so long a period might have prepared him for the lesson given at Horeb, that the power of God is not qualified or limited by outward appearances.

**Thursday: Rest and More** – When the message of the Gospel, given in the power of Elijah, brings the messengers face to face with the betrayal within, the wrath of the dragon, and the powers of this world, the temptation of Elijah will come to us to make us feel that evil has triumphed, we alone are left to serve God, and they seek our lives to take them away. Then will the Lord comfort us, as He did Elijah with the news of the seven thousand. “Lift up thine eyes round about, and behold: all these gather themselves together and come to thee.” “Then shalt thou say in thine heart, Who hath begotten me these, seeing I have lost my children, and am desolate, a captive, and removing to and fro? and who hath brought up these? Behold, I was left alone; these, where had they been?” The Lord answers this question by telling of His own working, and adds, “And thou shalt know that I am the Lord: for they shall not be ashamed that wait for Me” (Isaiah 49). His strength is made perfect in weakness, but we so soon get tired of weakness. Christ was always dependent upon His Father for words and works, and even for will. He spake with a still, small voice (1 Kings 19:12), but the power of God was in the voice. The power of God is very gentle. Paul wrote to the Thessalonians that “our Gospel came to you in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance.” Yet he says, “We were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her children” (1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2:7). The remembrance of the gentleness of God’s power will keep us from discouragement if we do not see the kind of power manifested that seems to our minds necessary for the furtherance of the Gospel, and the lament of Elijah, that we are no better than our fathers, and that it can profit the world nothing for us to live on any longer, will never rise to the lips of those who remember that God hath chosen “the base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence” (1 Corinthians 1:28-29).