

Sabbath School Lesson #9 – A Life of Praise – 20-26 August 2022

Christ would have us fight the good fight of faith, putting all our trust in Him who is mighty to save. Many people tell of how hard they found it to do right; their Christian life was most unsatisfactory to them, being marked only by failure, and they were tempted to give up in discouragement. No wonder they get discouraged; continual failure is enough to discourage anybody. The bravest soldier in the world would become faint-hearted if he had been defeated in every battle. Sometimes these persons will mournfully tell that they have about lost confidence in themselves. Oh, these poor souls, if they would only lose confidence in themselves entirely, and would put their whole trust in the one who is mighty to save, they would have a different story to tell. They would then “joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ.” Says the apostle, “Rejoice in the Lord always; and again I say, Rejoice” (Philippians 4:4). He who does not rejoice in God, even though tempted and afflicted, is not fighting the good fight of faith. He is fighting the poor fight of self-confidence and defeat.

Sunday: Framework for Praise – What is the framework of praise, but to be in peace? John fourteen begins by saying: “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me.” It ends by saying: “Peace I leave with you, My peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid.” So the chapter ends where it began: “Let not your heart be troubled.” Peace is ours, then how can we be troubled. Do not get things reversed. We are not to believe that we have peace because we have no trouble; but since Christ has given us His peace, we are not to be troubled, no matter how great the trouble. “My peace I give unto you.” Peace, perfect peace, means victory. In that Christ gives us His peace, He gives us His victory. He has conquered, and put the enemy to flight, after taking from him all his armour wherein he trusted, and He gives us peace. Not only so, but He gives us His peace – the peace that was unruffled even in the fiercest fight. He was oppressed and persecuted as no other man ever was; spies were continually on His track, perverting His words, seeking to exasperate Him, whispering about Him, bearing false witness, defaming His character, arousing suspicion, contradicting and abusing Him; yet never once was He impatient. What perfect peace! And this peace He has given us. We are not able to keep patient under trials, but the peace of Jesus can keep us. “Be careful for nothing; but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your request be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7).

Monday: Praying Down Walls – What is the key to prayer that downs walls? It is faith. John says that he that is born of God overcomes the world, through faith. Faith lays hold of the arm of God, and His mighty power does the work. How God’s power works in a man, accomplishing that which he could not possibly do for himself, no one can tell. It would be as easy to tell how God can give life to the dead. We cannot tell how Peter was enabled to walk on water, when the waves were rolling about him; but we know that at the command of the Lord he did it. So long as he kept his eye fixed on the Master, divine power enabled him to walk as easily as though it were solid rock underneath; but when he looked at the waves, possibly with a feeling of pride in what he was doing, as though he himself was doing it, fear very naturally took possession of him, and he began to sink. Faith enabled him to walk on the waves; fear made him sink beneath them. Says the apostle: “By faith the walls of Jericho fell down after they were compassed about seven days” (Hebrews 11:30). Why was that written? For our learning, “that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4). Why, is there any prospect that we shall ever be called upon to fight armed hosts, and to take fortified cities? No; “for we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places” (Ephesians 6:12); but the victories which have been gained by faith in God over visible foes in the flesh, are placed on record to show us what faith will accomplish in our conflict with the rulers of the darkness of this world. The grace of God, in answer to faith, is as powerful in these battles as in those; for we read: “For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh; for the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds; casting down

imaginings, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ" (2 Corinthians 10:3-5). It was not physical foes alone that faith enabled the ancient worthies to conquer. We read of them that they not only "subdued kingdoms," but "wrought righteousness, obtained promises," and, most wonderful and most encouraging of all, "out of weakness were made strong" (Hebrews 11:33-34). Their very weakness became strength to them through faith, because the strength of Christ is made perfect in weakness. Who, then, shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? since it is God that justifieth, and we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works. "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" "Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us" (Romans 8:35, 37).

Tuesday: The Life of Praise – What is the basis of true praise? The Divine injunction is, "Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord" (Psalm 150:6). This is without qualification. Rich and poor, high and low, the prosperous and the afflicted, the good and bad, – all are called upon to praise the Lord. There is no reason in the world why all men should not praise Him. "He is good;" and "His mercy endureth for ever" (Psalm 137:1). "The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord" (Psalm 33:5). "He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil" (Luke 6:35). "God commendeth His love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8). There are very many professed Christians who when conscious of their sin cannot praise Him. They praise the Lord when they feel in good case, and not otherwise. That which such ones call praising the Lord is really praise of themselves. The Pharisee doubtless thought he was praising the Lord when he said, "God, I thank thee that I am not as other men." He had no consciousness of sin, he felt good, and so he praised-himself. The fact that so many persons do not think that they can praise the Lord except when they feel in the best condition, is evidence that their praise is not for what the Lord is but for what they are, or what they think they are. True praise to God is that which arises solely from a sense of His goodness. The highest angel in heaven would find nothing for which to praise the Lord, if he looked to himself. We can praise only the object that we are looking at and thinking about. Praise to God is for what He is, and not for what we are. Now God is always the same, no matter what our condition. Therefore He is always worthy of praise. Out of the depths we may praise the Lord, and thereby be lifted up into the presence of His glory; for He says, "Whoso offereth praise, glorifieth Me." If the wicked would begin to praise the Lord, they would cease to be wicked. In our greatest sinfulness we may praise the Lord for His love and mercy to sinners. The goodness of God leads to repentance, and the continual recognition of that goodness keeps the soul in dependence upon it. So let all say in sincerity: "I will extol Thee, my God, O King; and I will bless Thy name for ever and ever. Every day will I bless Thee; and I will praise Thy name for ever and ever" (Psalm 145:1-2).

Wednesday: A Witness Who Convicts – In reading Romans 10:6-9, may we accept these words, especially the statement in the last verse, as literally true? Shall we not be in danger if we do? Is not something more than faith in Christ necessary to salvation? To the first of these questions we say, Yes, and to the last two we say, No. Read Acts 16:16-34, The jailer at Philippi, trembling under his load of guilt, he fell down before Paul and Silas, saying, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" Mark well the answer; for here was a soul in sorest extremity and what was sufficient for him must be the message to all lost ones. To the jailer's anguished appeal, Paul replied, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." This agrees with Romans 10:6-9. Many think that faith is not enough. The trouble is many have a faulty conception of faith. They imagine that it is mere assent and that it is only a passive thing to which active works must be added. But faith is active and it is not only the most substantial thing but the only real foundation. The law is the righteousness of God (Isaiah 51:6-7), for which we are commanded to seek (Matthew 6:33), but it cannot be kept except by faith, for the only righteousness which will stand in the Judgment is "that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith" (Philippians 3:9).

Thursday: A Weapon That Conquers – In 2 Chronicles 20:3-12, what can you learn about dealing with overwhelming opposition? This is a lesson for us in our conflicts with our adversaries – principalities and powers and wicked spirits (read James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:9).