

Sabbath School Lesson #11 – Waiting *in the Crucible* – 3-9 September 2022

Christ has promised to give His very Spirit, which brings forth all the lovely fruits, “to them that ask Him.” Ask Him for it, and believe that He gives it to you, for His promise cannot fail. “But the fruit of the Spirit is Longsuffering....” (Galatians 5:22). Let the Spirit of Christ fill you with good fruits, that through your love and gentleness, your joy and peace, your longsuffering and patience, those around you may taste the sweetness of the Lord’s life, and they may see that He is good, and learn to love and trust Him for themselves.

Sunday: The God of Patience – Are crucibles developing your patience? Patience is a virtue much insisted upon in the Bible. It is the attribute that characterises those who are at last victorious – the “patience of the saints” (Revelation 14:12). It is by faith and patience that we are to inherit the promises of God; so Paul, in his epistle to the Hebrews, exhorts to patient endurance, without slothfulness, that the promises may be obtained (Hebrews 6:12). When Christ was narrating to His disciples of troubles and persecutions which should befall them, His especial injunction was, “In your patience possess ye your souls” (Luke 21:19). In these very tribulations Paul gloried because they developed patience, as the athlete in training delights in his exercises and the laborious task and trials to which his strength is put, because it is through them that his strength and endurance grow, – for the Apostle said, “We glory in tribulations also: knowing that tribulation worketh patience” (Romans 5:3). It is these very tribulations, which try the faith of God’s people, that develop the patience of the saints. And although it is but a little while, far less now than when the apostle said it was but a little time before He that shall come will come, and not tarry (Hebrews 10:37), yet even greater is the need of patience, that, after having done the will of God, the promise may be received. God Himself is the God of patience, and has promised to protect in the hour of temptation those who have “kept the word of My patience” (Revelation 3:10). Then it will be that patience will have had her perfect work, and those who have possessed their souls in patience will be examples of the patience of the saints, “perfect and entire, wanting nothing” (James 1:4). They will then have overcome, and Christ says, in Revelation 3:12, “Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out.”

Monday: In God’s Time – What examples can you find in the Bible of God doing things in His own time that can help you learn to trust that He will do for you what’s right in His own time, as well? Turn to the story in Mark 4:38-40 where Jesus was sleeping. There is but one mention of Jesus sleeping in all the record of his life. This was not in the quiet of mountain retreat, or in the homes of friends, but, strangest place of all, it was in a storm at sea, when His disciples who had followed the sea all their lives were in mortal terror, the storm having continued till the ship was full of water. Jesus was asleep. The waves might roll, the storm rage, but the Master of the universe could not be destroyed. One line in the Christ in Song hymnal number 268, entitled ‘Master, The Tempest Is Raging’, says: “No water can swallow the ship where lies the Master of ocean and earth and skies.” Is not this a lesson of comfort and trust to the child of God? If Jesus is with us, though He seems to be sleeping, we are safe, whatever may take place. If we continue to trust, in God’s time He will allay the storm. But trusting in God’s time requires us to grow in faith, to fully know God. But a Christian cannot grow unless he partakes of spiritual food. He may be indeed a child of God, his sins all forgiven, his heart changed; but to maintain this relation, to make progress in divine life, in other words, to grow to the stature of a full-grown man in Christ Jesus, he must partake of the required food. That food is the word of God. The “sincere milk of the word” will cause the young Christian to thrive even as the healthful child thrives on its natural food (1 Peter 2:2). Jeremiah says: “Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and Thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart” (Jeremiah 15:16). And as we must partake of daily physical food in order to maintain strength, so daily the child of God should seek God’s word, listen to His voice, appropriate it to himself and his condition, and make it a part of his very being.

Tuesday: David: An Object Lesson in Waiting – Why did the Lord choose David to be king, why does He put men in positions, or why does He allow men to be in high positions? That he may have a greater opportunity of making God known. That the Lord brings a man to some high place is not evidence that the man is possessed of goodness, but that he has a

great need of the goodness that he can get only by that means. The Lord wants that man to be saved; He employs the only means that will save him. Pharaoh would not let the Lord make known His power in him, and He made it known outside of him and upon him Pharaoh, the haughty, defiant king of Egypt, had also been chosen to make the name of God known throughout all the earth (Exodus 9:15-16), but he refused to do it as the acknowledged servant of the Lord, and so the work had been accomplished through his obstinacy. The Lord said to Pharaoh, "For this cause have I raised thee up, for to shew in thee My power" (Romans 9:17). But the Lord put Pharaoh in the channel in which God's wisdom, power, and greatness could be revealed to him in a way that it could not possibly be otherwise, in order that he might know God and be saved; and Pharaoh would not have it. The power of God was manifested just the same; but Pharaoh lost all the good of it. Saul was called to be king of Israel. He was another man whom God put in the channel to the fulness of the knowledge of the glory of God; but Saul made the mistake of thinking that because he was there, and God recognised him in that place, this was evidence that he was all right, and that he could get along without so very much of the Lord, – that he need not follow the Lord particularly, – and so he lost it. That is the mistake that people make; the Lord chooses men; but these men make the mistake of their lives when they take to themselves credit, and say that it is because of their goodness that God chose them. David was also chosen of the Lord. Saul was yet king; but David waited, saying, God has made me king, and let Him bring the kingdom to me Himself. Saul hunted him for his life time after time; but always in that, David would flee like a partridge to the mountains, and dwell in dens and caves, right in the dominion which was all his own, waiting the Lord's own time. At last, when David had fled, and fled, and fled, until he had exhausted every resource of Saul, and demonstrated that he simply would not move a finger in defence, nor try to resent this thing, and take the place for himself, then the Lord turned the tide, and tried him on the other hand: He put Saul into David's hands. Now the Lord simply turns the thing around, and after that, every time Saul was in David's hands. David was in a cave, and Saul came in and sat down, and the men in the cave whispered to David, Now is your time. This is what God said should come. He would give your enemy, into your hands, and you shall do what you will. God had said to him I will give your enemies into your hand, and you shall do what you will. And when God put Saul into his hand, David did exactly what he would; that is, doing kindness, after God's own heart. There is a blessing in that for all of us. Let God do what He will with us. What will He do? Suppose I be sinful; suppose I be overwhelmed altogether with evil-doings, let me fall into the hands of God, and let Him do what He will. I am all safe; for He will do only good.

Wednesday: Elijah: The Problem of Rushing – In 1 Kings 19, after such a powerful intervention by the Lord on Mount Carmel, Elijah should have been full of faith and trust; instead, he ran in fear for his life; what lesson can we learn from this bad example? Sure, it was human failing that sent Elijah fleeing into the wilderness. "Day after day the question is put to individuals. "What doest thou here, Elijah?" Who sent you here? God did not send Elijah into the wilderness; he went of himself" {GCB April 14, 1901, page 216.4}. On the other hand, we notice Elijah's reply: "I have been very jealous for the LORD God of hosts: for the children of Israel have forsaken Thy covenant, thrown down Thine altars, and slain Thy prophets with the sword; and I, even I only, am left; and they seek my life, to take it away" (verse 10). The Lord calls, now, for those who will be "very jealous for the Lord God of hosts." He calls for those who will jealously regard His commandments, even at the expense of every earthly thing. He seeks now for those who will "keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus," against all earthly powers. What doest thou here? If you sent yourself, can you nonetheless say you have been very jealous for the Lord God of hosts?

Thursday: Learning to Take Delight in the Lord – Waiting in a crucible, how do you do that when your prayers seem not to be answered? Many are impatient if they do not at once receive special evidence that the Lord has heard their prayers. The Psalmist says, "Delight thyself also in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart" (Psalm 37:4). Let not your hope languish; only believe that God is true. Now, "the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it" (James 5:7), and shall not we have that patience and faith that will endure the test, and wait for the harvest of God's promises?