

### Sabbath School Lesson #3 – God’s Call to Mission – 14-20 October 2023

**C**hrist promised His disciples and said, “But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto Me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth” (Acts 1:8). He who breathed on His disciples saying, “Receive ye the Holy Spirit” (John 20:22), wants us to receive the same “Spirit of Christ” which was in all the prophets (1 Peter 1:11), because “if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His” (Romans 8:9), which Spirit is Christ Himself, as “the Lord is that Spirit” (2 Corinthians 3:17), for Christ being “the last Adam was made a quickening Spirit” (1 Corinthians 15:45) and “because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts” (Galatians 4:6), and for these reasons, let us have Christ, per inspired counsel: “It is not safe to catch the spirit from another. We want the Holy Spirit, which is Jesus Christ” – Ellen White, 10 April 1894 {9LtMs, Lt 66, 1894, par. 18}.

**Sunday: Moving Beyond Our Comfort Zone** – If we are in a comfort zone that prevent us from spreading the gospel, what lessons can we learn from the persecution that moved the disciples beyond their comfort zone (Acts 26:9-11)? Due to persecution, the believers at Jerusalem “were scattered abroad throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria” (Acts 8:1). In thus scattering they obeyed the injunction of the Master, “But when they persecute you in this city, flee into another” (Matthew 10:23). The wicked Jews thought to root out the rising religion of Jesus Christ, but instead of that they caused the seed to be broadcast. Thus they proved that man “can do nothing against the truth, but for the truth” (2 Corinthians 13:8).

**Monday: Becoming a Blessing to the Whole World** – Suppose you are called by God to go, “not knowing” where you are going. How do you respond, and why? When we learn that the calling of Abraham was the preaching of the gospel to him, and how he responded to that gospel, we too may respond as did Abraham, and through us, the same gospel will be spread for the blessing of others. The calling of Abram was the gospel preached to him. “Now the Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, ... and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:1-3). Now read what Paul says, “Even as Abraham believed God, ... And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed” (Galatians 3:6-8). Paul says that Christ sent him “not to baptize, but to preach the gospel: not with wisdom of words, lest the cross of Christ should be made of none effect;” and then he adds that “the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God” (1 Corinthians 1:17-18). And this is but another way of saying that the cross of Christ is the gospel, for the gospel is the power of God unto salvation. Now since the preaching of the gospel is the preaching of the cross of Christ (and there is no salvation by any other means), and God preached the gospel to Abraham when He said, “In thee shall all the families of the earth be blessed” (Genesis 12:3), it is clear that in that promise the cross of Christ was made known to Abraham, and that promise made was one that could be gained only through the cross of Christ. “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, ... That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Galatians 3:13-14). Here we have it stated in the most explicit terms that the blessing of Abraham, which was to come on all the families of the earth, was to come only through the cross of Christ. When we see the gospel of the cross of Christ in the promises of God to Abraham, and continually remember that all the promises of God are in Christ, to be enjoyed only through His cross, and that consequently they are spiritual and eternal in their nature, then we may respond to God’s call as did Abraham and become a blessing to the whole world.

**Tuesday: Abraham’s Call** – What lessons can we take from the story about Abram in Egypt? Goodness is not natural to mankind, and Abraham was very human. He was weak, mortal, sinful flesh, but “he believed in the Lord; and He counted it to him for righteousness” (Genesis 15:6). Some bad things are recorded against Abraham: “Whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope” (Romans 15:4). As Abraham was about to enter Egypt he formed the plan of passing his wife off as his sister, lest the Egyptians, enticed by her

beauty, should kill him in order to possess her. Whether Abraham thought of it or not, it is very evident that while this subterfuge might save his life, it was fitted to endanger his wife's honour, since if the Egyptians would be inclined to abduct a man's wife, they would have still less hesitancy in taking his sister. And this very thing happened. "The Egyptians beheld the woman that she was very fair. The princes also of Pharaoh saw her, and commended her before Pharaoh; and the woman was taken into Pharaoh's house. And he entreated Abram well for her sake; and he had sheep, and oxen, and he asses, and menservants, and maidservants, and she asses, and camels" (Genesis 12:14-16). A more cowardly and base part could not be played by any man than this. Pharaoh learned, however, through the judgments of God that the woman was Abraham's wife, and not his sister, and then he very indignantly reprov'd Abraham for his unmanly course. Not only so, but Abraham was summarily sent out of Egypt in disgrace. "Pharaoh commanded his men concerning him; and they sent him away, and his wife, and all that he had" (verse 20). This simply means that Abraham was told to get out at once, and Pharaoh's servants were ordered to conduct him away forthwith. It was humiliating, but Abraham had not a word to say in self-defence. Yet the man who could be guilty of so base an act as this, became the father of all them that believe, and was called "the friend of God" (James 2:23). Here then is comfort for all. Says the prophet Isaiah: "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord; look unto the rock whence ye were hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye were digged. Look unto Abraham your father, and unto Sarah that bare you; for when he was but one I called him, and I blessed him, and made him many" (Isaiah 51:1-5). Thank God that Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance! The goodness that appeared in Abraham's life was only that which the Lord gives every sinner who receives Him by faith.

**Wednesday: The Early Church and Comfort Zones** – In the early church, what brought about the scattering of believers beyond their comfort zone? Persecution! "The persecution that came upon the church in Jerusalem resulted in giving a great impetus to the work of the gospel. Success had attended the ministry of the word in that place, and there was danger that the disciples would linger there too long, unmindful of the Saviour's commission to go to all the world. Forgetting that strength to resist evil is best gained by aggressive service, they began to think that they had no work so important as that of shielding the church in Jerusalem from the attacks of the enemy. Instead of educating the new converts to carry the gospel to those who had not heard it, they were in danger of taking a course that would lead all to be satisfied with what had been accomplished. To scatter His representatives abroad, where they could work for others, God permitted persecution to come upon them. Driven from Jerusalem, the believers "went everywhere preaching the word." – E White {AA 105.2}.

**Thursday: Starting From Where You Are** – In Acts 1:8, what principle did Jesus present when doing the work of sharing or being His witnesses to the world? Receive power first. Before Jesus ascended to heaven, He breathed a measure of His Spirit into His disciples: "He breathed on them, and saith unto them, Receive the Holy Ghost" (John 20:22). This act of breathing His very Spirit into His disciples Christ continues to do. We are told: "Those who rose up with Jesus would send up their faith to Him in the holiest, and pray, 'My Father, give us Thy Spirit.' Then Jesus would breathe upon them the Holy Ghost. In that breath was light, power, and much love, joy, and peace" {EW 55.1}. In His last words before His ascension, He said, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8). It is a great mistake to urge people to go out and witness for Christ without them first receiving the Spirit of Christ. Such is emphasis on our works for salvation and not salvation by faith. Right order of things is very important! Note that Jesus Himself placed the order of things in this manner: (1) The reception of power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, that is, when it is truly said of you that "God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts" (Galatians 4:6), *and only then* (2) would you be able to be true witnesses to the ends of the earth. Here it is plain that we are not to go out and do witnessing or launch any endeavour for missions asking God to bless until *after* we have received the power of the Holy Spirit. We cannot truly witness until fitted. Let God put "the Spirit of His Son into your hearts" to fit you for mission starting from where you are.