

## Sabbath School Lesson #8 – Wisdom for Righteous Living – 17-23 Feb 2024

**C**hrist would have us redeem the short time left by righteous living. The psalmist says, “So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom” (Psalm 90:12). The apostle Paul puts it this way, “Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, redeeming the time” (Colossians 4:5). This language implies that the time spent with those who walk according to the spirit of this world, is liable to be wasted and lost. It also implies that it may be redeemed – it need not and should not be spent in vain. If we pray with the psalmist, we will appreciate the importance of Paul’s exhortation. If we number our days in this manner, we will have ever present before our minds, the fact that at the longest, our time is short, and even this may not all be ours. We will consider that great work which true wisdom sets before us, – the service of the Redeemer, and the preparation for the judgment, and as we appreciate its true character, will feel that we have no time to lose if we would have the Judge say to us in the last day, “well done good and faithful servant” (Matt 25:23).

**Sunday: Your Word I Have Hidden in My Heart** – Read Psalm 119:1–16, 161–168.

How should we keep God’s commandments, and what are the blessings that come from doing that? We read from John 14:15-27. “If ye love Me, keep My commandments.” Is this a severe requirement? No! Suppose you have a dear friend who is going to a distant land to be gone several years. You are sad at the thought of parting, but he comforts you with the assurance that he will come again, and that then he will remain with you; and then, putting a likeness of himself into your hands, he says, ‘If you love me, keep this.’ Would you say that it was asking too much of you? No, on the contrary, you would rejoice at such a token of your friend’s love and confidence. Even so should we regard this keepsake from our Lord. The commandments of Jesus are the commandments of God the Father; for God said of Him to Moses: “I will raise them up a Prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee, and will put My words in His mouth; and He shall speak unto them all that I shall command Him. And it shall come to pass, that whosoever will not hearken unto My words which He shall speak in My name, I will require it of him” (Deuteronomy 17:18-19). Jesus said: “I have not spoken of Myself; but the Father which sent Me, He gave Me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak. Whatsoever I speak therefore, even as the Father said unto Me, so I speak” (John 12:49-50). He was the revelation of God to men. The law of God was in His heart (Psalm 40:8), so that He was that law personified. Jesus is the One who gives freedom (John 8:34-36). The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus gives freedom from sin and death (Romans 8:2). He therefore is the “perfect law of liberty” into which we are to look as into a mirror, beholding not our own sinful selves, but “the image of the invisible God,” into whose image we are transformed as we behold (James 1:25; Colossians 1:15; 2 Corinthians 3:18). So, in requiring us to keep His commandments, He simply asks us to keep a memorial of Himself. Love will gladly do so. “This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments; and His commandments are not grievous.” “He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loveth Me.” When God made man, the crown and lord of creation, He planted a garden eastward in Eden; “and the Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it” (Genesis 2:8, 15). Man did not have to make the garden; he was not required to plant it; he was only to dress it and to keep it. God made it perfect; man’s duty was only to keep that which God had committed to him. So, God gives us His commandments, His own perfect righteousness, and asks us to keep it. By the faith of Jesus, we keep the commandments; so that one has only to keep the faith to keep God’s commandments. To us all, even as to Timothy, comes the exhortation, “Keep that which is committed to thy trust” (1 Timothy 6:20-21). It should not be considered a hardship to keep what is given to us, when that thing is the highest good. We read of the saints: “Here is the patience of the saints: here are they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus” (Revelation 14:12). On the effects of patience, we read: “Let patience have its perfect work, that ye may be perfect and entire, lacking in nothing” (James 1:4). The patience of the saints calls for allowing that patience to do its perfect work in us, resulting in perfection, which perfection is the keeping of the commandments of God. This perfection is only in Christ. He alone, of all those who have trod this earth, fully kept the law. But He gave

Himself for us, so that we may also have the perfect keeping of the law in us if we can only say in truth, that "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). We must "live by the faith of the Son of God" to overcome in the final crisis, but what does it exactly mean to live by the faith of Jesus? The faith of Jesus cannot exist outside Himself; thus, He must live in us if we may live by His faith. Christ Himself living in us; "Christ in you the hope of glory" (Colossians 1:27); God with us; God manifest in the flesh now, to-day in our flesh, by the faith of Jesus Christ — this and this only is living faith. For "every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is of God: and every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God; and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He that is in you, than he that is in the world" (1 John 4:2-4). Therefore, "examine yourselves whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves" (2 Corinthians 13:5).

**Monday: Teach Us to Number Our Days** – How important is it to number our days (Psalm 90:12)? That we must give an account for the deeds done in the body, is inspired truth. That we must account for what we should have done in the body is equally true. We have a part to act, we have a calling to fulfil, we have a talent to improve. Time is given us to this end; and time is rapidly passing. While we hesitate, it passes. While we trifle, it passes; and each passing moment unimproved not only cuts off its length from our list of duties, but also shortens our future reward just as truly as duties well done will increase our future happiness; for we shall all receive according to our work. There are many reasons why we should improve all our time. We have much to do, and only by improving every moment shall we have time sufficient for the work. We need wisdom from the Lord that we may rightly divide our time and use it to the best advantage. Let us redeem the time, because it is short, and the days are evil. Teach us to number our days that we apply our hearts unto wisdom.

**Tuesday: The Lord's Test** – In what way did the Lord test the Israelites? In how much they put their trust in Him. In the days of Nehemiah, as was in the days of Moses, the response of Israel was self-confidence. Read the record of their distrust in God in Psalm 106. He had proved them at the Red Sea, in the giving of the manna, and at the waters of Meribah. In every place they had failed to trust Him perfectly. At Sinai He came to prove them once more, in the giving of the law. The generation in the days of Nehemiah had, per Psalm 106, again forgotten how the Lord had led Israel in the past. As Scriptures reveal, God never intended that men should try to get righteousness by the law, or that they should think such a thing possible. In the giving of the law at Sinai, as shown by all the attendant circumstances, He designed that the children of Israel, and we also, should learn that the law is infinitely above the reach of all human effort, and to make it plain that, since the keeping of the commandments is essential to the salvation which He has promised, He Himself will fulfil the law in us. These are the words of God: "Hear, O My people, and I will testify unto thee; O Israel, if thou wilt hearken unto Me, there shall no strange god be in thee, neither shalt thou worship any strange god" (Psalm 81:8-9). "Incline your ear, and come unto Me; hear, and your soul shall live" (Isaiah 55:3). As His word brought forth Lazarus from the tomb, His word transforms the soul from the death of sin to the life of righteousness. But men distrust His word, they enter an oath, adding on the word of God their own word, as if their word or promise is better. We must trust the Lord, that He will keep His own law in us.

**Wednesday: Deceitfulness of the Wicked Way** – Read Psalm 141. What does the psalmist pray for? "Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue keepeth his soul from troubles" (Prov 21:23). It is such a task that any who seriously undertake it will be driven to pray with the Psalmist, "Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips" (Ps 141:3).

**Thursday: Blessings of Righteous Living** – What is the blessings of righteous living we have? The man that "walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly," and whose "delight is in the law of the Lord," "shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper" (Psalm 1:1-3). Whether in the visible things of nature or in the human heart, the word of God will work through every obstacle. The life will be manifested, and the righteousness cannot fail.