

Sabbath School Lesson #7 – Teaching Disciples: Part 1 – 10-16 August 2024

Christ said, “And when He had called the people unto Him with His disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” (Mark 8:34). All Christians have the same cross – the cross of Christ. There is no other cross to which salvation from God descends to fallen man. The cross means suffering and death, daily. The world saw Christ’s suffering and humiliation, and it sees only this in the cross of Christ to-day. But faith sees the power of God working out for us truth across the eternal and glorious purposes of God. If we are to glory in the cross of Christ, we must glory in suffering and infirmities which are endured for His sake. We must experience “the fellowship of His sufferings,” which is to have fellowship with Him through sufferings (Philippians 3:10). But it is a glorious thing to have fellowship with Christ. It means walking in light. “If we walk in the light, as He is in the light, we have fellowship one with another” (1 John 1:7). The Christian’s pathway, therefore, is not darkened by trials and distresses, but through all these it shines “brighter and brighter, unto the perfect day.” In fellowship with Christ through suffering we learn also the power of God. “For in that He Himself hath suffered, being tempted, He is able also to succour them that are tempted” (Hebrews 2:18). “Most gladly, therefore,” said Paul, “will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore, I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ’s sake; for when I am weak, then am I strong” (2 Corinthians 12:10). Christians are not the only ones who experience tribulation in this life. That is the common lot of all; but it makes a vast difference whether it is met in “the pathway of the just,” or out of it. Upon that pathway is shed the light of the cross, and the peace and joy that the cross has brought to earth. Christ is all along that pathway – a ladder reaching from earth to heaven – and He bears His cross with us. We do not follow Him afar off, for we take the cross together. We are close enough to have fellowship one with another. Far from being evidence of separation from God, of His displeasure, trials are to the Christian but a token of the cross that connects him with God, and with the eternal power and life and glory. And therefore, he glories in the cross and all that pertains to it. There is glory for fallen man in the cross, and nowhere else. No man creates this, but by coming to the cross he receives it. To the world it appears as darkness, but to the eye of faith it is light. “If ye be reproached for the name of Christ,” writes Peter, “happy are ye, for the Spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you” (1 Peter 4:14). And this is true of all trials that are endured in following Jesus Christ. And they all pertain to the cross.

Sunday: Seeing Clearly – Read Mark 8:22-30; why did it take Jesus two touches to heal the blind man, and what lessons came out of this account? “When the blind man came to Him, Christ touched His eyes; but he only received a partial restoration; he could not see all things clearly. Jesus then touched his eyes a second time and bade him to look up, and then he could see every man clearly. This is the work that needs to be done for this church. We may appoint meetings, as we have done, but many who have drawn the curtain of unbelief around their souls, and who walk in darkness, know not at what they stumble. And they refuse to come to the light, lest their deeds shall be reprov’d” – EG White {11LtMs, Ms 29, 1896, par. 2}. “On the Sabbath a large number came forward for prayers; but many, even of these, failed to make thorough work. They seemed like the blind man whom Jesus healed; at first he could only see men as trees walking. Jesus gave him the second touch; then he could see all things clearly. We longed to see a similar work done for these repenting ones. We longed to see them so thoroughly in earnest that they would not give over their efforts until Jesus should impart unto them the riches of his grace. Had there been humble confession, we should have seen the mighty movings of the Spirit of God. There is divine aid for all who will help themselves” – Ellen G White {RH October 21, 1884, Art. A, par. 24}.

Monday: The Cost of Discipleship – Read Mark 8:31-38; what does Jesus teach here about the cost of following Christ? The cost is to “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 2:5). So certainly, as we will let this mind be in us, so certainly it will be in us; and so certainly as it is in us, so certainly it will do in us what it did in Christ; and so certainly that which appeared in Him will appear in us. What, then, did this mind do in

Him? – “Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God” (verse 6). Lucifer envied the position of Christ and thought to do robbery to be like God (Ezekiel 28:14-17; Isaiah 14:13-14). When Satan tempted man, Satan instilled the exaltation of self into man – even his own ambition to be equal with God. Thus, it was the selfish desire to be equal with God that induced sin in man on the earth. Then it was that the mind that was in Christ Jesus was manifested. The word went forth immediately to Satan: “I will put enmity between thee and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel” (Genesis 3:15). In this word to Satan there was a promise to man of deliverance from the bondage of Satan, bondage of self, into the glorious liberty of sons of God indeed. Then, when the fulness of time was come, the Father would reveal Himself to mankind as He really is, and His bearing toward the world of sinners. And in order that this might be done in its fulness and perfection, Jesus emptied Himself (Philippians 2:6-8) and dwelt among us (John 1:14). So entirely did He empty Himself of all self that He could say with perfect truth, “I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent me” (John 6:38). “I can of Mine own self do nothing: As I hear, I judge, and My judgment is just because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me” (John 5:30). “Verily, verily, I say unto you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what he seeth the Father do; for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise” (verse 19). “The Father that dwelleth in me, He doeth the works” (John 14:10). “My doctrine is not Mine, but His that sent Me” (John 7:16). “The words that I speak unto you, I speak not of Myself,” “but the Father which sent Me, He gave a commandment, what I should say and what I should speak” (John 14:10; 12:49). He emptied Himself that the Father might appear in Him. He says to every man, “Whosoever will come after me, let him deny himself” (Mark 8:34). All sin is of self, and self is of Satan. All righteousness is of Christ, and Christ is of God. Now, therefore, let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, “who emptied Himself” that the Father might appear to men, and that men might be saved. Let it be in you. As surely as you will let this mind be in you, so surely will it be in you. And so surely as in Him it led Him to empty Himself, so surely it will lead you to empty yourself of all self. And so surely as you are emptied of self, so surely will you be “filled with all the fulness of God” (Ephesians 3:19).

Tuesday: The Mountain and the Multitude – Read Mark 9:24; in what situations, if any, have you had to cry out, “I believe; help thou mine unbelief”? What did you learn from those experiences? The Lord says: “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). Put your will on the side of belief rather than of unbelief. God will not force us to belief. He throws up evidence before us, but only we can choose the faith option. When the Lord invites us to come boldly and ask in faith, to “taste and see that the LORD *is* good” (Psalm 34:8), if we lack the faith, let us cry out “help my unbelief” (Mark 9:24). “In Christ, God has provided means for subduing every sinful trait, and resisting every temptation, however strong. But many feel that they lack faith, and therefore they remain away from Christ. Let these souls, in their helpless unworthiness, cast themselves upon the mercy of their compassionate Saviour. Look not to self, but to Christ. He who healed the sick and cast out demons when He walked among men is the same mighty Redeemer today. Faith comes by the word of God. Then grasp His promise, “Him that cometh to Me I will in no wise cast out.” John 6:37. Cast yourself at His feet with the cry, “Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.” You can never perish while you do this – never” – Ellen G White {DA 429.1}.

Wednesday: Who is the Greatest? – What is the biblical idea of greatness in contrast to the world’s idea? Which one are you striving for? Read Mark 9:30-41. Whosoever shall humble himself as a little child, the same is greatest. Conversion, then, – a changed life and humility, – is essential to greatness. This is indeed the entrance to the way of true greatness.

Thursday: The Healthy Man in Hell – We must hate sin so much that we would rather be maimed of limbs that cause us to sin. What is “fire that never shall be quenched” (Mark 9:43)? If the firefighters cannot quench fire in a building, it shall utterly be consumed. So shall the wicked be “burned up” with the unquenchable fire. The wicked are chaff – they will be consumed. “For, behold, the day cometh, that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, yea, and all that do wickedly, shall be stubble; and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts, that it shall leave them neither root nor branch” (Malachi 4:1).