

Sabbath School Lesson #8 – Teaching Disciples: Part 2 – 17-23 August 2024

Christ said, “For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (Mark 10:45). This was a lesson of service. Read Matthew 20:25-28. On this very occasion He said: “Whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? but I am among you as He that serveth” (Luke 22:27). Jesus was greatest of all, because He did the humblest service. Read Philippians 2:5-7 and notice that it was the form, not the character, of a servant, that Jesus took on Himself. Why did He not, in coming to earth, take the character of a servant? – Because He already had that. Although He is Lord of heaven and earth, He lives for the service of His creatures. So, when He was here, He “went about doing good; and healing all that were oppressed of the devil; for God was with Him” (Acts 10:38). Mark the expression, “for God was with Him.” That is given as the reason why Christ went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed. This shows the character of God. God with Him did those works (John 14:10). He associated with the poor, and sinners, for “the common people heard Him gladly.” Thus He was illustrating the words of God, “I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones” (Isaiah 57:15); in “him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at My word” (Isaiah 66:1-2). He came to earth to let the world see and know just what He was, but He had to come in a form that they could appreciate. Men’s ideas were so perverted that if the Son of God had come to earth in royal state and heavenly glory, they could never have associated Him with service, and so could not have learned the lessons of service that they ought. So, He changed His form, and let His life show who He was. Those who recognise Him as Lord, and acknowledge Him as such, even while He bears the form of a servant, will have the privilege of seeing Him serve, and of being served by Him, when He is arrayed as King of kings, and Lord of lords; He says, He “will come forth and serve them” (Luke 12:37).

Sunday: God’s Plan for Marriage – “Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife?” (Mark 10:2). To understand the truth about anything, we must go to the beginning of it. When the Pharisees asked Jesus, a question concerning marriage and divorce, referring to certain regulations that had been given by Moses, Jesus said that these were because of the hardness of their hearts, “but from the beginning it was not so” (Matthew 19:8); and then He quoted the record in Genesis. If we would know God’s plan for marriage, how it ought to be arranged, we must go to the record of those which God has planned and controlled. When God would provide a companion for Adam, He made a woman, and “brought her unto the man” (Genesis 2:22). There was no mistake here; the pair were made for each other, and both recognised the fact, and were satisfied. Another striking example is found in the case of the marriage of Isaac. He was the child of promise, the heir of the promise made to Abraham, and his life was in harmony with this fact. He was forty years old, yet even at that age he did not choose a wife for himself. Even professed Christians have not been ashamed to indulge in cheap wit at the expense of Isaac, saying they should not like to have their parents choose for them; but it must be remembered that Abraham did not choose a wife for Isaac. God Himself did the choosing. Read the beautiful story in the twenty-fourth chapter of Genesis. Abraham’s tried servant, who had the same faith as his master, was sent in search of the one whom God had chosen for Isaac. When the servant said, “peradventure the woman will not follow me,” Abraham replied, “The Lord before whom I walk will send His angel with thee, and prosper thy way.” And so, it was. And after traveling a long distance, the servant halted at a well, and prayed to the Lord to show him which of the damsels that came to draw water was the one for his master’s son. He did not pray aloud, but spoke in his heart, and even before he had finished praying, the sign which he had asked was granted. The whole matter was arranged by the Lord, and the relatives of Rebecca, as well as Rebecca herself, recognised the fact. They said, “The thing proceedeth from the Lord; we cannot speak unto thee bad or good. Behold, Rebecca is before thee, take her and go, and let her be the master’s son’s wife, as the Lord hath spoken.” And Rebecca, when asked if she would go at once, said, “I will go.” Then the return journey was made, and the servant told Isaac all things that he had done, and Isaac brought her into his mother Sarah’s tent, and

took Rebecca, “and she became his wife, and he loved her.” “Now we brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.” In those two instances we have an effective safeguard against sin. When Scriptures say the woman was created for the man, we are not to understand merely that women in general were created for men, but that as in the case of Adam and Eve, God who knows the end from the beginning, and who writes our members in His book even before they are formed, and who has a definite purpose for each individual that is born, provides for each man a help meet for him, and will as certainly bring the two together if they will have the patience to wait, as He brought Eve to Adam, and Rebecca to Isaac. And if they are both in Him, they will likewise recognise His choice and find their happiness in it.

Monday: Jesus and Children – What did Jesus mean by saying that “Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall not enter therein” (Mark 10:15)? What is the wisdom of childhood? It is simple belief. A child, before it has been deceived by its parents or others, knows nothing of doubt. It is simple enough to believe all that is told it. And this is its only hope of learning. If a child of four years had the doubt that is sometimes boasted of by older people, he would never learn anything. Unfortunately, this confidence is too often abused, and the child learns that people do not always mean what they say. Yet it takes a great deal of deceit to drive the Spirit of belief entirely from the heart of a child. But God never deceives. He “cannot lie.” Therefore, everyone may depend upon His word just as implicitly as the child naturally does upon the word of its mother. And this is the only way in which the truth of God may be known. This is what the Lord meant when He said that whosoever did not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, could not enter therein.

Tuesday: The Best Investment – “What shall I do that I may inherit eternal life?” (Mark 10:17). The question asked by the young ruler is one that has been asked by thousands, and one that should interest every person. Men will spend the earnings of years, and travel to the utmost limits of the globe, in order to prolong their lives for a few years. How eagerly, then, should they grasp anything which will lengthen out their lives to all eternity. It is indeed wonderful that so few manifest an interest in that which pertains to their eternal welfare, while they are so zealous for life and happiness for a short time. In this the majority of mankind manifest only the wisdom of the infant who seizes the glittering toy, and rejects the infinitely more valuable bag of treasure. But some are asking, “What must I do to be saved?” And to such the words of our Lord himself on this subject must be of all-absorbing interest.

Wednesday: Can You Drink My Cup? – There would be less complaining over adversity if we would remember that one of the hardest things for a human being to bear is prosperity. There is, indeed, only one condition under which this is possible, and that is when self is dead; for wherever self is, prosperity and pride are sure to go hand in hand. Paul could not bear the special marks of God’s favour bestowed upon him in visions and revelations, and was given a thorn in the flesh, the “messenger of Satan” to buffet him, lest he should be exalted thereby. It is natural to seek favours from God without thinking of the thorn in the flesh. John and James desired of Christ that they might sit one on His right hand and the other on His left, in His glory. The Saviour asked them, “Can ye drink of the cup that I drink of, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?” “They said unto Him, We can” (Mark 10:37-39). But there came time soon afterwards when they would not have answered the question in this confident manner. In the garden of Gethsemane, when He drank of the cup, they with the other disciples, filled with sorrow and amazement, “forsook Him and fled.”

Thursday: “What Do You Want Me to Do for You?” – By the wayside, near Jericho, as Jesus passed along, sat blind Bartimaeus, begging (see Mark 10:46-49). The result is well known. As soon as Bartimaeus said, “Lord, that I might receive my sight, Jesus replied, “Thy faith hath made thee whole.” “And immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way.” All men are blinded by nature, for “all have sinned,” and sin is blindness. “For we ourselves also were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy, hateful, and hating one another” (Titus 3:11). With a word Jesus gave to blind Bartimaeus his sight. That was written for our sakes, that we might know His power to open our sin-blinded eyes. Said He, “I am the light of the world; he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life” (John 8:12). His word is light and life, and the word that gave sight to Bartimaeus, can remove the blindness of sin.