

Sabbath School Lesson #9 – Love-driven Ministry – 22-28 August 2026

Christ would have us admonish each other the more carefully and faithfully, as we see the end is nigh. Let us watch for souls as those that must give an account and be faithful to each other in Christian fellowship. Paul wrote, “For out of much affliction and anguish of heart I wrote unto you with many tears; not that ye should be grieved, but that ye might know the love which I have more abundantly unto you” (2 Corinthians 2:4).

Sunday: Thanksgiving – Read 2 Corinthians 1:3-7; what is the reason for Paul’s attitude of thanksgiving here? Paul is thankful because it is in Christ that Christians receive comfort in their afflictions. Whoever is afflicted for any cause whatever, may know if he will that he is afflicted with Christ. “In all their affliction he was afflicted” (Isaiah 63:9). Even though the affliction be directly because of sin, we may have the same assurance, for we are told, “He was oppressed, and he was afflicted,” and, “For the transgression of my people was he stricken” (Isaiah 53:7-8). The thought alone that Christ bears with us the burden of grief or temptation, is enough to make it light, because it draws our minds away from ourselves. But Christ cannot be divided. The one who has Christ has Him for all that there is in him. So, if our faith grasps Him in His sufferings – that is, if we remember that “He hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows,” so that we bear them only in Him – then it is most certain that we shall have at the same time all the comfort there is in Him. As “the joy that was set before Him” enabled Him to endure the cross, and despise the shame, so the joy that there is in Him enables us to rejoice in tribulation. Paul had taught this truth to the Corinthians.

Monday: Simplicity and Sincerity – Read 2 Corinthians 1:12-14 in the light of 2 Corinthians 2:17 and 2 Corinthians 4:2; how can we cultivate sincerity and love as that Paul had for the Corinthians? Here is a sevenfold advice we can all by God’s grace take. One, let it be your great object to have a holy heart, a renewed and right spirit. All helps and directions will not preserve you from delusion and ruin, unless your heart is sanctified. Pray, therefore, with David, “Let my heart be sound in thy statutes, that I be not ashamed.”

Two, always suspect and examine your ends in what you do. As your aim and design are, so are you. The intentions of the heart lie deep. The same action, done with a holy end, may be acceptable to God, which, done with a corrupt design, He would abhor. Here is a story of a man of God, who was commended for a good action, replied, ‘The work indeed is good, but I distrust the motives. Selfishness is liable to insinuate itself into the best actions.’

Three, regard hypocrisy as the most odious sin in the sight of God and men. To have no holiness is bad enough; but to pretend it when we have it not, is double impiety. To make religion a mere step to preferment and a covert to wickedness – O how vile a thing is it! God made Christ a sacrifice for sin, and the hypocrite makes Christ a cloak for his sin.

Four, let it be your constant endeavour to mortify those lusts that breed hypocrisy. Pride, vain glory, self-love, a worldly heart, are the seeds from which this cursed plant springs up in the souls of men. Dig but to the root of hypocrisy, and you shall certainly find these unholy passions; and till the Lord help you to mortify them, hypocrisy will spring up in all your duties.

Five, listen to the voice of conscience in sickness and trouble. Mark its upbraidings at such times, whether they be that you are indulging sin or neglecting duty. These upbraidings of conscience will designate the corruptions in which, probably, most lies your danger.

Six, away with all temporising in religion; be a Christian at heart, faithful to your Master and true to yourself. Hold fast integrity, whatever else you lose by it. O let this always be your rejoicing, which was Paul’s “the testimony of your conscience, that in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom, but by the grace of God, you have had your conversation in the world” (2 Corinthians 1:12). Let your daily prayer and cry to God be that of David, “Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for I wait on thee” (Psalm 25:21).

Seven, keep your heart always under the awe of God’s all-seeing eye. Remember He beholds all your ways, and ponders all your thoughts; He will bring every secret thing into judgment. Thus did Job, and it preserved him. Thus did David, and it preserved him. Thus, do thou also, and it will preserve thee blameless and without guile to the day of Christ.

Tuesday: Changing Plans for Love – Read 1 Corinthians 16:5-7; what was Paul’s original travel plan and how does he explain the change? Paul explains himself from the

imputation of levity and inconstancy, in that he did not hold his purpose of coming to them at Corinth. His adversaries there sought all occasions to blemish his character. Paul avers the sincerity of his intention (2 Corinthians 1:15-17), and he does this in confidence of their good opinion of him, and that they would believe him, when he assured them he was minded, or did really intend, to come to them, and that with the design, not that he might receive, but that they might receive a second benefit, that is, a further advantage by his ministry. He tells them that he had not herein use lightness (2 Corinthians 1:17), that, as he aimed not at any secular advantage to himself, so it was not a rash and inconsiderate resolution that he had taken up, for he had laid his measures thus of passing by them to Macedonia, and coming again to them from Macedonia in his way to Judea (2 Corinthians 1:16), and therefore they might conclude that it was for some weighty reasons that he had altered his purpose; and that with him there was not “yea yea, and nay nay” (2 Corinthians 1:17). He was not to be accused of levity and inconstancy, nor a contradiction between his words and intentions.

Paul would not have the Corinthians to infer that his gospel was false or uncertain, nor contradictory (2 Corinthians 1:18-19). For if it had been so, that he had been fickle in his purposes, or false in the promises he made of coming to them (which he was not justly to be accused of, and we may understand his expression, 2 Corinthians 1:18; Our word towards you was not yea and nay), yet it would not follow that the gospel preached not only by him, but also by others in full agreement with him, was either false or doubtful. For God is true, and the Son of God, Jesus Christ, is true. The true God, and eternal life. Jesus Christ, whom the apostle preached, is not yea and nay, but in him was yea (2 Corinthians 1:19), nothing but infallible truth. And the promises of God in Christ are not yea and nay, but yea and amen (2 Corinthians 1:20). There is an inviolable constancy and unquestionable sincerity and certainty in all the parts of the gospel of Christ. If in the promises that the ministers make as common men, and about their own affairs, they see cause sometimes to vary from them, yet the promises of the gospel covenant, which the ministers preach, stand firm and inviolable.

Wednesday: Forgiveness and Reaffirmation of Love – Read 2 Corinthians 7:5-13; what was the result of what he wrote to them, and what was Paul’s reaction because of that result? We are told by Ellen G White: “For some time Paul had been carrying a burden of soul for the churches – a burden so heavy that he could scarcely endure it. False teachers had sought to destroy his influence among the believers and to urge their own doctrines in the place of gospel truth. The perplexities and discouragements with which Paul was surrounded are revealed in the words, “We were pressed out of measure, above strength, insomuch that we despaired even of life.” {AA 325.1}. “But now one cause of anxiety was removed. At the tidings of the acceptance of his letter to the Corinthians, Paul broke forth into words of rejoicing: “Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,” {AA 325.2}. “In expressing his joy over their reconversion and their growth in grace, Paul ascribed to God all the praise for this transformation of heart and life. “Thanks be unto God,” he exclaimed, “which always causeth us to triumph in Christ,” – Ellen White {AA 325.3}.

Thursday: Triumph in Christ – Read 2 Corinthians 2:14-17; what was Paul’s reaction upon meeting Titus in Macedonia and hearing about positive response of the Corinthians? We are told: “Paul was now full of faith and hope. He felt that Satan was not to triumph over the work of God in Corinth, and in words of praise he poured forth the gratitude of his heart. He and his fellow laborers would celebrate their victory over the enemies of Christ and the truth, by going forth with new zeal to extend the knowledge of the Saviour. Like incense the fragrance of the gospel was to be diffused throughout the world. To those who should accept Christ, the message would be a savor of life unto life; but to those who should persist in unbelief, a savor of death unto death” {AA 326.1}. “Realizing the overwhelming magnitude of the work, Paul exclaimed, “Who is sufficient for these things?” Who is able to preach Christ in such a way that His enemies shall have no just cause to despise the messenger or the message that he bears? Paul desired to impress upon believers the solemn responsibility of the gospel ministry. Faithfulness in preaching the word, united with a pure, consistent life, can alone make the efforts of ministers acceptable to God and profitable to souls. Ministers of our day, burdened with a sense of the greatness of the work, may well exclaim with the apostle, “Who is sufficient for these things?” – Ellen G White {AA 326.2}.