

Sabbath School Lesson #10 – Authentic Christian Ministry – 29 Aug-4 September 2026

Christ and Him crucified is the reality of authentic Christian ministry. For the Christian, the crucifixion of Christ is an ever-present reality; not a symbol upon the breast or gazed upon in the church, but a daily experience in his life. Paul wrote, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; we are perplexed, but not in despair; Persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed; Always bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our body" (2 Corinthians 4:8-10). Again, "I am crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20). And to the church he wrote: "O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" (Galatians 3:1). And what had been done for the Galatian church had been done for all the churches. In Paul's day and under his preaching, the churches saw Jesus Christ set forth, crucified among them, and the believers experienced His crucifixion in their hearts. They had the reality; and where the reality is, symbols are altogether unnecessary and out of place.

Sunday: Fruits of an Authentic Ministry – Read 2 Corinthians 3:1-9; in what sense can we be an epistle of Christ? In Paul's day, credentials were demanded by the established church to prove authentic ministers. However, Paul did not bear such credentials. No man was ever subjected to closer scrutiny, or met with greater opposition, than the Apostle Paul. He had much opposition from the established church. His right to be called an apostle was denied; but this gave him no anxiety. He wrote: "Need we, as some others, epistles of commendation to you, or letters of commendation from you? Ye are our epistle written, in our hearts, known and read of all men" (2 Corinthians 3:1-2). Even so Christ said: "I receive not testimony from man." "The works which the Father hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do bear witness of Me, that the Father hath sent Me" (John 5:34, 36).

God Himself gives the same credentials to every one whom He sends forth. "He whom God hath sent speaketh the words of God" (John 3:34), and God's words are authoritative. He makes us able to be ministers of the new covenant, even of the quickened Spirit of Christ that gives life. Whoever steadily and constantly holds forth the Word of life will never be embarrassed by any sudden challenge of his authority, or call for his credentials. The power to do gives the right to do; and whoever has not the power can never have the authority. This authority everyone may have, it comes with the reception of the Spirit of Christ, for "God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father" (Galatians 4:6).

"And the Jews marvelled, saying, How knoweth this man letters, having never learn?" (John 7:15). The Greek word here rendered "letters," is the word meaning scriptures or writings. A learned man, one well acquainted with books, is commonly called "a man of letters," or a literary man. Now there are many books, but only one that is so prominent as to be sufficiently designated by the term "the Book," and that is the Bible; for the word Bible means simply book. So "the writings," when used in the Bible without qualification, mean the sacred writings, or the Scriptures. The text above quoted should therefore be rendered, as it is in some versions, "How does this man know the Scriptures, never having learned?"

Jesus never studied in the Jewish schools; He got His knowledge from the Word of God. All Jewish children were taught the Book of the Law, according to the command of the Lord by Moses (Deuteronomy 5:6-7). Many parents taught carelessly, and often mingled with their instruction many idle traditions learned from the theologians; but children of faithful parents knew the Holy Scriptures from childhood. With the child Jesus this was no routine task, for He says, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; yea, Thy law is within My heart" (Psalms 40:8).

Monday: Suffering and Glory – Read 2 Corinthians 4:7-18; notice Paul's sufferings, how did he endure his sufferings? Like Moses, Paul approached life by faith, he endured his suffering in faith. It is said of Moses that "by faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured, as seeing Him who is invisible" (Hebrews 11:27). This statement will apply generally to those who live the life of faith on earth. Their sight is directed to that which is invisible. They look with the eye of faith, and that brings invisible things in the sight; for "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." And while the eye of faith sees that which is invisible, it takes note of the carnal things which are visible. In

the crowded street, in the busy marts of trade and commerce, in the presence of sin and temptation, the man of faith lives and moves so though he saw it not. The sounds of earth's confusion break upon his ear in a hardly distinguishable cadence, while his mind is full of the consciousness of the truth of the life beyond. Satan does not find easy access to such a mind with his temptations. When suffering comes, faith brings in sight the glory beyond, you are strengthened to endure. It was with Christ, whose faith beheld the time when He should "see of the travail of His soul and be satisfied," who thus "for the joy that was set before Him, endured the cross, despising the shame" (Hebrews 12:2). Life seems a long-drawn-out torture to the afflicted soul who does not see and know the Lord; but he should remember that life is more than a few years long. If we receive evil things, as well as good things, with thanksgiving, as from the hand of our Father, and know that we suffer only with Christ, eternity is ours, and "I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18). Think how insignificant the longest life of affliction will seem, when looked back upon after a hundred thousand million years of fulness of joy in the kingdom of God, which will be but the beginning of eternity! Paul reminds us, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, which is but for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal" (2 Corinthians 4:17-18). Whatever your condition in life, whether you have wealth and ease, or poverty and affliction, never forget to take the long view, and you will be kept from becoming either high-minded or downcast.

Tuesday: Christ-focused Ministry of Reconciliation – Read 2 Corinthians 5:11-15; how does this passage demonstrate that Paul's ministry is Christ-centred? In the ministry of Christ, "God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto Himself," even in the ministry of Paul, as is for all true Christian ministers, God "hath committed unto us the word of reconciliation" (2 Corinthians 5:19). The secret of this ministry of reconciliation, is a heart enlarged by the love of God – "For the love of Christ constraineth us." That love is the golden chain of perfect freedom! that binding yoke of most sweet and willing bondage! See Paul, the bondsman of Christ, going out to his daily service of labours and perils, chanting his morning song, "Most gladly will I glory in infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me" (2 Corinthians 12:9). Strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, was Paul – but his strength was the strength of faith. Paul would know nothing but "Christ and Him crucified" (1 Corinthians 2:2), and there is nothing to know outside of Christ. In Christ are hid all the treasures of wisdom. He is the power and wisdom of God (1 Corinthians 1:24). The beginning of a Christ-focused ministry is having wisdom. The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom (Proverbs 9:10).

Wednesday: Call to Holiness – Read 2 Corinthians 6:11-7:1; according to this passage, what does a holy life look like? A holy life not only look like, but it is a temple of God. Every place where God's presence is manifested, is sacred. The word "temple" or "sanctuary" signifies "holy place" – every abiding place of God is necessarily holy. The temple of God is His dwelling-place. A holy life is God's temple. Paul says, "What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; for God hath said, I will dwell in them; and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. Wherefore, out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing."

Thursday: Comfort and Joy – Read 2 Corinthians 7; what are Paul's feelings upon hearing that the Corinthians had repented? Paul expressed his joy at the good work which had been wrought in the hearts of the Corinthians. Having commended them for the readiness with which they had accepted his reproof, he closed with the words, "I rejoice therefore that I have confidence in you in all things." The majority at Corinth repented. "That repentance which is produced by the influence of divine grace upon the heart, will lead to the confession and forsaking of sin. Such were the fruits which the apostle declares had been manifested by the Corinthian church: "What carefulness it wrought in you, yea, what clearing of yourselves, yea, what indignation, yea, what fear, yea, what vehement desire, yea, what zeal." {LP 176.2}. Not all at Corinth repented; we are told: "Still there was a small minority of the Corinthians who stubbornly resisted all efforts of the apostle for the purification of the church; but their course was such that none could be deceived in them." {LP 177.1}.