

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2014: *Discipleship*
Lesson 12 “The Harvest *and the Harvesters*”

Read for this week’s study

John 1:40–46, 4:28–30, Luke 24:4–53, Acts 1:6–8, Matt. 9:36–38, Luke 15.

Memory Text

“Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be my disciples” (John 15:8).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Beggars’ Bread
- III. When Jesus Urged Patience
- IV. Exercising Authority
- V. Laborers for the Harvest
- VI. Lost and Found
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Zdravko Stefanović

THE FIELDS ARE READY FOR HARVEST

- A. Introduction
 1. What are some of the concepts that the metaphor of harvest conveys in the Bible? (Jeremiah 8:20)
 2. Did Jesus contradict Himself when He said that the harvest is plentiful—but on another occasion that the road and the gate leading to life are narrow and only a few find them?
- B. Jesus Sends out the Twelve (Matthew 10)
 1. What kind of authority did Jesus give to the Twelve?
 2. Isn’t this message about the kingdom too short and simple?
 3. Why were the apostles told to ‘travel light’?
 4. Was Jesus a pessimist, since most of this speech deals with persecutions?

C. Story of Cornelius (Acts 10)

1. How did Peter as a Jew see Cornelius?
2. How did God see Cornelius and his family?
3. Is this a story about the conversion of a Gentile family only?
4. What did it take to break down the ethnic wall which divided Jews and Gentiles?

D. Imprisoned for Jesus (Acts 16)

1. Normally Paul went to preach in synagogues. Why not this time?
2. Why is it that God's ethics are not always good business?
3. Paul was ready to pay a high price to bring justice to a suffering girl. How many believers would do the same today?
4. Who were the first three Gentile converts to the Christian faith? Where were they from?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

There's no greater mention of the Holy Spirit than in John. Jesus talked about Him at great length, and what His work would be. Is that the first mention? What's the first mention of the Holy Spirit in the biblical record?

Genesis! Page 1, isn't it? Right at Creation He was here. How about His work to win and convert and convict, and lead us into the truth? Is that in the Old Testament anywhere? Do you think of any references to the Spirit doing this kind of work?

Well, think of all the innumerable places. And you remember when David confessed his sin, he said, "And take not Thy Holy Spirit from me." What had led David to repentance but the work of the Holy Spirit? So you remember all the verses we looked at on the way through, referring to the Holy Spirit. Then why did Jesus say, "It would be better that I go, and then the Holy Spirit can come." Why did He say it would be better? He only stayed three and a half years in His ministry.

After Jesus left and they realized they were alone, (though He said, "I do not leave you orphans" in the Greek, "You are not alone. The Spirit will come and guide you,") for the very first time they sat down and opened their Bibles and went to work. They actually began to think things through. But why do that, when you have the Lord visibly present? I mean, if the Lord were here tonight, and we should have a question, why should you go and get the books out? Why not ask Him directly?

And Jesus says, "It would be better that I go, because you'll never grow up if you don't start thinking it through for yourselves." And so He says, "It's better that I go now."

And you can't see the Spirit. If you want to consult the Spirit, you'd better open the books that He has inspired. You'd better read those. And as Ellen White says, even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be, must be, judged by the Scriptures.

So He doesn't come as just a voice of authority. He comes with the authority of truth, which you will find in the Scriptures. And the men began to grow up, in the upper room. And finally they realized that the authority of their message lay in the truth, which they found as the two men on the way to Emmaus did. They found it by comparing the teachings of the Old Testament with the life and the teachings and the sufferings and the death of Christ. When they put that all together, at last they were ready to go. And then the Spirit showed Himself. He had been there all along. Who had inspired the Scriptures they were reading? Who was guiding them in the interpretation of these Scriptures? But when finally they put it all together and they were ready to go, then the Spirit appeared. Some say, "The Spirit came." No, they wouldn't have been where they were if the Spirit hadn't worked all along. Now the Spirit gave them visible endorsement.

"Now you're ready to go. Now you take the truth. And you're going to take it just as you found it. You're going to take the Bible." Look how Paul did this. "You're going to take the Scriptures out, and you're going to tie in with that, the culminating revelation based on the Old Testament, to be found in the way Jesus lived, the way He treated people, the way He suffered, and the way He died."

And then they really had authority and power, but not a visible leader. And that's the authority we have. So I think there were many ways, perhaps, in which it was better that Jesus go. And the one that appeals to me most is that they never would have grown up so long as He was there, and they could run to Him and say, "Is it this? Is it that?" And then, of course, they were preoccupied with being with Him in the kingdom, "What position will I hold in the kingdom?" He said, "There are much more important things than that. I think I'd better go. I think I'd better go, and leave you to think this thing through." And they grew up. They still had some growing to do, as you recall. Peter had some growing to do. But in the end, he really grew up, didn't he. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Acts*, recorded April, 1982 Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/59MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/60MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

This matter of teaching the truth with authority is at the very heart of the great controversy. God spoke the truth with authority but it was not by making claims supported with demonstrations of power. That's the devil's method. And religion has used it for hundreds and thousands of years and forbid that our Church should ever stoop to that method. It would

suggest that we don't have the evidence. The Bible records the evidence, the demonstration of God's trustworthiness all the way from the first charges leveled against Him in Genesis to the death of Christ on the cross. And Paul makes it plain that when Christ died on the cross it was not just for you and me. It was for the whole universe. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Understanding the Mission of the Church, number 1, recorded September, 1983, Camp AuSable, Michigan} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMUTMOTC>*

Well, how does one determine the authority of anyone who speaks, even when God speaks? In Deuteronomy 14, when Moses was inspired to write that we should take the tithe and buy strong drink with it and rejoice before the Lord, that's the Bible. Is God speaking with authority? Then why don't you go out and do it? So what do we mean He speaks with authority when in Proverbs 31 the wise man says give wine to the poor that they may forget their misery and their poverty? Why don't we use that as a key text for inner city ministry and open saloons in Detroit? Well, we know better, don't we? So what do we mean when we say God speaks with authority? We have to determine the meaning and until we understand the meaning whether it speaks with authority or not makes no difference to us.

So how do we recognize the voice of authority? In Matthew and Luke, you remember, Jesus is described as speaking with authority. Has Ellen White spoken with any such authority? Jesus spoke with great authority. In what did His authority lie? Well, did it lie in the authoritarian claims that He made? Is not the Holy Spirit called the Spirit of Jesus? Did not Jesus inspire Moses to write that we should be very wary of claims? Deuteronomy 13, remember, even with miracles. Don't believe mere claims, only if the truth is told. You remember 1 Kings 13 the older prophet who made claims but lied. Many warnings in the Bible, do not accept mere claims, so Jesus certainly didn't come and expect people to accept mere claims.

One illustration, when John the Baptist was in prison he probably heard reports about Jesus' preaching that we should visit people in prison, but Jesus never went to visit His cousin. And this puzzled not only John but his followers and they wondered, is He really the one or not? And John sent two emissaries to Christ with the question, "are you the one, are you the Christ or not?" And Jesus said, "Of course I am and I expect you to believe it!" It could have been the devil, couldn't it, masquerading as Christ, so Jesus did not say, "Yes I am." For what authority would it have had? Jesus said, "Spend the day with me." And they watched Him, the way He treated people, the way He preached the good news and all the other things that He did. And He never said who He was. At the end of the day the two disciples went back to prison to visit John and John said, "What's the answer, is He or not?"

"He never said."

“Well, why didn’t you come straight back to me?”

“He invited us to spend the day with Him.”

“Tell me, what did you see, what did you hear?”

And the two disciples told John and as John listened he said, “Oh yes, He’s the one.” Because every report was fully in harmony with the picture already presented in Scripture in the thirty-nine books of the Old Testament. You see, the answer was evidence and not a claim.

Did Jesus’ authority rest upon His miracles and His show of power? He performed many miracles. But when He began developing large crowds just because of miracles alone, He dismissed them. You remember the crowds got bigger and bigger as He began handing out the free food and the free medicine. You can always get a big crowd for that, and they thought boy, this is really it, socialized medicine and free food! And Jesus did not want them to follow Him for this. You see, they were quick to believe what a wonderful messiah He would make because when He leads us to fight against the Romans we won’t even have to carry along provisions. He can miraculously feed us all the time. And when we get wounded in battle He can heal us. Oh, they thought, we’ve really got a good messiah here.

And then He gave them some difficult words. Do you remember what He said to them? And they all left Him and there were just the twelve and He turned to them and said, (remember the Greek, the question begins with not ou but mē, which means the answer is no.) “You don’t want to leave me too, do you?” And they said, “No we don’t because to whom else shall we go?” Which may not have been too encouraging, nowhere else to go to, but at least they did stay. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Understanding the Mission of the Church, number 5, recorded September, 1983, Camp AuSable, Michigan} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/5MMUTMOTC>*

Further Study with Ellen White

The reason why it seems so difficult to win souls for Christ, is that Satan is continually engaged in misrepresenting the character of God to the human mind. Christ came to reveal the Father to the world in his true character, that the false conceptions which men entertained of the divine character might be swept away. {RH, May 31, 1892 par. 9}

All who are consecrated to God will be channels of light. God makes them His agents to communicate to others the riches of His grace. His promise is, “I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.” Ezekiel 34:26. {DA 141.4}

Philip said to Nathanael, "Come and see." He did not ask him to accept another's testimony, but to behold Christ for himself. Now that Jesus has ascended to heaven, His disciples are His representatives among men, and one of the most effective ways of winning souls to Him is in exemplifying His character in our daily life. Our influence upon others depends not so much upon what we say as upon what we are. Men may combat and defy our logic, they may resist our appeals; but a life of disinterested love is an argument they cannot gainsay. A consistent life, characterized by the meekness of Christ, is a power in the world. {DA 141.5}

God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image. {DA 294.4}

He who called the fisherman of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God. {DA 297.1}

There are souls perplexed with doubt, burdened with infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the Unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ's stead, can be a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon Christ. {DA 297.2}

We are to be laborers together with the heavenly angels in presenting Jesus to the world. With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our co-operation; for man must be the channel to communicate with man. And when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God's love. {DA 297.3}

Servants of God, with their faces lighted up and shining with holy consecration, will hasten from place to place to proclaim the message from heaven. By thousands of voices, all over the earth, the warning will be given. Miracles will be wrought, the sick will be healed, and signs and wonders will follow the believers. Satan also works with lying wonders, even bringing down fire from heaven in the sight of men. Thus the inhabitants of the earth will be brought to take their stand. {FLB 332.6}

The message will be carried not so much by argument as by the deep conviction of the Spirit of God. . . . The rays of light penetrate everywhere, the truth is seen in its clearness, and the honest children of God sever the bands which have held them. {FLB 332.7}

God has a work for His people to do for the world, and if they will work in harmony with one another and with heaven, He will demonstrate His power in their behalf as He did for His first disciples on the day of Pentecost. {FLB 332.8}

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer's love and of His saving grace. The men and women who through the long centuries of persecution and trial enjoyed a large measure of the presence of the Spirit in their lives, have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men they have revealed the transforming power of redeeming love. {AA 49.2}

The parables of the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal son, bring out in distinct lines God's pitying love for those who are straying from Him. Although they have turned away from God, He does not leave them in their misery. He is full of kindness and tender pity toward all who are exposed to the temptations of the artful foe. {COL 198.1}