

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2014: *Discipleship*
Lesson 13 “The Cost of Discipleship”

Read for this week’s study

Luke 12:49–53; Deut. 21:15; 1 Cor. 9:24–27; Matt. 18:8, 9; John 14:1–3; Heb. 11:32–12:4.

Memory Text

“Our hope for you is unshaken, for we know that as you share in our sufferings, you will also share in our comfort” (2 Corinthians 1:7, ESV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Calculating Cost: First Priority
- III. Bearing Our Cross
- IV. Disciplined Response
- V. Comparing Costs
- VI. A Better Resurrection
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Zdravko Stefanović

- A. Introduction
 1. If anyone would come after me he must deny himself, take up his cross and follow me. (Jesus)
 2. I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. (Apostle Paul)
 3. When Christ calls someone, he bids him come and die. (Dietrich Bonhoeffer)
 4. The entrance to God’s kingdom is free, but the subscription costs everything we have. (Anonymous)
 5. We shall find Christ’s footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great city, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation. In doing as Jesus did when on earth, we shall walk in His steps. (Ellen G. White)

B. Twin Parables in Matthew (Matthew 13:44-46)

1. The main point of the parables: The incomparable value of God's kingdom.
2. Contrast the joy of the hired laborer with the attitude of the rich young man. (Matthew 19:16-22)
3. The apostle Paul spoke of the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus the Lord for whose sake he 'lost all things.' (Philippians 3:7-8)

C. Twin Parables in Luke (Luke 14:28-33)

1. The main point of the parables: Following Jesus has its privileges but also its costs.
2. How popular is the concept of "commitment" in Christian faith today?
3. Contrast the decisions of two of Paul's disciples: Young Timothy (Acts 14:8-22) and Demas (2 Timothy 4:9).

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

What is the faith which was "once for all delivered to the saints"? Wouldn't it have to be something consistently delivered to the saints, all the way along? That's that one central issue that runs all through the Bible. To me, that's all about trust, which is all about God, the truth about God that was in Genesis, and runs right through to Revelation. Are we willing to contend for that? To fight for that? To stake our lives on that? I think we're going to have to before the end comes. Paul did, and it cost him. It even cost him in his own church. He got into trouble at headquarters because of the position he took about trust, about God, about faith. And I wonder what's going to happen in the future. I think we have to be strongly convinced before we'd be willing to fight, and contend for it. And yet to fight for it in the right way. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – 1, 2, 3 John and Jude, recorded August, 1982 Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/77MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/78MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Could you say, "I do what I do because God has told me to, and He has the power to reward and destroy"? Is this why you don't murder or commit adultery, because God has said you mustn't? You would otherwise, but you can't afford to incur His displeasure.

This might be all right for a beginner or a little child, but it suggests that God's laws are arbitrary and do not make good sense in themselves. That does not speak very favorably of God.

Would you rather say, "I do what I do as a believer because God has told me to, and I love Him and want to please Him"? Is this why you don't steal or tell lies? You would see nothing wrong or harmful about doing these things, it is just that you want so much to please God. For some

reason He does not like it when you steal or lie, and since He has been so good to us, you feel under some obligation to please Him. It would only be grateful and fair.

Again, this might be all right for a beginner or a child. It might even be progress beyond the obedience prompted only by fear of punishment and desire of reward. But it still implies an arbitrariness in God's commandments and does not speak so well of His character and government.

There is another possible approach to obedience. Could you say this? "I do what I do because I have found it to be right and sensible to do so, and I have increasing admiration and reverence for the One who so advised and commanded me in the days of my ignorance and immaturity." Then hastening to add, "Being still somewhat ignorant and immature, I am willing to trust and obey the One whose counsel has always proved to be so sensible, when He commands me to do something beyond my present understanding." {Maxwell, Graham. *I Want to Be Free*, pp. 34-35 Pacific Press Publishing Association, Mountain View, California 1970}

And all Job was left with, no rewards at all, all he said is, "As I know God, I don't know why this is happening. It doesn't make sense. It doesn't fit in with what I know about Him so far. But one thing does fit in. I'm sure if you'd be quiet long enough and let me talk to God, and if He would come from wherever He is and talk to me, I'm sure we could work this out and it would make sense."

And he was absolutely right. Because where is the "make sense"? It's in Job 1 and 2.

You see, if you know about the great controversy, it makes sense. If you know about Satan being the accuser and God being the defender, if you know about the universe watching and God saying, "Let Me show you a really trustworthy friend. I will let Satan test him to the limit, and he won't let Me down."

See, Job didn't know that. But he wasn't afraid to talk to God. He knew God that well. He had the same confidence Abraham did, that it would make sense.

Does the book make sense to you, as you look back over the whole great controversy and see Job in it? Job is one of the most highly honored men in the history of the planet. Magnificent his faith in God, and the intensity of his relationship with God. And when it was broken up, it nearly killed him.

As Christ felt his unity with the Father broken up, He feared that in His human nature He would be unable to endure the coming conflict with the powers of darkness. Having made the decision, He fell dying to the ground.

Job had that kind of a relationship with God. He couldn't take it as far as Jesus did. But look how far he went! Magnificent! See, when we think of perfection, we think of all kinds of behaviors. Whereas what God wants the most is this kind of a relationship with Him that will see us through the time of trouble that's coming.

To be perfect doesn't even mean to have perfect health, desirable as that is. When did Job bear his incredible witness to God? When he was deathly sick and covered with boils! And if any of us here are not at all well, and maybe never will be very well again, don't say, "I can never have the faith of Job; I can never bear this kind of witness about God."

A man covered with boils is the only man in the Bible who has this compliment. I'm sure others may have deserved it, but this compliment is expressed, "Job has said of Me what is right" off the dung heap, covered with boils, deathly ill. So nobody needs to feel shut out for this.

And you know, during the time of trouble, much as we may have worked to preserve our health, some of us may be in dreadful physical circumstances! Can you imagine? Without food and drink, and who knows what the circumstances are? Maybe tied up in prison; haven't jogged around the block in months! And yet one could bear this witness.

See, we have to be very careful of what we include in perfection! Until this emergency period is over, the essence of this maturity and perfection that God wants, is this conviction, this being settled into the truth about Him so intellectually and spiritually that we cannot be moved, even if everything is taken away. I see that as the essential quality of character of those who are described as having the character of Christ reproduced in them.

We rather see them moving with poise and grace through life, never ruffled, and so on. That's perfection. Well, that is one aspect. But what do you do during an emergency? Jesus was so smitten by this awful experience of His Father not communicating with Him in Gethsemane or on the cross, that He fell dying to the ground in Gethsemane and expired on the cross. And He cried out in anguish, and was filled with fear, even despair, *Desire of Ages* says. But He didn't let it overcome Him.

Is that not the essence of this thing? So I believe our picture of God and our decision about and our commitment to it, that this is something I'd stake my life on! He could even slay me, and I would still trust Him. (Job 13:5) This is the essential quality of perfection that is mentioned in the scriptures. Not that we obey 5,999 rules to perfection. It isn't that! We might even be sick. We might even be crying out. We might even be expressing despair momentarily, and God is saying, "There's a really grown up saint surviving the time of trouble!"

I think Job is a real example of this and should be very encouraging to us in all ages and all conditions. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 -Job, recorded 1982, Riverside, California}

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/25MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/26MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

In this last meeting with His disciples, the great desire which Christ expressed for them was that they might love one another as He had loved them. Again and again He spoke of this. "These things I command you," He said repeatedly, "that ye love one another." His very first injunction when alone with them in the upper chamber was, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." To the disciples this commandment was new; for they had not loved one another as Christ had loved them. He saw that new ideas and impulses must control them; that new principles must be practiced by them; through His life and death they were to receive a new conception of love. The command to love one another had a new meaning in the light of His self-sacrifice. The whole work of grace is one continual service of love, of self-denying, self-sacrificing effort. During every hour of Christ's sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another. {DA 677.2}

This love is the evidence of their discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples," said Jesus, "if ye have love one to another." When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart. {DA 678.1}

This love, manifested in the church, will surely stir the wrath of Satan. Christ did not mark out for His disciples an easy path. "If the world hate you," He said, "ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted Me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept My saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for My name's sake, because they know not Him that sent Me." The gospel is to be carried forward by aggressive warfare, in the midst of

opposition, peril, loss, and suffering. But those who do this work are only following in their Master's steps. {DA 678.2}

Take up your appointed work. The Lord will fulfill the promise on His part. These inspired scriptures would never have been given to you if the Lord had not had confidence that you could do all that He has required. You can heed the invitation, "Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light." {TM 127.1}

You may rise to the heights to which the Holy Spirit calls you. True religion means living the word in your practical life. Your profession is not of any value without the practical doing of the word. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." This is the condition of discipleship. {TM 127.2}

The Saviour of the world conquered Satan in the wilderness of temptation. He overcame to show man how he may overcome. He announced in the synagogue of Nazareth: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, to preach the acceptable year of the Lord." {3T 388.2}

The great work which Jesus announced that He came to do was entrusted to His followers upon the earth. Christ, as our head, leads out in the great work of salvation and bids us follow His example. He has given us a world-wide message. This truth must be extended to all nations, tongues, and people. Satan's power was to be contested, and he was to be overcome by Christ and also by His followers. An extensive war was to be maintained against the powers of darkness. {3T 388.3}

When benevolence, kindness, tenderheartedness, sympathy, are manifest in our lives; when the joy of right doing is in our hearts; when we exalt Christ, and not self, we may know that our faith is of the right order. "Hereby we do know that we know Him, if we keep His commandments." 1 John 2:3. {MB 146.3}

We are living epistles, known and read of all men. {5T 348.2}

When, as erring, sinful beings, we come to Christ and become partakers of His pardoning grace, love springs up in the heart. Every burden is light, for the yoke that Christ imposes is easy. Duty becomes a delight, and sacrifice a pleasure. The path that before seemed shrouded in darkness, becomes bright with beams from the Sun of Righteousness. {SC 59.2}

The loveliness of the character of Christ will be seen in His followers. It was His delight to do the will of God. Love to God, zeal for His glory, was the controlling power in our Saviour's life. Love beautified and ennobled all His actions. Love is of God. The unconsecrated heart cannot

originate or produce it. It is found only in the heart where Jesus reigns. “We love, because He first loved us.” 1 John 4:19, R.V. In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around. {SC 59.3}

The peace that Christ gave to His disciples, and for which we pray, is the peace that is born of truth, a peace that is not to be quenched because of division. Without may be wars and fightings, jealousies, envies, hatred, strife; but the peace of Christ is not that which the world giveth or taketh away. {OHC 328.6}

He would have every individual sense his responsibility to so use his precious time here in this world that it will be fruitful daily in good works. This is the only worthy aim of every living mortal—to employ his God-given faculties with endless results in view. {TMK 321.5}