

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Third Quarter 2014: *The Teachings of Jesus*

### Lesson 9 “Our Mission”

#### Read for this week’s study

Matt. 5:14–16; Luke 24:48, 49; John 20:21; Matt. 28:19, 20; Rev. 14:6–12.

#### Memory Text

“ ‘And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come’ ” (Matthew 24:14, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. To Be the Light of the World
- III. To Be Witnesses
- IV. So Send I You
- V. To Make Disciples
- VI. To Preach the Gospel
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week we’ll look at the gospel commission as Jesus Himself presented it. (...) Christ sent out the Twelve Apostles and later seventy disciples **to evangelize** (*Matt. 10:5–15, Luke 10:1–12*). During forty days after His resurrection, Christ appeared several times to His disciples (*1 Cor. 15:3–8*), and He placed the responsibility of **preaching the gospel** in their hands (*Acts 1:2, 3*). Again and again He entrusted them with the **gospel commission**.” (Sabbath afternoon; emphasis mine) Obviously, the way the gospel is understood will be of utter importance.
2. “What is Jesus saying in Matthew 5:14–16 to each of us individually and as a church community?” (Sunday’s lesson) Sunday’s lesson concentrates on the fact that we are supposed to be the light of the world. “A concealed disciple is no more useful than a lamp under a bowl on a dark night.” However, this passage is a transition (a gateway) between the Beatitudes (the life of Kingdom now) and what will follow (fulfilment of the law). Jesus is calling the Israel of His day to be true Israel. God had called Israel to be the salt of the earth; but Israel was behaving like everyone else.
3. In the same way, God called Israel to be the light of the world (see Isaiah 42:6; 49:6). Israel was the community through which God intended to shine His light into the

world's dark corners, not only to reveal evil, but especially to enable people who were living in darkness to find a new way. But what if the people who were called to be the light-bearers had become part of the darkness? This was Jesus' warning and challenge. Jerusalem, the city set on a hill, was supposed to be a beacon of hope to the world. His followers were supposed to be like that: their deep, heartfelt reflection of God's character would be a sign to the nations around that Israel's God is worthy of everybody's worship. What happens when God's people reflect the misunderstanding of God's character typical among the majority population around them?

4. Monday's lesson emphasizes that we are to be witnesses. "That night, His presence and His words transformed them dramatically, dispelling their anxiety and unbelief and filling them with the peace and joy that come from the certainty of His resurrection." (Monday's lesson) If the events of that night accomplished the task, why did they still need the Holy Spirit to accomplish the same goals 50 days later?
5. "Then Christ began to expound their mission, gradually helping them to grasp the significance of their responsibility as witnesses of His death, His resurrection, and His power to forgive sins and to transform lives (*Luke 24:46–48*). They had surely seen Him die, but they had also seen Him alive again. So they could testify for Him, that He was the Savior of the world. (...) We can testify based only on our own experiences, not someone else's. As rescued sinners, we have the privilege of telling others what Jesus has done for us." (Monday's lesson) In what sense is our witness the same as the first disciples? In what sense is their position and witness unique?
6. "Sending someone implies that the one who sends has authority over the one who is sent. It also involves a purpose, since one is sent with a mission to fulfill. Jesus was sent by the Father to save the world (*John 3:17*), and we are sent by Jesus to proclaim salvation through Him." (Tuesday's lesson) If we are supposed to "look at the gospel commission as Jesus Himself presented it" – how did it get narrowed to only salvation? Was the mission of Jesus to make sure that as many people as possible are saved (*John 17:3*)? Is that supposed to be our goal? Or are the issues in the great controversy wider than numerical goals that measure who gets saved and who does not?
7. "Jesus provided the Holy Spirit to enable the disciples to carry out their mission. At Creation, God "breathed into" Adam "the breath of life" (*Gen. 2:7*). Now Jesus "breathed on" the disciples " "the Holy Spirit" " (*John 20:22, NKJV*). As the breath of life transformed lifeless dust into a living being, so the Holy Spirit transformed fearful and discouraged disciples into powerful living witnesses to continue Jesus' work. The same anointing is indispensable today to fulfill the commission entrusted to us." (Tuesday's lesson) Once again, what difference do you see between a one-time salvation history event such as Pentecost and the necessary daily empowerment that all believers need?
8. "Unfortunately, many Bible versions do not reflect on the fact that, in Greek, the only verb that is imperative is *make disciples*, while the other three verbs are

participles.”(Wednesday’s lesson) What are the implications of the fact that “making disciples” is the main task of Christ’s followers? How are we doing that today?

9. “We rejoice when somebody is baptized, but baptism is not the end of the story. It is just part of the process of making someone a disciple. Our task is to invite people to follow Jesus, which means to believe in Him, to obey His teachings, to adopt His way of life, and to invite others to become His disciples, too.” (Wednesday’s lesson) How do we avoid the risk of producing Sabbath-keeping, adult-baptizing, conditional immortality-believing, health reforming Adventists with the devil’s picture of God?
10. “The mission itself is expressed by the Greek verb *kērusso*, given here in the imperative mood. *Kērusso* means ‘to proclaim aloud, to announce, to preach.’ Mark uses this term 14 times, more than any other Gospel. The church must proclaim the gospel. (...)The eleven alone could never announce the gospel to the entire world, much less to every creature living in it. A task of such worldwide dimension requires the participation of the entire church. It is entrusted to all the believers in Jesus in all ages. This includes you and me.” (Thursday’s lesson) The lesson puts emphasis on everybody’s involvement. We need to put emphasis on the gospel so that the right picture of God is proclaimed. What is the point of global involvement if the wrong picture of God’s character is preached?
11. Revelation 13 shows that at the end, after the loud cry is given with clarity, a great majority will prefer Satan’s picture and worship him (thinking that they are worshiping the true God). Given that reality, how do you see the mission of the church?

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The whole emphasis in these two letters is on the truth, on the good news. And Paul starts out by saying in Romans, “I have been commissioned to make known God’s good news.” And then he says, “I’m proud of the good news. It has power to save and heal people,” and he adds here in Galatians (just as Jesus taught in the gospel of John), “and to set them free.” Now what is this good news? Paul says, “in it the righteousness of God is revealed.” We can look back and see it running all through the 66 books, from the charge that God was a liar in Genesis, to Christ’s statement in John that Satan is the one who’s lied, to the description in Revelation 12 of the war up in Heaven led by the deceiver on one side—there are many mentions in Scripture of this controversy over the character of God. We’re able to say that this good news that has the power to save and heal us is the truth about God.

And since it’s in the setting of the great controversy, we do well to state what it is not. The good news is that God is not the kind of person Satan has made Him out to be. And what Satan has made Him out to be is repeated all through Scripture. And the sad report all through Scripture, and appearing much more frequently than good news, is that God’s own people, who are privileged to know the good news and know about the great controversy, have most of the

time accepted Satan's lies. And that's the reason why they're so prone to legalism, they're so much involved in unthinking, mechanical obedience, like saying, "Oh when will the Sabbath be past, that we may buy and sell and get gain?" It meant they were keeping the Sabbath, but their hearts weren't in it. Crowding into God's sanctuary, and Isaiah saying, "Who requires this trampling of my courts? And who asks for all these sacrifices? Your hearts aren't in it." And Amos says, "I can't stand the sound of your noisy hymns; you're not thinking while you sing." Over and over the prophets of the Bible bewail and bemoan the unthinking, mechanical ("rote", Isaiah says) rote obedience of God's people.

Now rote, mechanical, legalistic, unthinking obedience implies a rote, mechanical, unthinking, legalistic, arbitrary God. And those who God chose to be His spokesmen to the world turned out to be the most serious perverters of the truth. To the extent that, when Christ came to set them right, remember, and give a correct picture of God, it was His family, His Sabbath-keeping saints in the Promised Land, who killed Him rather than accept the truth. The Bible is a record of great failure on man's part, with some notable exceptions. But the way God has dealt with this, the way He's sought to reveal the good news about Himself, not based on His claims, but on innumerable, repeated demonstrations of His truthfulness and His trustworthiness under the most difficult of circumstances; that's real evidence one can depend on. The Bible is a record of this, and on this basis, God won His case 1,900 years ago. And Paul says I've come to give you a finished message, that Christ came and demonstrated the truth beyond all question before the eyes of the onlooking universe. Only people on this planet are not yet convinced. And so I'm commissioned to bring you this good news, that God has won His case. The onlooking universe had heard all the charges, has now seen the evidence, and they're convinced that Satan is the liar; God has told the truth. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Galatians, part 5, recorded March, 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*  
<http://pkp.cc/5MMGALATIANS66>

The Good News is God is not the kind of person His enemies have made Him out to be; arbitrary, unforgiving, and severe. Jesus said, "If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father." God is just as loving and trustworthy as His Son; just as willing to forgive and heal. Though infinite in majesty and power, our Creator is an equally gracious person who values nothing higher than the freedom, the dignity, and the individuality of His intelligent creatures, that their love, their faith, their willingness to listen and obey may be freely given.

This is the truth revealed through all the books of Scripture. This is the everlasting good news that wins the trust and admiration of God's loyal children throughout the universe. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, session 16, "God's Last

Pleading With His Children” recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

They had been together in the upper room and heard Jesus say, “If you have seen Me, you’ve seen the Father. And there’s no need for Me to intercede with the Father for you, for the Father loves you Himself. And in the judgment, you’ll actually just be judged by the truth. That’s all, nothing arbitrary about it.” And they had seen Him feed the hungry, and heal the sick, and cry at the funeral of one of His friends, and all those things. And now they were to go out and spread the good news. You would think the world would be thrilled, but it was no more thrilled to hear them than it was to hear Christ. . . .

The disciples went out to explain it the best they could, and they did learn to do it better and better as time went on. You remember Peter had much to learn yet. And the brethren in Jerusalem had much to learn. They still thought they should hang on to the ceremonies, you remember. The commission was given to the early Christian church when it still had a lot of theological progress to make. You see, just because we are commissioned, it doesn’t mean our theology is perfect! Because certainly the early Christian leaders did not have a perfect theology, but they had the essence of it, and they went out to give the good news. {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)

I read from Micah and Amos and Isaiah and other places, from Deuteronomy, from Leviticus, all God has ever wanted of His people is trust, real trust. A willingness to listen, to accept His instruction, if need be, His correction, His discipline, people who are willing to listen. No wonder Jesus said, “Go into all the world and make disciples of people.”

The first quality of a disciple, a student, is a respectful willingness to listen. As soon as God has that there’s nothing He can’t do for us. He can heal and restore us. Of course, all He wants of angels who have never left Him is trust. All He wants of us in this emergency period is trust. But we need it more than anybody else because we need so much healing and repair, and if we don’t trust Him, He can’t do this for us. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 5, recorded October, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/9MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/10MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

## Further Study with Ellen White

The word of God, spoken by one who is himself sanctified through it, has a life-giving power that makes it attractive to the hearers, and convicts them that it is a living reality. {DA 142.1}

The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in human hearts, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness. {COL 386.1}

Christ has given to the church a sacred charge. Every member should be a channel through which God can communicate to the world the treasures of His grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ. There is nothing that the Saviour desires so much as agents who will represent to the world His Spirit and His character. There is nothing that the world needs so much as the manifestation through humanity of the Saviour's love. All heaven is waiting for men and women through whom God can reveal the power of Christianity. {Mar 128.3}

"Ye are the light of the world." The Jews thought to confine the benefits of salvation to their own nation; but Christ showed them that salvation is like the sunshine. It belongs to the whole world.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 306. {ChS 22.2}

Trials patiently borne, blessings gratefully received, temptations manfully resisted, meekness, kindness, mercy, and love habitually revealed, are the lights that shine forth in the character in contrast with the darkness of the selfish heart, into which the light of life has never shone. {MB 44.4}

Through the ministration of angels, God sends light to His people, and through His people the light is to be given to the world. {ML 304.6}

Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, Let your light shine. If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions, and the Lord's glory will be revealed. The light will shine forth to penetrate and dispel the darkness. You cannot help shining within the range of your influence. {COL 420.1}

The humble worker who obediently responds to the call of God may be sure of receiving divine assistance. To accept so great and holy a responsibility is itself elevating to the character. It calls into action the highest mental and spiritual powers, and strengthens and purifies the mind and heart. Through faith in the power of God, it is wonderful how strong a weak man may become, how decided his efforts, how prolific of great results. He who begins with a little knowledge, in a humble way, and tells what he knows, while seeking diligently for further knowledge, will find the whole heavenly treasure awaiting his demand. The more he seeks to impart light, the more light he will receive. The more one tries to explain the word of God to others, with a love for souls, the plainer it becomes to himself. The more we use our knowledge and exercise our powers, the more knowledge and power we shall have. {COL 354.1}

Looking unto Jesus we obtain brighter and more distinct views of God, and by beholding we become changed. Goodness, love for our fellow men, becomes our natural instinct. We develop a character which is the counterpart of the divine character. Growing into His likeness, we enlarge our capacity for knowing God. More and more we enter into fellowship with the heavenly world, and we have continually increasing power to receive the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of eternity. {COL 355.1}

The work committed to the disciples would require great efficiency; for the tide of evil ran deep and strong against them. A vigilant, determined leader was in command of the forces of darkness, and the followers of Christ could battle for the right only through the help that God, by His Spirit, would give them. {AA 31.1}

As Christ sent forth His disciples, so today He sends forth the members of His church. The same power that the apostles had is for them. If they will make God their strength, He will work with them, and they shall not labor in vain. {Mar 128.2}

It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of the Saviour. {Mar 128.5}

It is a law of heaven that as we receive we are to impart. The Christian is to be a benefit to others; thus he himself is benefited. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself" (Proverbs 11:25). This is not merely a promise. It is a law of God's divine administration, a law by which He designs that the streams of beneficence shall be kept, like the waters of the great deep, in constant circulation, perpetually flowing back to their source. In the fulfilling of this law is the power of Christian missions. . . . {HP 317.5}

It is a wonderful thought that human beings can speak the word of God, in simple words of comfort and encouragement. The humblest instruments will be used of God to sow the seeds of truth, which may spring up and bear fruit, because the one in whose heart they were sown needed help—a kind thought, a kind word, made effective by the One who has said, "Lo, I am with you alway." {HP 188.4}

He finds His faithful ones, and holds communion with them, encouraging and strengthening them. And angels of God, that excel in strength, are sent forth by God to minister to His human workers who are speaking the truth to those who know it not. {HP 188.6}