

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Second Quarter 2015: *The Book of Luke*
Lesson 10 “Following Jesus in Everyday Life”

Read for this week’s study

Luke 11:37–54; 12:4–21, 35–53; Amos 6:1; Luke 8:4–15; 22:24–27.

Memory Text

“And the apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith’” (Luke 17:5, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Flee Pharisaism
- III. Fear God
- IV. Be Prepared and Watchful
- V. Be a Fruitful Witness
- VI. Be a Servant Leader
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Jon Paulien

1. In Luke 17:5 the disciples ask Jesus to “increase our faith.” What concepts and strategies have helped you to increase your faith? (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. Read Luke 11:37-54. This is a parallel text to Matthew 23. Jesus was warning about what basic principles here? How are these same principles manifested today? Is there ever a time when it is appropriate for us to confront people as forcefully as Jesus did here? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Luke 12:4-12. What is Jesus saying to us about fear? What does it mean to “fear God?” How does that fear relate to the high sense of human value that Jesus expresses? How would you explain the sin against the Holy Spirit? Is anything truly unforgivable with God? (Monday’s lesson)
4. Read Luke 12:13-21. How can we apply this to our personal finances in practical terms? How much is needed in order to be content (1 Timothy 6:6-9)? One of the challenges in today’s environment is the potential erosion in retirement pensions, both governmental and otherwise. How can one know when one’s savings are truly enough to make it through retirement? (Monday’s lesson)

5. Read Luke 12:35-53. Many of these verses are parallel to Jesus' eschatological sermon in Matthew 24 and 25. As such this concerns readiness for the return of Jesus. What is that readiness and how do these verses apply to our own situation today? When Jesus says, "To whom much is given, much is required," to whom is He referring? (Tuesday's lesson)
6. Read Luke 8:4-15. What are the implications of this parable for Christian witness and evangelism? (Wednesday's lesson)
7. Read Luke 22:24-27. What are the implications for Christian leadership? Do church people ever act like the "Gentiles" when they come to positions of leadership? What is so revolutionary about Jesus' response to the disciples? Is it even possible to survive in this world if we follow Jesus' principles? (Thursday's Lesson)
8. How does one stand firm for the right without becoming a Pharisee? How can we know what issues are worth fighting for and which should be left for everyone to make up their own minds? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: In Luke 11:37-52 He was invited to dine in the home of a Pharisee, and He went and seemed to be right at home and loved them. But was it still love when He pronounced woes on the Pharisees and the lawyers?

Graham: Ah, I wish we had a recording or even a video recording of the look on His face and the sound of His voice. I am sure there were tears in His voice when He said that, because He was addressing His own children. And it's very clear in Scripture that God does not want anyone to be lost. But it was because their behavior was so gross and so unacceptable, that He was honest with them, like a good physician. You would like the doctor to tell you the truth and to do whatever needs to be done. And so He gave them the unvarnished truth for their own sakes. This is the One who gave His life for them a little while later. So there's a time for denunciation, but it had better be done with tears in the voice. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #9, "There is No Need To Be Afraid of God" recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/9MMCAG>*

Yet, as you look down that Bible Reference Sheet, doesn't the Bible emphasize, make it very plain, that we are supposed to fear God and be His God-fearing people? Look at that first one on the list. You recognize it is the message of the first of the three angels, in Revelation 14:7: "Fear God and give him glory, for the hour of his judgment has come." (RSV)

It even gives a good reason why we should fear Him. But one needs to understand the word fear. If you will forgive the Greek, it's pronounced *phobos*, from which we do get phobia. But it doesn't always mean terror. Sometimes it means respect. It means reverence. Look for example at the next verse, Psalm 128:1, 2: "Blessed is everyone who fears the Lord. [You mean blessed is everyone who is terrified of God? Well, read on.] You shall be happy, and it shall be well with you." (KJV)

Surely the Psalmist isn't saying, "Happy is everyone who is scared of God." This is the other meaning that the word may have. Blessed is everyone who reveres and respects the Lord. You shall be happy and it will be well with you. Note, for example, Proverbs 9:10: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (KJV) You mean to be terrified of God is the beginning of wisdom and learning? No, there again the context determines the meaning of the word. So the translation in the *Good News Bible*, right beside it, is to be preferred: "To be wise you must first have reverence for the Lord."

Where there is no respect, there is no reverence, and very little learning can take place. Think of all the lengths to which our God has gone through the centuries to gain the respect of His people and hold it long enough to tell them some more of the truth about Himself. Perhaps the most famous example is the one provided at Mt. Sinai. God came down to speak to His people. Did they all line up quietly to listen? They were noisy. They were complaining. They were fussing about the food and the water. There was no respect for God. So God could not speak to them softly that day. Instead there was thunder and lightning, and fire and smoke and earthquake. And God said to Moses, "You put a fence around that mountain. Don't let the people come too close to me." Now we sing "Nearer, Still Nearer," but not that day. The people were so terrified that they spoke to Moses, here in Exodus 20:18-20:

The people were afraid and they trembled [in fact, God had said]; if anyone comes near the fence, he's to be stoned or shot. If anyone breaks through the fence, I'll burst forth and consume him. [No wonder the people were afraid and trembled.] And they stood afar off, and said to Moses, "You speak to us, and we will hear; but let not God speak to us, lest we die." But Moses said to the people, "Do not fear [There is no need to be afraid]; for God has come to prove you [or to test you], and that the fear of Him may be before your eyes, that you may not sin." (RSV)

Notice the use of the word *fear* in both meanings. You see, "Do not fear" means do not be afraid, but "That the fear of Him may be before you" is the word reverence. So the very same word carries both meanings in the very same passage, as you notice. But don't you love it that Moses could stand in the middle of the earthquake and the fire, and say that there is no need to be afraid? Because he knew God, and he knew why God was raising His voice on that occasion.

We might ask “why didn’t God speak more softly?” We know He prefers to—and He has, many times when talking to His friends, as in the still, small voice with Elijah at the mouth of the cave. But when people are hard of hearing, God will raise His voice. How grateful we should be that He is willing to raise His voice. Now did He speak too loudly? Did He terrify them too much? What were they doing forty days later when the fire, and the earthquake, and the lightning and the thunder died away? They were dancing drunk around a golden calf in a fertility cult ritual. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #9, “There is No Need To Be Afraid of God” recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/9MMCAG>*

Lou: A question came in last week that really touched my heart. This person wrote, “How are we who have been raised as Seventh-day Adventist Christians, and have been taught to fear God and His judgments, to change to a love relationship? When you asked last Friday night, ‘Would you be comfortable if the Father walked in?’ I hesitated to answer, and then I said ‘I hope so.’ I am afraid! How do I dispel this fear?”

Graham: Oh, I know the One who would love to hear that question, would be God Himself. If you would look at God and say, “God, I hesitate to tell you this, but I’m scared.”

And I wonder what He would do. Would He say, “I appreciate that”?

Or would He say, “I think maybe I’d better not talk to you any longer, you’re so scared. I’ll send for My Son.”

Well, in practicality I think the solution is to become convinced in Scripture that the One who came is fully God. We’re not afraid of Jesus. But to realize the One who was with us is no less than God! And that’s what the Sabbath reminds us of, that gentle Jesus—who was afraid of Him? He is the Almighty Creator. And then if we could just come to the place where we would truly accept what we call the “testimony of Jesus.” The ultimate testimony of Jesus is, “Do you want to know what My Father is like? If you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father.” We find it hard to believe that. So I think we need to read it over and over and come to the place where we really are convinced. You want to know what God is like? Look at Christ, for Christ is God. And as we think of it, number one, it seems incredible, for it takes a little time. And number two, the enemy is opposed to our knowing this, so he will throw up every roadblock he can to keep us from believing this incredible truth. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #10 with Lou Venden, “The Reminder of The Evidence” recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/10MMCAG>*

During the last three conversations we have talked about when the conflict will be over. We discussed how it would be over when God's children on this planet have fully responded "yes" or "no" to His final pleading. The conflict will be over when His loyal children on this planet have become so settled into the truth that they will be ready to resist Satan's final efforts to deceive. The conflict will be over when, like grown up believers, they not only know the truth well enough to survive themselves, but like Job, they know it well enough to speak well and truly of their Heavenly Father. So the question for tonight is not when will the conflict be over, but rather how soon will it be over?

Do you think the end will come, the conflict will be over, Christ will return—in our own lifetime? The disciples wondered about this, you remember, and they asked Jesus, as in the first of the texts on our Bible Reference Sheet, Matthew 24:3: "Tell us [they said], when will this be and how can we tell when you're coming back and the world will come to an end?" (*Beck*)

And Jesus replied that even the angels do not know. In fact, He added, that while He was still in His humble, human form on this planet, that even He did not know Himself, only the Father. Look again at Matthew 24:36, next on the sheet. Jesus' own words: "But about that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, not even the Son; only the Father." (*NEB*)

But Jesus went on to indicate that there was something much more important than knowing the exact time. He indicated that it was far more important to trust Him enough to be willing to wait. You recall our conversation, "All God Asks of Us Is Trust?" For if only we trust Him enough to be ready for His coming, whenever that should be, we really don't need to know the exact time. If we trust Him, all will be well. Jesus indicated this in the next verse, in John 14:1, 3: "Set your troubled hearts at rest [on the subject, He said]. Trust in God always; trust also in me . . . I shall come again and receive you to myself, so that where I am you may be also." (*NEB*) {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #19, "How Soon Will the Conflict Be Over?" recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/19MMCAG>

Now sometimes God's patience has even puzzled His trusting children. You recall that in the days of Habakkuk, they cried out to God, "Why don't you do something? Why don't you come and rescue us and help us in our predicament?" They even were in despair that God seemed to be doing nothing. And so the prophet Habakkuk was sent to urge them not to give up their faith, but to trust God enough to be willing to wait and let God work out His plans in His own good time. Micah said the problem often is that we simply don't understand God's plan. Let us trust Him as we seek to understand it more and give Him time to do it in His own time and in His own way. I wish we could have included all of Habakkuk in our Bible Reference Sheet, but

just looking at Habakkuk 2:3. The prophet sums up his message by saying: “It may seem slow in coming, but wait for it; it will certainly take place.” (GNB)

In fact, God’s first message to Habakkuk was “I am doing something, but you wouldn’t believe it if I told you.” Habakkuk said, “Try me, Lord. Tell me.” And the Lord did. And Habakkuk indicated that he was willing to wait. That’s the source of that great verse, “The just, the righteous, God’s friends, will live in faith, in trust.” That verse was not written about forgiveness. It was written about trusting God enough to be willing to wait. That great verse that Paul picked up in Romans is a most appropriate one for those who wonder why the Lord still waits. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #19, “How Soon Will the Conflict Be Over?” recorded June, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/19MMCAG>*

If the purpose of the Bible is to give us the truth about God, why are there so few specific statements about Him?

In answer, I sometimes ask, What if the Bible should consist mainly of God’s claims about Himself? On what basis would you believe them?

When John the Baptist was languishing in prison, he began to wonder if Jesus really was the Christ. He sent some friends to ask Him for the truth.

Did Jesus tell them, “Yes, indeed I am. And I expect John to believe”?

Anyone could make this claim—even the devil himself. Only on the basis of sufficient evidence could John’s serious question be given a satisfactory reply.

So Jesus answered John’s disciples, “Go and tell John what you see and hear—that blind men are recovering their sight, cripples are walking, lepers being healed, the deaf hearing, the dead being brought to life and the good news is being given to those in need. *And happy is the man who never loses his faith in Me.*” Matthew 11:4-6, Phillips.

The Bible is a record of the things that God has said and done. But most of the Bible is made up of the historical details that describe the situations within which God so acted and so spoke. Without these details we would not be in a position to understand why God chose to speak and act in such a variety of ways. {Maxwell, A. Graham. *You Can Trust the Bible; why, after many translations, it is still the word of God*, 54. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1967}

Can God really be trusted? No mere claim can settle this question. The devil has made many claims, and with impressive authority and power. What is required is the truth, the truth about God. We can not, dare not, trust someone we do not know.

But can God be known that well? As the Infinite One, has he revealed himself in such a way that we may understand and be confident that this is the truth? Does what we see and hear about him add up to such weight of evidence that we can say, "Indeed you can trust God"?

The Bible points forward to a time of worldwide peace, a day when love and trust will fill God's whole universe. Then "'no longer shall each man teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, 'Know the Lord,' for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, says the Lord'" (Jeremiah 31:34).

This time has not yet come. There are still many neighbors and brothers who do not know God as he is. In ignorance, or blinded by Satan's lies, how can they decide about God? And how can they meet the last worldwide effort to deceive?

It should be no surprise to hear our Lord explain that the gospel must go to all the world before the end can come (Matthew 24:14). God would not ask anyone to face the final, indescribable time of distress without a chance to prepare (see Daniel 12:1-3).

As a schoolboy I always considered it an honor when my teacher would ask me to deliver an important item of news. The more important the news, the greater the privilege of telling. It is the inestimable privilege of those who have already made up their minds to trust God, now to spread the Good News, the everlasting truth about our gracious and trustworthy God.

{Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 19-20. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-02>

Further Study with Ellen White

Through the plan of salvation a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and results of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 12}

By coming to dwell with us, Jesus was to reveal God both to men and to angels. . . Not alone for His earthborn children was this revelation given. Our little world is the lesson book of the universe. God's wonderful purpose of grace, the mystery of redeeming love, is the theme into which "angels desire to look," and it will be their study throughout endless ages. {DA 19.2}

The law of Jehovah was burdened with needless exactions and traditions, and God was represented as severe, exacting, revengeful, and arbitrary. He was pictured as one who could take pleasure in the sufferings of his creatures. The very attributes that belonged to the character of Satan, the evil one represented as belonging to the character of God. Jesus came to teach men of the Father, to correctly represent him before the fallen children of earth. Angels could not fully portray the character of God, but Christ, who was a living impersonation of God, could not fail to accomplish the work. The only way in which he could set and keep men right was to make himself visible and familiar to their eyes. That men might have salvation he came directly to man, and became a partaker of his nature. {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 6}

Christ exalted the character of God, attributing to him the praise, and giving to him the credit, of the whole purpose of his own mission on earth,—to set men right through the revelation of God. In Christ was arrayed before men the paternal grace and the matchless perfections of the Father. In his prayer just before his crucifixion, he declared, “I have manifested thy name.” “I have glorified thee on the earth; I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.” When the object of his mission was attained,—the revelation of God to the world,—the Son of God announced that his work was accomplished, and that the character of the Father was made manifest to men. {ST, January 20, 1890 par. 9}

It is true that disappointments will come; tribulation we must expect; but we are to commit everything, great and small, to God. He does not become perplexed by the multiplicity of our grievances, nor overpowered by the weight of our burdens. His watchcare extends to every household, and encircles every individual; He is concerned in all our business and our sorrows. He marks every tear; He is touched with the feeling of our infirmities. All the afflictions and trials that befall us here are permitted, to work out His purposes of love toward us—“that we might be partakers of His holiness,” and thus become participants in that fullness of joy which is found in His presence. {ML 292.5}

Our Lord teaches that the true object of life is ministry. Christ Himself was a worker, and to all His followers He gives the law of service—service to God and to their fellow men. Here Christ has presented to the world a higher conception of life than they had ever known. By living to minister for others, man is brought into connection with Christ. The law of service becomes the connecting link which binds us to God and to our fellow men. {COL 326.3}

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings. {COL 333.1}