

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Third Quarter 2015: *Missionaries*
Lesson 8 “Cross Cultural Missions”

Read for this week’s study

John 4:4–30; Matthew 8:5–13; Mark 5:1–20; Matt. 15:21–28; Luke 17:11–19; John 12:20–32.

Memory Text

“Behold! My Servant whom I have chosen, My Beloved in whom My soul is well pleased! I will put My Spirit upon Him, and He will declare justice to the Gentiles’ ” (Matthew 12:18, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Samaritan Woman
- III. The Roman Army Officer
- IV. Dealing With Demons
- V. Ten Lepers
- VI. The Greeks and Jesus
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Moderator: Daniel Duda

1. “Thanks to its position, Nazareth was near major routes traveled by Roman army units, as well as merchant caravans. As a result, Jesus must have been in contact with non-Jews His whole early life (not to mention the time in Egypt). After His rejection in Nazareth (see Luke 4:16–31), Jesus centered His ministry in the cosmopolitan Galilean city of Capernaum. These contacts with Gentiles and their world significantly impacted His ministry and teaching. Even though He focused on Israel, the wider world was His concern. During the more than three years of His ministry between His baptism and ascension, on at least six occasions Jesus had direct contact with persons from the nations. We will look this week at the gospel accounts of these contacts.” (Sabbath afternoon) Was the model of Jesus’ ministry influenced primarily by the cultural factors of His upbringing or by His reading of the Old Testament story?
2. “The only point where Jesus changed the conversation was when He told her to bring her husband, knowing that she wasn’t married but had been with several men. Of course, asking her to do this opened the way for Him to reach out to her, however uncomfortable she had become. Nevertheless, by doing this, He was able

to witness to her in a powerful way.” (Sunday’s lesson) What is the lesson we can learn from Jesus about cross-cultural ministry? Is raising sensitive topics the best way into somebody’s heart?

3. “Jesus transgressed a few Jewish customs: first, asking a Samaritan woman to give Him a drink; second, being alone with her. In Israel a man could not be seen alone with a woman unless she was a family member. Jesus followed Jewish customs when in Israel. However, in Samaria He was outside Jewish territory and not bound by Jewish traditions, even though as we have seen elsewhere, Jesus distinguished between human-made traditions and the commands and precepts of God.” (Sunday’s lesson) Was Jesus respecting Samaritan norms as a guest in their territory? When is it safe to ignore cultural norms and traditions? What is the lesson for us? How does the story of the Samaritan woman function in the Gospel according to John? (See John 2:23.24)
4. Monday’s lesson deals with the Roman army officer (centurion). “From the account of this healing, we can see that vast cultural divides were not able to keep the Jews and this Roman apart. What lessons can we take from this about how we must learn to transcend whatever cultural differences we can (in good conscience) in order to reach out to others?” (Monday’s lesson) Matthew puts this immediately after Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount and His healing of the leper. How does the story function in Matthew and Luke (7:1-10)?
5. Matthew told us at the end of the previous chapter that the crowds were astonished because when Jesus taught, He taught as one with authority. Therefore Matthew’s next section (chapters 8 & 9) will show us what Jesus’ authority looked like in practice. And he starts with two stories about a leper and a centurion’s servant. Both are stories of healing, but Matthew’s point goes beyond that. With the leper, Jesus is restoring and renewing a member of Israel. With the centurion, faith in Jesus’ authority is already spreading to people outside of Israel, as a sign of the great drawing in of all the nations that God intends to accomplish. These two stories are a window on the whole gospel. (See Matthew 8:11.12)
6. “Read Mark 5:1–20 and Matthew 15:21–28. How do these stories help us understand how Jesus related to non-Jews? How do we understand Jesus’ words to the Canaanite woman? Also, what lessons should the disciples have picked up, seeing Jesus minister to those who were not part of the covenant people?” (Tuesday’s lesson) It is interesting that Mark puts the story of Canaanite woman in 7:24-30. What is the significance of its connection with the preceding story (7:1-23; similarly in Matthew 15:1-20)? How does the story function in Mark?
7. “The lesson was that, contrary to their understanding, the work of the gospel is not just for the Jews but is to go to other nations, as well.” (Tuesday’s lesson) It will take years for the disciples to learn what the Canaanite woman understood. But Jesus is patient with them and with us—patient with all of His disciples. For Jesus there is no “other side”, insiders or outsiders, all people are His children. He is the Lord of all.

8. Wednesday's lesson deals with the story of ten lepers (Luke 17:11-19). "The fact that they [the ten lepers] just turned around and went [to show themselves to the priests] showed that they believed in Him and His power to heal them. Only the Samaritan, though, expressed appreciation for what Jesus had done. The nine did not forget to go to the priests, but they neglected to give thanks to their Healer." (Wednesday's lesson)
9. Luke does not say that the nine were any less cured, but he does imply that they were less grateful. Luke once again focuses on Jesus' attitude to the outsider, the foreigner. This man put to shame the Jews who had been healed, but who did not say 'thank you.' Only this foreigner gives God the glory, thus demonstrating to the Jews that they were not living up to their very name which reminded them to praise God (the word 'Judah' in Hebrew means 'praise'). Is it possible that we also get off-track, and someone from outside our circle needs to remind us who we are supposed to be?
10. The last story of the lesson is about the Greeks who want to see Jesus (John 12:20-32). "Their approach signaled the beginning of world evangelization. (...) What we see here are men, outside of Judaism, wanting to come to Jesus. What a sign that the world was ready for His atoning death!" (Thursday's lesson) Really? Look again. If this is about evangelism, why does Jesus respond the way He does (vs. 24-32)? Why does He talk about losing His life instead of keeping it? Jesus clearly sees this as a subtle but dangerous temptation! What do we learn from Him as we watch and listen? Jesus would not allow even the most pious excuse in the world (evangelism and gaining new converts) to distract Him from the course the He needed to take.

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Think how Jesus treated the women. And He stunned the observers by treating them so. Even a Samaritan woman? You remember the disciples were surprised; first, that He was talking to a Samaritan, but secondly, that He was talking to a woman. You don't do that. But He did. He spoke to her very kindly, even though He knew what she had been doing. His treatment of the woman taken in adultery, think how He sought to recover her dignity and self-respect. The way He treated Mary, who was known as a wicked woman in the town, so that she too might recover dignity and self-respect. How graciously He treated women. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Proverbs*, recorded 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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

<http://pkp.cc/29MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/30MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Lou: Let's go to one further quick question that has come in: "Is healing, the healing of our bodies, the healing that we've talked about this evening, dependent upon perfect obedience to Christ's teaching? Or doesn't God's mercy at times supersede even the doubts of those who question His divine authority?"

Graham: Oh, that's true. I suppose that could refer to when Jesus went everywhere healing everybody. He went through villages and left nobody sick. He healed all ten lepers, and only one came back to thank Him. I think on that occasion Jesus was saying something else that was crucial about the Father, that He is a Healer, not a destroyer. So everywhere Jesus went He healed people whether they trusted Him or not. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #14 with Lou Venden, "God Can Completely Heal the Damage Done" 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/14MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

The Saviour's words, "Ye are the light of the world," point to the fact that He has committed to His followers a world-wide mission. In the days of Christ, selfishness and pride and prejudice had built strong and high the wall of partition between the appointed guardians of the sacred oracles and every other nation on the globe. But the Saviour had come to change all this. The words which the people were hearing from His lips were unlike anything to which they had ever listened from priest or rabbi. Christ tears away the wall of partition, the self-love, the dividing prejudice of nationality, and teaches a love for all the human family. He lifts men from the narrow circle that their selfishness prescribes; He abolishes all territorial lines and artificial distinctions of society. He makes no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. He teaches us to look upon every needy soul as our neighbor and the world as our field. {MB 42.2}

Wherever a soul reaches out after God, there the Spirit's working is manifest, and God will reveal Himself to that soul. For such worshipers He is seeking. He waits to receive them, and to make them His sons and daughters. {DA 189.2}

The stay of Jesus in Samaria was designed to be a blessing to His disciples, who were still under the influence of Jewish bigotry. They felt that loyalty to their own nation required them to cherish enmity toward the Samaritans. They wondered at the conduct of Jesus. They could not refuse to follow His example, and during the two days in Samaria, fidelity to Him kept their prejudices under control; yet in heart they were unreconciled. They were slow to learn that their contempt and hatred must give place to pity and sympathy. But after the Lord's ascension, His lessons came back to them with a new meaning. After the outpouring of the Holy Spirit, they recalled the Saviour's look, His words, the respect and tenderness of His bearing toward

these despised strangers. When Peter went to preach in Samaria, he brought the same spirit into his own work. When John was called to Ephesus and Smyrna, he remembered the experience at Shechem, and was filled with gratitude to the divine Teacher, who, foreseeing the difficulties they must meet, had given them help in His own example. {DA 193.4}

The Saviour is still carrying forward the same work as when He proffered the water of life to the woman of Samaria. Those who call themselves His followers may despise and shun the outcast ones; but no circumstance of birth or nationality, no condition of life, can turn away His love from the children of men. To every soul, however sinful, Jesus says, If thou hadst asked of Me, I would have given thee living water. {DA 194.1}

The gospel invitation is not to be narrowed down, and presented only to a select few, who, we suppose, will do us honor if they accept it. The message is to be given to all. Wherever hearts are open to receive the truth, Christ is ready to instruct them. He reveals to them the Father, and the worship acceptable to Him who reads the heart. For such He uses no parables. To them, as to the woman at the well, He says, "I that speak unto thee am He." {DA 194.2}

The Samaritan woman who talked with Jesus at Jacob's well had no sooner found the Saviour than she brought others to Him. She proved herself a more effective missionary than His own disciples. The disciples saw nothing in Samaria to indicate that it was an encouraging field. Their thoughts were fixed upon a great work to be done in the future. They did not see that right around them was a harvest to be gathered. But through the woman whom they despised a whole cityful were brought to hear Jesus. She carried the light at once to her countrymen. {MH 102.2}

This woman represents the working of a practical faith in Christ. Every true disciple is born into the kingdom of God as a missionary. No sooner does he come to know the Saviour than he desires to make others acquainted with Him. The saving and sanctifying truth cannot be shut up in his heart. He who drinks of the living water becomes a fountain of life. The receiver becomes a giver. The grace of Christ in the soul is like a spring in the desert, welling up to refresh all, and making those who are ready to perish eager to drink of the water of life. In doing this work a greater blessing is received than if we work merely to benefit ourselves. It is in working to spread the good news of salvation that we are brought near to the Saviour. {MH 102.3}

Christ's gracious presence in His word is ever speaking to the soul, representing Him as the well of living water to refresh the thirsting soul. It is our privilege to have a living, abiding Saviour. He is the source of spiritual power implanted within us, and His influence will flow forth in words and actions, refreshing all within the sphere of our influence, begetting in them desires and aspirations for strength and purity, for holiness and peace, and for that joy which brings no sorrow with it. This is the result of an indwelling Saviour. {TM 390.2}

During His earthly ministry Christ began to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and to preach salvation to all mankind. Though He was a Jew, He mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of the Jews with regard to this despised people. He slept under their roofs, ate at their tables, and taught in their streets. {AA 19.2}

Jesus longed to unfold the deep mysteries of the truth which had been hid for ages, that the Gentiles should be fellow heirs with the Jews, and “partakers of His promise in Christ by the gospel.” Ephesians 3:6. This truth the disciples were slow to learn, and the divine Teacher gave them lesson upon lesson. In rewarding the faith of the centurion at Capernaum, and preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of Sychar, He had already given evidence that He did not share the intolerance of the Jews. But the Samaritans had some knowledge of God; and the centurion had shown kindness to Israel. Now Jesus brought the disciples in contact with a heathen, whom they regarded as having no reason above any of her people, to expect favor from Him. He would give an example of how such a one should be treated. The disciples had thought that He dispensed too freely the gifts of His grace. He would show that His love was not to be circumscribed to race or nation. {DA 402.2}

The Saviour’s visit to Phoenicia and the miracle there performed had a yet wider purpose. Not alone for the afflicted woman, nor even for His disciples and those who received their labors, was the work accomplished; but also “that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through His name.” John 20:31. The same agencies that barred men away from Christ eighteen hundred years ago are at work today. The spirit which built up the partition wall between Jew and Gentile is still active. . . .There are no barriers which man or Satan can erect but that faith can penetrate. {DA 403.1}

In faith the woman of Phoenicia flung herself against the barriers that had been piled up between Jew and Gentile. Against discouragement, regardless of appearances that might have led her to doubt, she trusted the Saviour’s love. It is thus that Christ desires us to trust in Him. The blessings of salvation are for every soul. Nothing but his own choice can prevent any man from becoming a partaker of the promise in Christ by the gospel. {DA 403.2}

But the purposes of Christ were not thwarted. He allowed the evil spirits to destroy the herd of swine as a rebuke to those Jews who were raising these unclean beasts for the sake of gain. Had not Christ restrained the demons, they would have plunged into the sea, not only the swine, but also their keepers and owners. The preservation of both the keepers and the owners was due alone to His power, mercifully exercised for their deliverance. Furthermore, this event was permitted to take place that the disciples might witness the cruel power of Satan upon both man and beast. The Saviour desired His followers to have a knowledge of the foe whom they were to meet, that they might not be deceived and overcome by his devices. It was also His will that the people of that region should behold His power to break the bondage of Satan

and release his captives. And though Jesus Himself departed, the men so marvelously delivered, remained to declare the mercy of their Benefactor. {GC 515.1}

The Saviour manifested divine compassion toward the Syrophenician woman. His heart was touched as He saw her grief. He longed to give her an immediate assurance that her prayer was heard; but He desired to teach His disciples a lesson, and for a time He seemed to neglect the cry of her tortured heart. When her faith had been made manifest, He spoke to her words of commendation and sent her away with the precious boon she had asked. The disciples never forgot this lesson, and it is placed on record to show the result of persevering prayer. {COL 175.2}

Heavenly beings still visit the earth as in the days when they walked and talked with Abraham and with Moses. . . .There are invisible agencies observing every word and deed of human beings. In every assembly for business or pleasure, in every gathering for worship, there are more listeners than can be seen with the natural sight. Sometimes the heavenly intelligences draw aside the curtain which hides the unseen world that our thoughts may be withdrawn from the hurry and rush of life to consider that there are unseen witnesses to all we do or say. {COL 176.2}

We need to understand better than we do the mission of the angel visitants. It would be well to consider that in all our work we have the co-operation and care of heavenly beings. Invisible armies of light and power attend the meek and lowly ones who believe and claim the promises of God. Cherubim and seraphim and angels that excel in strength—ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands—stand at His right hand, “all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.” Hebrews 1:14. {COL 176.3}

The Saviour’s own visit to Samaria, and later, the commendation of the good Samaritan, and the grateful joy of that leper, a Samaritan, who alone of the ten returned to give thanks to Christ, were full of significance to the disciples. The lesson sank deep into their hearts. In His commission to them, just before His ascension, Jesus mentioned Samaria with Jerusalem and Judea as the places where they were first to preach the gospel. This commission His teaching had prepared them to fulfill. When in their Master’s name they went to Samaria, they found the people ready to receive them. The Samaritans had heard of Christ’s words of commendation and His works of mercy for men of their nation. They saw that, notwithstanding their rude treatment of Him, He had only thoughts of love toward them, and their hearts were won. After His ascension they welcomed the Saviour’s messengers, and the disciples gathered a precious harvest from among those who had once been their bitterest enemies. {DA 488.6}

Let your light shine, and other lights will be kindled. {GW 195.3}

Jesus came in personal contact with men. He did not stand aloof and apart from those who needed His help. He entered the homes of men, comforted the mourner, healed the sick,

aroused the careless, and went about doing good. And if we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we must do as He did. We must give men the same kind of help that He did. {ML 227.4}

He was the teacher sent by God to instruct mankind. As one in whom all restorative power is found, Christ spoke of drawing all men unto Him, and of giving the life everlasting. In Him there is power to heal every physical and every spiritual disease. {LHU 167.5}

He [Christ] passed by no human being as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. In whatever company He found Himself He presented a lesson appropriate to the time and the circumstances. Every neglect or insult shown by men to their fellowmen only made Him more conscious of their need of His divine-human sympathy. He sought to inspire with hope the roughest and most unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them manifest as the children of God. . . . {LHU 183.2}

Though He was a Jew, Jesus mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of His nation. In face of their prejudices He accepted the hospitality of this despised people. He slept with them under their roofs, ate with them at their tables—partaking of the food prepared and served by their hands—taught in their streets, and treated them with the utmost kindness and courtesy. And while He drew their hearts to Him by the tie of human sympathy, His divine grace brought to them the salvation which the Jews rejected. {LHU 183.3}

Wherever hearts are open to receive the truth, Christ is ready to instruct them. He reveals to them the Father, and the service acceptable to Him who reads the heart. For such He uses no parables. To them, as to the woman at the well, He says, “I that speak unto thee am he” (*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 25-28). {LHU 183.6}