

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2016: *The Role of the Church in the Community*

Lesson 6 “Jesus Mingled With People”

Read for this week’s study

Matthew 1:22, 23; John 1:14; Luke 15:3–24; Matthew 9:10–13; Psalm 51:17; 1 John 2:16; Philippians 2:13–15.

Memory Text

“Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, ‘This man welcomes sinners and eats with them’” (Luke 15:1, 2, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Christ’s Method Alone
- III. Lost and Found
- IV. Eating With Sinners
- V. Mingling Wisely
- VI. In the Midst of a Crooked Generation
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

Key Statement:

“Christ’s method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour **mingled with men** as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, ‘Follow Me.’”

—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 143.

1. Read Luke 15:1-2. Why do you suppose the tax collectors and sinners were not gathering around to hear the Pharisees? What was it about Jesus that made Him so attractive to unholy people and so unattractive to the “good people?” (Sabbath afternoon)

2. Read the summary of Jesus' ministry in Matthew 9:35-36. What were the main elements of Jesus' ministry? What was His driving motivation for ministry? What does it mean to "connect" with people and how can we learn to do that more effectively? What do Matthew 1:22-23 and John 1:14 tell us about Jesus? How far did Jesus go to mingle with people? (Sunday's lesson)
3. Read Luke 15:3-24. How do these parables relate to the first two verses of the chapter? What do all three parables have in common? What does each parable imply about the value God sees in us? What does the celebration at the end of each parable tell us about God? What stories in the gospels tell us that Jesus purposely placed Himself in contact with people of dubious character? Have you ever avoided witnessing to a person who would likely not fit in well at your local church? (Monday's lesson)
4. Read Matthew 9:9-13. How is this story reminiscent of the parables in Luke 15? How do Hosea 6:5-6 and Psalm 51:16-17 convey a similar, New Testament style message? What is the relationship between mercy and sacrifice? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. Wednesday's lesson suggests there is a right way and a wrong way to "mingle" with the "world." What is meant by "the world" in statements like that? What does Genesis 13:5-13 tell us about the dangers of "mingling" with the world? If Abraham had 318 trained servants (Genesis 14:14), what does that tell us about the ethnicity of Israel? Read Genesis 19:12-26 and Numbers 25:1-3. How do you balance the need for mission and spiritual self-defense? Read the statement from *Selected Messages*, volume 3, page 231 in the lesson. How do you reconcile that statement with many other statements on avoiding the presence and appearance of evil? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. Thursday's lesson opens with the statement that "the world needs what we have been given in Christ?" What have we been given in Christ? Could you summarize it in 30 seconds to a total stranger? What would you say? Read Philippians 2:13-15. What do we learn from this passage? How does it encourage us to balance outreach and spiritual self-defense? Is there a danger of grumbling and complaining in mission? (Thursday's lesson)
7. Friday's lesson argues that by isolating ourselves in Christian "ghettos" we are "in apostasy." Do you think that statement is too strong, or is the point valid? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: I want to come back to a basic question that I've heard again and again, and I'm sure it will be in the minds of many of our hearers. How do you answer the question, "Must one obey God's law to be saved?" You said the law is not a threat to our freedom. But on the other hand, don't I have to obey it?

Graham: Maybe the safest way to approach that in a brief time is to consider the word "obedience." The biblical word means "to hearken, to listen." The Greek word is "to listen humbly." As Micah said, "All God asks of us is that we walk humbly before our God." The thief on the cross didn't have much time to live up to all the precepts of the many, many laws that had been used as God's emergency measures, but he certainly was humbly and gratefully and reverently willing to listen to the one in the middle. And he died willing to listen, sincerely, honestly willing to listen. He will arise in the same frame of mind. He has much to learn, but he'll be a good pupil. He'll be a good disciple. That means he's willing to listen, to accept instruction, to accept correction. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #12 with Lou Venden, "God's Law is No Threat to Our Freedom" recorded April, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/12MMCAG>*

What are the two main fruits of the Spirit? Truth, he leads us into truth, and love. And love is the keeping of the commandments which we've already covered. Galatians 5:22 the fruit of the Spirit is love. And, by the way, all the ones that follow are really out-workings of love. So they all come around to the same place. And it's all that Micah ever said and Amos and Hosea. What does God want as we approach him? For in the end we will all stand before him. I mean, physically, visibly we will all stand; even if we're lost we will stand before him. And we ask like Micah, "With what shall I come before the Lord?" He says, "When you finally come, please just bring yourselves, and be humble and be teachable, and be trustworthy and be willing to listen, and I can save you."

And the thief on the cross says, "But I understand there's a great deal I have yet to learn."

Sure, but that's no problem if you're a disciple. And the word disciple means one under discipline and discipline means instruction. That is, we become pupils. And we're very short-life pupils compared with those before the Flood. We only have 70, 80, 90 years at best, so we have a very short period for study. And God says, "Never mind the time. If you only live a few hours after crucifixion as with the thief on the cross and it is apparent that you have a new heart and a right spirit and have become one of my pupils you'll be safe to save. And I will instruct you in the hereafter." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Three Angels' Messages, #6, recorded October, 1981, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/6MM3ANGELSM>*

You see, Christ came to reveal the truth about God. The Holy Spirit comes for the same purpose. The record of Christ's revelation is in the Bible. The Holy Spirit is the one who moved

some of our fellow believers to write the record. The Spirit helps us to understand the record. Romans eight even tells us the Holy Spirit helps us to pray as we read.

So if we desire to know God, and learn the answers to the questions in the great controversy; if we want to see Christ; if we want to be open to the work of the Holy Spirit; if we want to let him lead us into truth; there is only one way, and that is to read the Bible. As we read all sixty-six books we will discover how true that last verse is: Hebrews 1:1:

In many [very many] and various [very various] ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets [you see that is demonstrating in many and various ways over a long period of time, and under a great variety of circumstances; that's what Hebrews 1:1 is saying]. . . . In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son [or by his Son]. (RSV)

You don't find claims in there. You find demonstration, over many centuries of time and certainly under a great variety of circumstances. The very length of the sixty-six books speaks well of our God. The very existence of the Bible says that God is not trying to lead us to trust him without evidence. If God offered us only claims, the Bible would be only a paragraph long. How moving it is to us to realize that the infinite one has chosen to win his family by being a humble teacher. By stooping to meet us where we are, speaking a language we can understand, leading us no faster than we are able to follow, and running grave risks of being misunderstood—especially when we are so noisy that he has to raise his voice to get our attention, and then tell us that he does not like to raise his voice at all! A teacher like that could be trusted. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4, "God's Way Of Restoring Trust" recorded February, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG>

Well, now that God is here, in person, so humbly in human form, veiling the dazzling splendor of his divinity, that human beings might come to know him without being consumed—for is this not the God that said to Moses, "No man can see my face and live?" And yet the reflected glory was so bright that he wore a veil out of consideration for the people. So he came humbly in human form, And of course when he got tired, and he got hungry, some thought, "That could not be God." And when he was on his knees washing a dozen pairs of dirty feet, Judas decided this definitely could not be God, for his God would not so humiliate himself. And yet to others of us, that is one of the most wonderful things God ever did. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – John, recorded April, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/57MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/58MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

And you could count on God when things were that bleak, to send a message of encouragement and enlightenment and explanation to his people. He surely wouldn't send a book of mysteries and dates and schedules of events that they could not possibly understand. Rather, that sixty-sixth book that he did send, the book of Revelation (which means clarification, not mystification), that sixty-sixth book is an invitation to discouraged early Christians to look a little higher—to take the *larger view* of things. To see how they've all been caught up in a vast great controversy that affects the whole universe! And that it's a controversy over God's own character and government. And then to read on and see that God has already won this war and the angels all agree with him, to see that this is the good news. And then to read on and realize that God is inviting *us* to join in the celebration; and then to go out to the world and invite all others who are willing to listen, to join in God's victory in the war. And then we Christians might not seem so much on the defensive all the time; we have good news to tell. There's no way God and his side can lose. And should we not *join the winning side?* is the invitation in that sixty-sixth book. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #11, "The Conflict in God's Family" recorded January, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>*

But you notice in all of this, in the end, we want to understand why God does things, and he always looks good. That's for sure. And sometimes he stoops very low to meet us where we are, to do little quaint things, at times. Look at all those rules in the Old Testament. Some of them, when we reread them, seem so strange. I don't think he liked them, either. But he knew we needed them, and so he gave them to us.

Many other things in Mark, like Jesus eating with tax collectors and sinners. How extraordinary! What a risk to his reputation! And he suffered because of it, didn't he? They said he was a winebibber, and that he associated with immoral people. How are you going to help people if you don't meet them where they are? He has always done that, but it's very dangerous. Harsh critics will misunderstand. But we admire it, don't we. How marvelous that he was willing to go out and eat with these people who were regarded as the dregs of society, even stopping under the tree and saying, "Zacchaeus, I want to have dinner with you today."

Can you imagine, though, the Lord turning up at your front door and saying, "Could I have dinner with you today?" What would you say? Zacchaeus was overcome, wasn't he? He came down out of that tree, and he promised, not just restitution. He said, "I will give four times as much." He was really overwhelmed. He never got over it. And that was a very wonderful occasion. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – John, recorded April, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/57MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/58MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

So many times in the Bible the glory of God is described as having the appearance of fire, and all that is out of harmony would be consumed if God did not veil his life-giving glory. Ellen White is eloquent on this. Time after time she speaks of God in mercy veiling his life-giving glory. She says that when Christ came, he veiled his divine splendor lest he consume those that he came to save, and/or destroy them. So the dazzling brightness of his divinity was veiled. How soon was it veiled? Wasn't it immediately when Adam and Eve sinned, or they would have been consumed when God came to talk with them in the garden that day? And that's why they needed the clothes. And Ellen White says that God gave them clothes right away to protect them from the extremes of heat and cold. Isn't that interesting? Our atmosphere was changed, not at the Flood alone. It was changed when sin first came in. And I think we've tried to pin too many things on the Flood that don't fit these days. But some of the things that geoscientists are observing these days fit much more what may have happened to our planet when God put it in the dark, in mercy, so that we could survive. And it has remained a dark place ever since.

When Ellen White came out of vision, she would say, "This earth is a dark place," you remember? There are just so many comments like that. Now, isn't God's strange act the first time when he unveils his life-giving glory and ceases to protect his children who are out of harmony? Because no more time, no more help, would be of any avail. And what happens? All that is out of harmony with him is consumed. This is not an act of arbitrary power; the glory of him who is love will consume them. Another statement: The light of the glory of God, which brings life to the righteous, will consume the wicked. And all he has to do is come, this time, with his glory unveiled. And you know he's not willing that any should perish, and we know how he feels about those who perish. Read Hosea 11 again. "How can I give you up? How can I let you go?" It comes all through Scripture. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – 1 & 2 Timothy, Titus, & Philemon, recorded May, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/71MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/72MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

The earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God

could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfill His word. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder." God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the "Son of man" who shares the throne of the universe. It is the "Son of man" whose name shall be called, "Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. The I AM is the Daysman between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both. He who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," is not ashamed to call us brethren. Hebrews 7:26; 2:11. In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love. {DA 25.3}

Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. No man has seen God at any time except as He is revealed through Christ. . . . {8T 265.2}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to reveal, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. . . . {8T 265.5}

Christ revealed all of God that sinful human beings could bear without being destroyed. He is the divine Teacher, the Enlightener. Had God thought us in need of revelations other than those made through Christ and in His written word, He would have given them. {8T 266.1}

Taking humanity upon Him, Christ came to be one with humanity and at the same time to reveal our heavenly Father to sinful human beings. He was in all things made like unto His brethren. He became flesh, even as we are. He was hungry and thirsty and weary. He was sustained by food and refreshed by sleep. He shared the lot of men, and yet He was the blameless Son of God. He was a stranger and sojourner on the earth—in the world, but not of

the world; tempted and tried as men and women today are tempted and tried, yet living a life free from sin. {8T 286.3}

Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled. Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy. By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union. {DA 26.2}

Looking upon man, God saw his desperate rebellion, and He devised a remedy. Christ was His gift to the world for man's reconciliation. The Son of God was appointed to come to this earth to take humanity and by His own example to be a great educating power among men. His experience in man's behalf was to enable men to resist Satan's power. He came to mold character and to give mental power, to shed abroad the beams of true education, that the true aim of life might not be lost sight of. The sons of men had had a practical knowledge of evil; Christ came to the world to show them that He had planted for them the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. {CT 33.3}

He dined and lodged with the rich and the poor, and made Himself familiar with the interests and occupations of men, that He might gain access to their hearts. The learned and the most intellectual were gratified and charmed with His discourses, and yet they were so plain and simple as to be comprehended by the humblest minds. {3T 214.2}

Christ reached the people where they were. He presented the plain truth to their minds in the most forcible and simple language. The humble poor, the most unlearned, could comprehend, through faith in him, the most exalted truths of God. No one needed to consult the learned doctors as to his meaning. He did not perplex the ignorant with mysterious inferences, or use unaccustomed and learned words, of which they had no knowledge. The greatest teacher the world has ever known, was the most definite, simple, and practical in his instruction. {RH, April 17, 1888 par. 7}

Jesus, the heavenly Teacher, did not hold Himself aloof from the children of men; but in order to benefit them He came from heaven to earth, where they were, that the purity and holiness of His life might shine upon the pathway of all and light the way to heaven. The Redeemer of the world sought to make His lessons of instruction plain and simple, that all might comprehend them. He generally chose the open air for His discourses. No walls could enclose the multitude which followed Him; but He had special reasons for resorting to the groves and the seaside to give His lessons of instruction. He could there have a commanding view of the landscape and make use of objects and scenes with which those in humble life were familiar, to illustrate the important truths He made known to them. With His lessons of instruction He associated the works of God in nature. The birds which were caroling forth their songs without a care, the

flowers of the valley glowing in their beauty, the lily that reposed in its purity upon the bosom of the lake, the lofty trees, the cultivated land, the waving grain, the barren soil, the tree that bore no fruit, the everlasting hills, the bubbling stream, the setting sun, tinting and gilding the heavens—all these He employed to impress His hearers with divine truth. He connected the works of God's finger in the heavens and upon the earth with the words of life He wished to impress upon their minds, that, as they should look upon the wonderful works of God in nature, His lessons might be fresh in their memories. {2T 579.2}

All who heard the Saviour "were astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with power." "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Luke 4:32; Matthew 7:29. The teaching of the scribes and elders was cold and formal, like a lesson learned by rote. To them the word of God possessed no vital power. Their own ideas and traditions were substituted for its teaching. In the accustomed round of service they professed to explain the law, but no inspiration from God stirred their own hearts or the hearts of their hearers. {DA 253.3}

Jesus had nothing to do with the various subjects of dissension among the Jews. It was His work to present the truth. His words shed a flood of light upon the teachings of patriarchs and prophets, and the Scriptures came to men as a new revelation. Never before had His hearers perceived such a depth of meaning in the word of God. {DA 253.4}

Jesus met the people on their own ground, as one who was acquainted with their perplexities. He made truth beautiful by presenting it in the most direct and simple way. His language was pure, refined, and clear as a running stream. His voice was as music to those who had listened to the monotonous tones of the rabbis. But while His teaching was simple, He spoke as one having authority. This characteristic set His teaching in contrast with that of all others. The rabbis spoke with doubt and hesitancy, as if the Scriptures might be interpreted to mean one thing or exactly the opposite. The hearers were daily involved in greater uncertainty. But Jesus taught the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority. Whatever His subject, it was presented with power, as if His words could not be controverted. {DA 253.5}

Yet He was earnest, rather than vehement. He spoke as one who had a definite purpose to fulfill. He was bringing to view the realities of the eternal world. In every theme God was revealed. Jesus sought to break the spell of infatuation which keeps men absorbed in earthly things. He placed the things of this life in their true relation, as subordinate to those of eternal interest; but He did not ignore their importance. He taught that heaven and earth are linked together, and that a knowledge of divine truth prepares men better to perform the duties of everyday life. He spoke as one familiar with heaven, conscious of His relationship to God, yet recognizing His unity with every member of the human family. {DA 254.1}

The souls who came to Jesus felt in His presence that even for them there was escape from the pit of sin. The Pharisees had only scorn and condemnation for them; but Christ greeted them as

children of God, estranged indeed from the Father's house, but not forgotten by the Father's heart. And their very misery and sin made them only the more the objects of His compassion. The farther they had wandered from Him, the more earnest the longing and the greater the sacrifice for their rescue. {COL 186.2}

These souls whom you despise, said Jesus, are the property of God. By creation and by redemption they are His, and they are of value in His sight. As the shepherd loves his sheep, and cannot rest if even one be missing, so, in an infinitely higher degree, does God love every outcast soul. Men may deny the claim of His love, they may wander from Him, they may choose another master; yet they are God's, and He longs to recover His own. He says, "As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep that are scattered; so will I seek out My sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day." Ezekiel 34:12. {COL 187.1}

In the parable the shepherd goes out to search for one sheep—the very least that can be numbered. So if there had been but one lost soul, Christ would have died for that one. {COL 187.2}

The sheep that has strayed from the fold is the most helpless of all creatures. It must be sought for by the shepherd, for it cannot find its way back. So with the soul that has wandered away from God; he is as helpless as the lost sheep, and unless divine love had come to his rescue he could never find his way to God. {COL 187.3}

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}

In the parable of the prodigal son is presented the Lord's dealing with those who have once known the Father's love, but who have allowed the tempter to lead them captive at his will. {COL 198.2}

Christ came to this world as the expression of the very heart and mind and nature and character of God. He was the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person. But He laid aside His royal robe and kingly crown, and stepped down from His high command to take the place of a servant. He was rich, but for our sake, that we might have eternal riches, He became poor. He made the world, but so completely did He empty Himself that during His ministry He declared, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." {MM 19.1}

Christ stood at the head of humanity in the garb of humanity. So full of sympathy and love was His attitude that the poorest was not afraid to come to Him. He was kind to all, easily approached by the most lowly. He went from house to house, healing the sick, feeding the

hungry, comforting the mourners, soothing the afflicted, speaking peace to the distressed. He took the little children in His arms and blessed them, and spoke words of hope and comfort to the weary mothers. With unflinching tenderness and gentleness He met every form of human woe and affliction. Not for Himself, but for others, did He labor. He was willing to humble Himself, to deny Himself. He did not seek to distinguish Himself. He was the servant of all. It was His meat and drink to be a comfort and a consolation to others, to gladden the sad and heavy-laden ones with whom He daily came in contact. {MM 19.3}

At the time of Christ's first advent darkness had covered the earth, and gross darkness the people. Truth looked down from heaven, and nowhere could discern the reflection of her image. Spiritual darkness had settled down over the religious world, and this darkness was almost universal and complete. . . . {RC 16.2}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world's Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life. {5T 738.4}

Christ, the Light of the world, veiled the dazzling splendor of His divinity and came to live as a man among men, that they might, without being consumed, become acquainted with their Creator. Since sin brought separation between man and his Maker, no man has seen God at any time, except as He is manifested through Christ. {MH 419.1}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. {MH 419.4}