

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

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

Lesson 7 “Jesus Desired Their Good”

Read for this week’s study

Jonah 3:4–4:6; Luke 19:38–42; Matthew 5:43–47; 1 Corinthians 13; Mark 8:22–25; Philippians 2:3–5; James 2:14–17.

Memory Text

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!” (Matthew 23:37).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Jonah in Nineveh
- III. The “Anyway” Principle
- IV. Love Never Fails
- V. The Second Touch
- VI. The Other-centered Church
- 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 Matthew 23:37. In spite of their rejection, Jesus still desired the good of Jerusalem. What does that tell us about God? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Jonah 3:4-4:6. What serious attitude problem does Jonah have? What does that tell us about his view of God? Read Luke 19:38-42. What is Jesus’ attitude toward the city of Jerusalem on this occasion? Note the contrast with the attitude of

Jonah. Both are on a hill overlooking a city, but they have a different attitude toward God's "threat." According to this text, what was God's role in the destruction of Jerusalem? (Sunday's lesson)

3. What if you and I discover that we are more like Jonah than we realized? What do we do if we don't desire the good of those around us, particularly the lost? Is there anything we can do to become more like Jesus in our compassion for others? (Sunday's lesson)
4. Read Matthew 5:43-47, Luke 6:27, 35 and Luke 23:34. How should our behavior toward others relate to their behavior toward us? How do we understand the idea that "God is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked?" How does Romans 2:4 underline that picture as well? (Monday's lesson)
5. Does history provide lessons of how "Christians" have done terrible deeds in the name of Christ? Has Christianity as a whole succeeded in "desiring the good" of non-Christians? What do Daniel 7:24-25 and Romans 2:24 have to say about that? Read 1 Corinthians 13. What does Paul say that love is? What does love have to do with our witness to the world? How can a religion that has texts like this be as cruel as institutional Christianity has been in the course of history? (Tuesday's lesson)
6. Read Mark 8:22-25. What spiritual lesson can we learn from the fact that Jesus' first healing touch didn't fully heal the blind man? How do you understand the man's answer to the question, "Do you see anything?" Why do you think Jesus deliberately healed the man in two stages? What does the lesson make of this fact? (Wednesday's lesson)
7. How would you define "humility"? What do you think of Paul's definition of humility in Philippians 2:3-5? How does one actually live this out in today's world? What does it actually mean to die to self? (Thursday's lesson)
8. Read James 2:14-17. Is it possible to trust God and not have the kinds of good works James is talking about here? (Friday's lesson)
9. How would you define "character?" What does the desire to do good to others have to do with character? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

But what do you think of a man who is embarrassed to know God so well? Paul says, in Romans 1, "I am not ashamed of the good news about God and his righteousness." But Jonah was ashamed. But what was it that he was ashamed about, really? Isn't it that he would be discredited as a prophet? He had gone in there and said, "Forty days," and he was afraid it wouldn't happen. And it didn't, so he says, "God, you've absolutely ruined my reputation. Who'll believe me now?"

The Good News is about God. And one of the best parts of the good news about him is that he is not willing that any should perish. He waits, and this kindness of God is meant to lead us to repentance, not to shame. . . . Jonah was more concerned about his own reputation than about God's. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Obadiah, Jonah & Micah 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/45MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/46MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

As God treats us, so we shall treat each other. This is why David will be comfortable there [in Heaven], in spite of his great sin. It is not because all the memory of sin has been blotted out. This would require that every Bible be destroyed and all memory of what it contains. Gone would be all memory of the plan of salvation and God's merciful handling of the problem of sin!

Lou: How can you grow if you're looking at yourself and hoping to grow? And how can you avoid the self confidence that comes in, for instance, with the Laodiceans who feel very content? I suppose if you'd ask a Laodicean, he'd say, "Well, I've really done quite well. I'm growing very nicely, thank you."

Graham: One of the evidences that one is growing up is that one is not becoming arrogant. There's nothing more stubborn than a little child. "My daddy says it, and he's bigger than your daddy, and therefore it's true." I would say it would be a mark of immaturity for a person of advanced years to be so self-satisfied and so arrogantly stubborn about his opinions. That suggests one is still a child.

One grows up. One even enhances this quality of a child, the humility, the willingness to listen, to accept correction, to accept instruction. That should become even greater as one gets older.

So an arrogant, "I think I've almost made it now," suggests one may not have even started. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #18 with Lou Venden, "God Waits for His Children to Grow Up" 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/18MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

Just as we trace the pathway of a stream of water by the line of living green it produces, so Christ could be seen in the deeds of mercy that marked His pathway at every step. Wherever

He went, health sprang up and happiness followed wherever He passed. The blind and deaf rejoiced in His presence. His words to the ignorant opened to them a fountain of life. He dispensed His blessings abundantly and continuously. They were the garnered treasures of eternity, given in Christ, the Lord's rich gift to man. {CH 499.1}

Christ might have occupied the highest place among the highest teachers of the Jewish nation. But He chose rather to take the gospel to the poor. He went from place to place, that those in the highways and byways might catch the words of the gospel of truth. He labored in the way in which He desires His workers to labor today. By the sea, on the mountainside, in the streets of the city, His voice was heard, explaining the Old Testament Scriptures. So unlike the explanation of the scribes and Pharisees was His explanation that the attention of the people was arrested. He taught as one having authority, and not as the scribes. With clearness and power He proclaimed the gospel message. {CH 318.1}

Never was there such an evangelist as Christ. He was the Majesty of heaven, but He humbled Himself to take our nature that He might meet men where they were. To all people, rich and poor, free and bond, Christ, the Messenger of the Covenant, brought the tidings of salvation. How the people flocked to Him! From far and near they came for healing, and He healed them all. His fame as the Great Healer spread throughout Palestine, from Jerusalem to Syria. The sick came to the places through which they thought He would pass, that they might call on Him for help, and He healed them of their diseases. Hither, too, came the rich, anxious to hear His words and to receive a touch of His hand. Thus He went from city to city, from town to town, preaching the gospel and healing the sick—the King of glory in the lowly garb of humanity. “Though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye, through His poverty might be rich.” 2 Corinthians 8:9. {CH 318.2}

Christ loved to gather the people about Him under the blue heavens, on some grassy hillside, or on the beach beside the lake. Here, surrounded by the works of His own creation, He could turn their thoughts from the artificial to the natural. In the growth and development of nature were revealed the principles of His kingdom. As men should lift their eyes to the hills of God and behold the wonderful works of His hand, they could learn precious lessons of divine truth. In future days the lessons of the divine Teacher would thus be repeated to them by the things of nature. The mind would be uplifted and the heart would find rest. {MH 54.1}

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.” {MH 143.3}

There was but one hope for the human race—that into this mass of discordant and corrupting elements might be cast a new leaven; that there might be brought to mankind the power of a new life; that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world. {Ed 76.1}

Christ came to restore this knowledge. He came to set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. He came to manifest the nature of His law, to reveal in His own character the beauty of holiness. {Ed 76.2}

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {Ed 76.3}

All that man needs to know or can know of God has been revealed in the life and character of His Son. {8T 286.1}

“Love your enemies,” He bade them; “bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven;” “for He is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil.” “He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.” “Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful.” Matthew 5:44, 45; Luke 6:35, 36. {8T 286.7}

Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. The scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national benefit of the gifts of heaven and to exclude the rest of God’s family in the world. But Christ came to break down every wall of partition. He came to show that His gift of mercy and love is as unconfined as the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh the earth. {MH 25.3}

The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste, a religion by which Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common brotherhood, equal before God. No question of policy influenced His movements. He made no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. That which appealed to His heart was a soul thirsting for the waters of life. {MH 25.4}

He 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 fellow men 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. {MH 25.5}

His eyes shone with an expression of that love which led Him to leave the heavenly courts and come to earth to die in the sinner’s place. . . . He pitied and loved not only those who sought to be obedient and loving, but those also who were wayward and perverse. Jesus has not

changed; He is the same yesterday, today, and forever, and He still loves and pities the erring, seeking to draw them to Himself, that He may give them divine aid. He knows that a demon power is struggling in every soul, striving for the mastery; but Jesus came to break the power of Satan and to set the captives free. {ML 300.3}

In Christ the character of the Father was revealed. As children looked upon His countenance, they saw purity and goodness shining forth from His eyes. In His countenance gentleness, meekness, love, and conscious power were combined. But though every word, every gesture, every expression of His face, betokened His divine supremacy, humility marked His deportment and bearing. He came but for one purpose, and that was the salvation of the lost. {ML 300.4}

Christ seldom attempted to prove that truth is truth. He illustrated truth in all its bearings, and then left His hearers free to accept or reject it, as they might choose. He did not force anyone to believe. In the sermon on the mount He instructed the people in practical godliness, distinctly outlining their duty. He spoke in such a manner as to commend truth to the conscience. The power manifested by the disciples was revealed in the clearness and earnestness with which they expressed the truth. {Ev 171.1}

Jesus had begun to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and to preach salvation to the world. Though He was a Jew, He 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 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. {DA 193.2}

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 Saviour went from house to house, healing the sick, comforting the mourners, soothing the afflicted, speaking peace to the disconsolate. 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 the servant of all. It was His meat and drink to bring hope and strength to all with whom He came in contact. And as men and women listened to the truths that fell from His lips, so different from the traditions and dogmas taught by the rabbis, hope sprang up in their hearts. In His teaching there was an earnestness that sent His words home with convicting power. {AA 364.2}

The Son of God came from heaven to make manifest the Father. "No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, He hath declared Him." John 1:18. "Neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal Him." Matthew 11:27. When one of the disciples made the request, "Show us the Father," Jesus answered, "Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" John 14:8, 9. {SC 11.1}

In describing His earthly mission, Jesus said, The Lord "hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He hath sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised." Luke 4:18. This was His work. He went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by Satan. There were whole villages where there was not a moan of sickness in any house, for He had passed through them and healed all their sick. His work gave evidence of His divine anointing. Love, mercy, and compassion were revealed in every act of His life; His heart went out in tender sympathy to the children of men. He took man's nature, that He might reach man's wants. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. Even little children were attracted to Him. They loved to climb upon His knees and gaze into the pensive face, benignant with love. {SC 11.2}

Christ reached the people where they were. He presented the plain truth to their minds in the most forcible, simple language. The humble poor, the most unlearned, could comprehend, through faith in Him, the most exalted truths. 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. {GW 49.3}

Confused, humiliated, and unable to understand God's purpose in sparing Nineveh, Jonah nevertheless had fulfilled the commission given him to warn that great city; and though the event predicted did not come to pass, yet the message of warning was nonetheless from God. And it accomplished the purpose God designed it should. The glory of His grace was revealed among the heathen. Those who had long been sitting "in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron," "cried unto the Lord in their trouble," and "He saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder." "He sent His word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions." Psalm 107:10, 13, 14, 20. {PK 272.5}

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}

The Lord God through Christ holds out His hand all the day long in invitations to the needy. He will receive all. He welcomes all. He rejects none. It is His glory to pardon the chief of sinners.

He will take the prey from the mighty, He will deliver the captive, He will pluck the brand from the burning. He will lower the golden chain of His mercy to the greatest depths of human wretchedness and guilt and lift up the debased soul contaminated with sin. But man must will to come, and cooperate in the work of saving his soul by availing himself of opportunities given him of God. The Lord forces no one. {TMK 235.2}

No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple courts, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan's influence those who have been deluded by his deceptions, and places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. In Christ there is neither Jew nor Greek, bond nor free. {PK 369.3}

The Son of God came to the world as a restorer. He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Every word He uttered was spirit and life. He spoke with authority, conscious of His power to bless humanity, and deliver the captives bound by Satan; conscious also that by His presence He could bring to the world fullness of joy. He longed to help every oppressed and suffering member of the human family, and show that it was His prerogative to bless, not to condemn. {LHU 37.2}

It was no robbery for Christ to do the works of God; for this was the purpose He came from heaven to fulfill, and for this the treasures of eternity were at His command. In the disposal of His gifts He was to know no control. He passed by the self-exalted, the honored, and the rich, and mingled with the poor and oppressed, bringing into their lives a brightness, a hope, and an aspiration they had never before known. {LHU 37.3}

Recommended Reading:

Desire of Ages chapter 43 – “Barriers Broken Down”

The Ministry of Healing chapter 1 – “Our Example”

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