

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

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

Lesson 8 “Jesus Showed Sympathy”

Read for this week’s study

2 Kings 13:23; Exodus 2:23–25; Luke 7:11–16; 1 John 3:17; John 11:35; Romans 12:15; 2 Corinthians 1:3, 4.

Memory Text

“And when Jesus went out He saw a great multitude; and He was moved with compassion for them, and healed their sick” (Matthew 14:14, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Hearing the Groans
- III. Our Sympathetic Savior
- IV. Walking in Their Shoes
- V. Jesus Wept
- VI. Another Kind of Comforter
- 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. How would you define “sympathy?” What aspect of God’s character could be described in this way? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Judges 2:11-18. How did God “punish” the people for their rebellion against Him? When you visit a patient in the hospital, what do you say if they ask, “Is God punishing me?” Read 2 Kings 13:23. What is the root of God’s compassion here? How does that apply to us today? How are “covenant” and “pity” related? Read Isaiah 54:7-10. What is God’s “overflowing anger” here? What does this text tell us

about God? What does Exodus 2:23-25 tell us about God? Would God have intervened if they had not cried out? What does it mean when it says God “remembered” His covenant? Does God sometimes use other people to answer prayer? How can we know when God is calling and we are not simply suffering from indigestion? (Sunday’s lesson)

3. Read Matthew 9:35-36 and Luke 7:11-16. What do they teach us about the role of sympathy and compassion in the ministry of Jesus? What do they tell us about God? (Monday’s lesson)
4. Read Colossians 3:12-13, 1 Peter 3:8-9 and 1 John 3:17-18. How do you “put on” compassion? What is the basis for forgiveness? What are some of the qualities that are closely related to compassion? What does Peter mean by “returning evil for evil?” How do you apply these principles with beggars on the street or even generally in today’s world? (Tuesday’s lesson)
5. What does John 11:35 in context tell us about Jesus’ humanity and how He related to the suffering of others? How do you get “tuned” to other people’s feelings? What does Romans 12:15 add to this point? (Wednesday’s lesson)
6. According to 2 Corinthians 1:3-4, who is the ultimate Comforter? How does that relate to what John says about the Holy Spirit in John 14-16? (Thursday’s lesson)
7. Read Deuteronomy 24:10-22. What is the meaning of “righteousness” in these texts? What was the basis for Israel’s own acts of compassion? Read Matthew 15:32-38. Why did Jesus feed the 4000? If the poor will always be with us, why did Jesus spend so much of His limited time in helping the poor? How does Paul express the idea of compassion in different words (Galatians 6:2)? Ellen White talks about showing “disinterested benevolence.” What exactly does that mean and why should God’s people do it when there is so much urgency to get the gospel out? (Friday’s lesson)
8. How can a local church become a safe, healing place for the brokenhearted? Why is that so often not the case? (Friday’s lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Even as He hung on the cross, enduring the pain of crucifixion and the mocking of those He came to save—even as He passed through the unspeakable agony of separation from His Father—He prayed, “Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do.” Luke 23:34.

This is the kind of Person our God is. All love and strength and dignity and compassion.

And the Father is just as loving and forgiving as the Son. For Jesus said, “He who has seen Me has seen the Father.” John 14:9, R.S.V.

For six thousand years God has worked to win us back, to persuade us to love Him as He loves us. During all these years He has mercifully veiled us from the glory of His presence that we might have time to know Him better. {Maxwell, A. Graham. *You Can Trust the Bible; why, after many translations, it is still the word of God*, 73-74. Mountain View, California: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 1967}

The Bible is a record of God's revelation of himself in many and various ways, and one of his ways is through the people who so loved and admired him that they imitated him and became like him. That doesn't sound like Paul before Damascus Road. Look at him now. He's so tender of heart and gracious. Wonderful things had happened to Paul. And I think that fits in very well. In fact, I think things like this are among the most important parts of Scripture.

"Jesus wept." Think what that says about God. God attended the funeral of one of his friends, and the Bible says that he cried. And when he raised Jairus' daughter, he said "Wait a minute, everybody. This little girl is hungry, and somebody get something for her to eat." That's theology! Why do we put other things above it? See, that's "Let this mind be in you which is in Christ Jesus", who said, "This little girl is hungry. Get her something to eat." And he cried at a funeral. That's the mind of Christ. Why has theology become so far out on cloud nine it even has a vocabulary of its own? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Philippians & 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, recorded May, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/69MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/70MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Do you remember the blind man? The disciples said, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" What a picture they had of God! And Jesus said, "That's not why he's blind, but this is an opportunity for God to be glorified." And he healed him. {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)

Think of the story of Simon, the leper healed by Jesus. He invited Jesus to a dinner at his house. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were also invited. Luke says that Mary was known for living an immoral life in the town. Some understand that this is the same woman taken in adultery. You remember during the feast, this woman anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume.

She tried to keep it private, but forgot that the fragrance would fill the air. It became public. Simon said “within himself”, the record says, “If Jesus were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman this is that is touching him. He would know what kind of sinful life she lives.” Jesus spoke up and said, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” “Speak on,” he said. And Jesus told the story of the two debtors. Simon realized that Jesus knew his innermost thoughts—which meant that Jesus knew what a sinner he had been! Simon held his breath to see if Jesus would expose him before the crowd. Surely, self-righteous Simon deserved to be exposed. Jesus handled it privately. He maintained Simon’s dignity and reputation with his associates. He did not expose him and meanwhile he graciously accepted Mary’s impulsive act. Think what these stories tell us about our God.

Then you remember the experience with the paralytic at the pool. For thirty-eight years he had been trying to get into the water. One Sabbath afternoon he looked up, and the kindest face he had ever seen looked back at him and said, “Would you like to be well?” Jesus didn’t lecture the man on the youthful self-indulgence that may have caused his illness in the first place. He simply said, “Would you like to be well? If so, get up, put your mat under your arm and go home.” Later, Jesus met him and said, “I suggest you stop sinning, lest something worse befall you.” But always in that order—first Jesus made people comfortable. He healed them. Especially sinners who might be despising themselves; he tried to recover their dignity and self-respect. How can you ask a person to act with dignity when you have deprived him of his self-respect? God always first restores this. Later he said to stop sinning, lest something worse befall you. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #13, “How God Treats His Erring Children” 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/13MMCAG>*

The sins of David have been immortalized on the pages of Scripture. Rahab’s former profession has been described there. So have the sins of Samson, Gideon, Moses, Jacob, and Abraham. Hebrews 11 indicates that they too will be in the kingdom. And they too will be comfortable there.

When Paul included a long list of sins at the end of Romans 1, he put gossiping right in the middle. No one will be admitted to heaven who cannot be entrusted with the knowledge of other people’s sins and who will not wholeheartedly treat former sinners with full dignity and respect.

This is how it will be possible for David and Uriah to meet and not come to blows. Some day it may be our privilege to see those two men meet again for the first time in the hereafter. Think how David stole Uriah’s wife and then arranged for the murder of the faithful soldier who had

helped him become king (see 2 Samuel 11, 12; 1 Chronicles 11:10, 41)! Will the past be all forgotten?

Will Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon, David's son, have forgotten she once was Uriah's wife? Will the prophet Nathan have forgotten his moving appeal to the king? Will David have forgotten his confession in the fifty-first Psalm? Will we have forgotten David's prayer for a new heart that has helped many of us pray the same prayer?

Or will it be possible for David and Uriah to approach each other, look into each other's eyes, remember, and once more become friends? To me that would be far more wonderful.

Could we begin to treat each other this way here and now in this life? It is surely not natural to do so. It would be a great miracle of healing, like the miracle that happened to John. At first, Jesus called him Son of Thunder. But later John became "the beloved disciple" and wrote in his Gospel and Epistles so much about Christian love.

John watched the way Jesus received sinners, how he treated everyone with dignity and grace. Never had John seen such strength of character, and yet such tenderness; such fearless denunciation of sin, and yet such patience and sympathy. As he was moved to ever deeper admiration, John became more and more like the One he worshiped and admired. {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 94-95. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-09>

Recommended Listening:

Conversations About God #13 "How God Treats His Erring Children" is available at:

<http://pkp.cc/13MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

His messages of mercy were varied to suit His audience. He knew "how to speak a word in season to him that is weary" (Isaiah 50:4); for grace was poured upon His lips, that He might convey to men in the most attractive way the treasures of truth. He had tact to meet the prejudiced minds, and surprise them with illustrations that won their attention. Through the imagination He reached the heart. His illustrations were taken from the things of daily life, and although they were simple, they had in them a wonderful depth of meaning. The birds of the air, the lilies of the field, the seed, the shepherd and the sheep,—with these objects Christ illustrated immortal truth; and ever afterward, when His hearers chanced to see these things of nature, they recalled His words. Christ's illustrations constantly repeated His lessons.

{DA 254.2}

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {8T 286.4}

From the hillside He looked upon the moving multitude, and His heart was stirred with sympathy. Interrupted as He was, and robbed of His rest, He was not impatient. He saw a greater necessity demanding His attention as He watched the people coming and still coming. He “was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd.” Leaving His retreat, He found a convenient place where He could minister to them. They received no help from the priests and rulers; but the healing waters of life flowed from Christ as He taught the multitude the way of salvation. {DA 364.2}

God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe. Like rays of light from the sun, like the streams of water bursting from a living spring, blessings flow out from Him to all His creatures. And wherever the life of God is in the hearts of men, it will flow out to others in love and blessing. {SC 77.1}

The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and He longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from His countenance, and His conduct was characterized by grace and humility, love and truth. {OHC 366.4}

What a wonderful reverence for human life Jesus expressed in His life mission! He stood not among the people as a king, demanding attention, reverence, service, but as one who wished to serve, to uplift humanity. He said He had not come to be ministered unto but to minister. . . . {OHC 176.3}

We are not to think of God only as a judge and to forget Him as our loving Father. Nothing can do our souls greater harm than this, for our whole spiritual life will be molded by our conceptions of God’s character. . . . {TMK 262.2}

Recommended Reading:

Steps to Christ chapter 9 – “The Work and the Life”

<https://egwwritings.org/>