

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Third Quarter 2016: *The Role of the Church in the Community*
Lesson 9 “Jesus Ministered to Their Needs”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 5:22–43, 10:46–52; John 5:1–9; Psalm 139:1–13; Mark 2:1–12; Acts 9:36–42.

Memory Text

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness” (Matthew 9:35, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Interruption for Ministry
- III. How Can I Help You?
- IV. The Deeper Needs
- V. Dorcas in Joppa
- VI. The Church at Work
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. How do you minister to the needs of people in your immediate surroundings? The lesson starts with an illustration from a third world country where the needs are obvious and people destitute and desperate for help. Great! “What a powerful and practical example of how meeting the needs of the community is so important for Christians.” (Sabbath afternoon) However, how do you minister in places where the needs are not so obvious, people live in relative abundance and the society does not allow you in certain spheres at all!?
2. “Often the greatest opportunities to minister to people’s needs come through interruptions. Most of us try to avoid interruptions, and get upset when our plans are derailed. As we look at the ministry of Jesus, we notice that some of the needs that He cared for came as interruptions, to which He lovingly responded.” (Sunday’s lesson) How do you decide when to take your example from Jesus and when to take it from Nehemiah, who said four times: “I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?” (Nehemiah 6:3)

3. “By asking questions, Jesus showed the men respect. He showed that He was listening to them and by listening that He cared about what they were struggling with. (Monday’s lesson) How do we learn the art of asking the right questions, letting them know they are heard, they are safe in revealing their needs?”
4. “Too many churches think they already know, or they guess at what needs to be done to serve others in their community. When we put forth the effort of talking to people about their needs or the needs of the community, it lets them know we care, and it informs us how we can serve in ways that will be appreciated.” (Monday’s lesson) Does your church have a strategy in place for listening to their community? Many churches do not. Why do you think this is so?
5. “Jesus, as the Lord, knew more about the people than they knew about themselves. [...] He knew even needs that went below the surface.” (Tuesday’s lesson) Every counselor is trained to recognize that “the presenting need is not the actual need”, that the cause of the problems is much deeper than people reveal in a superficial meeting.
6. What do we imply about Jesus when we say “Of course we are not going to be able to get below the surface as Jesus did”? (Tuesday’s lesson) How can we be in tune with the needs of people as much as possible? Why is it that insulation “from the world” can’t be a measure of our sanctification?
7. “Consistent caring for those inside your church is also a powerful evangelistic strategy (see Acts 2:42–47).” (Wednesday’s lesson) How can we be sure that our motive in “caring” for people is not simply to win them? No one likes being someone else’s “project”. How can we allow the gospel to radically transform our motivation in addition to our dogmatics?
8. Why does Jesus need to tell us such an obvious thing in Luke 14:25-35—that we should count the cost before trying to build a tower? What kinds of things do we have the tendency to over or underestimate? What is the antidote to that?
9. Amy Sherman describes three styles a church can use in serving its community: (1) The **Settler style** focuses on meeting the needs of the community around your church. Which nearby community is your “Joppa”? (2) The **gardener style** means developing ministry ties with neighborhoods outside your church’s immediate area, as gardeners view their gardens as an extension of their homes. (3) The **shepherd style** is serving one targeted population rather than a specific geographic neighborhood. (Wednesday’s lesson)
10. How can you and your local church make the greatest impact on the community? How can we best go about learning the needs of the community and the gifts of the congregation?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Do you have something of special note from your reading this time? I mean, little things like Mark 5:43, the raising of Jairus' daughter. Now, the whole story is very wonderful, how he resurrected her, and do you notice, in Mark, that the words to the little girl are, "*Talitha cumi*" in Aramaic. This fits the idea that it was Peter writing this. "Taking her by the hand he said to her, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' And immediately the girl got up and walked for she was twelve years old. And they were immediately overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged them that no one should know this, and told them to give her something to eat."

And I find the story is often told, omitting that last line. Can you imagine the excitement after the resurrection of this little girl? And when they were all rushing out to dismiss the mourners; of course good stewardship would require that, for you had to pay them, perhaps, they rushed out to dismiss them, and tell everyone the little girl is alive! Jesus said, "One moment. This little girl is hungry. Somebody get her something to eat." Is that important theology? I think it is very significant that he would do that. You notice, when they were hungry, he said, "These folk haven't eaten for a long time. Get them something to eat." "Give the little girl something to eat." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Mark, recorded April, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/53MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/54MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

What about the Pool of Bethesda story? What does that say about God? From time to time God would look out over the parapets of heaven and see that a large crowd had gathered around the pool, and he'd call an angel over and send him down to stir the water; because the arrangement was, the first one in was healed.

And there was a poor man there, thirty eight years, and he tried and he tried to get in, and he never could make it. Can you imagine the angels saying, maybe, one time, "God, just this once, couldn't we bend the rules? Couldn't we reward that poor man? Couldn't we heal him?" And God says, "You know I change not. First man in!"

That doesn't put God in a very good light. And I was so relieved, back in 1938, when I first began to learn some New Testament Greek, to discover that the idea that an angel stirred the water and the first one in was healed was a legend. There's nothing in the early manuscripts about that at all. Now what is in there is: there was a pool. It had these porches. Its name is not too certain. Bethesda, Belzethar. Bethsaida? Well, let's say Bethesda. It doesn't matter. And the water moved. Yes. Maybe drainage from the temple area; maybe wind currents; maybe a spring. Nobody knows. They thought that an angel stirred the water. That was added later on. And that the first one in was healed. And you know, if you had the exhilarating experience of

being the first one in, it might enable you to at least walk a few blocks home without your crutches! We see that often in meetings nowadays. What do you suppose Ellen White has for that, not knowing the Greek? In *Desire of Ages* she says, “It was thought that an angel stirred the water.”

Now, the real truth of it is, the man was there for all these years. He squandered his health in youthful self-indulgence. And as he lay there, he looked up one Sabbath afternoon, and saw the kindest face he’d ever seen. And the kind face said, “Would you like to be well?” And he said, “I surely would, but there’s no one here to get me into the water.” And the kind face said, “You don’t need to get in the water. Just get up. Pick up your bed and go home.” We see him staggering home under a king-size water bed. He just rolled up a little mat. He’d broken the rules, though. You couldn’t do it. And instead of those Sabbath-keepers rejoicing that this poor man, who had been a paralytic for thirty-eight years, was well; shouldn’t they have been thrilled, to see him walking home? No! They said, “You broke the Sabbath! You broke the Sabbath! A terrible thing!”

Now a little later on, Jesus met this man and said, “Sin no more, lest something worse befall you.” But do you notice the order in which he did it? First he healed him and made him comfortable; later on he discussed a little theology with him. Shouldn’t it have been the other way around? Beside the pool, the Lord should have said, “Would you like to be well?” “Yes I would.” “But you know what caused this, don’t you?” And a good twenty minute discourse on sin and its consequences, and then heal him. No, the Lord heals first and then he discusses these other more important matters. Always in that order, which of course is a model to us, and puts God in a very gracious light.

COMMENT: Would you say he always did it in that order?

Ah, give me some exceptions. Yes, you’ll always find some.

COMMENT: When the roof was ripped up “Thy sins be forgiven thee. Now take your bed and go home.”

Of course, he made the point; Which is easier to say? He was making a very interesting point there. They wondered if he had any authority to forgive sins. Which is easier, to forgive, or to say, “Be healed?” And so he healed him, which led them to wonder, “I wonder if he has authority to forgive, too?” He was making a point there. I like the fact he did associate, at least, the two. I don’t know whether the man ran home saying, “I’ve been forgiven!” or “I feel well,” the more. What do you think? {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)

Further Study with Ellen White

To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks. These cost those who give them nothing, but they leave behind a fragrance that surrounds the soul. Their effect can never be estimated. Not only are they a blessing to the receiver, but to the giver; for they react upon him. Genuine love is a precious attribute of heavenly origin, which increases in fragrance in proportion as it is dispensed to others. . . . {5BC 1140.4}

Christ's love is deep and earnest, flowing like an irrepressible stream to all who will accept it. There is no selfishness in His love. If this heaven-born love is an abiding principle in the heart, it will make itself known, not only to those we hold most dear in sacred relationship, but to all with whom we come in contact. It will lead us to bestow little acts of attention, to make concessions, to perform deeds of kindness, to speak tender, true, encouraging words. It will lead us to sympathize with those whose hearts hunger for sympathy (MS 17, 1899). {5BC 1140.5}

In this last meeting with His disciples, the great desire which Christ expressed for them was that they might love one another as He had loved them. Again and again He spoke of this. "These things I command you," He said repeatedly, "that ye love one another." His very first injunction when alone with them in the upper chamber was, "A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another." To the disciples this commandment was new; for they had not loved one another as Christ had loved them. He saw that new ideas and impulses must control them; that new principles must be practiced by them; through His life and death they were to receive a new conception of love. The command to love one another had a new meaning in the light of His self-sacrifice. The whole work of grace is one continual service of love, of self-denying, self-sacrificing effort. During every hour of Christ's sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another. {DA 677.2}

This love is the evidence of their discipleship. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples," said Jesus, "if ye have love one to another." When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart. {DA 678.1}

The two restored demoniacs were the first missionaries whom Christ sent to preach the gospel in the region of Decapolis. For a few moments only these men had been privileged to hear the teachings of Christ. Not one sermon from His lips had ever fallen upon their ears. They could

not instruct the people as the disciples who had been daily with Christ were able to do. But they bore in their own persons the evidence that Jesus was the Messiah. They could tell what they knew; what they themselves had seen, and heard, and felt of the power of Christ. This is what everyone can do whose heart has been touched by the grace of God. John, the beloved disciple, wrote: "That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled, of the Word of life; . . . that which we have seen and heard declare we unto you." 1 John 1:1-3. As witnesses for Christ, we are to tell what we know, what we ourselves have seen and heard and felt. If we have been following Jesus step by step, we shall have something right to the point to tell concerning the way in which He has led us. We can tell how we have tested His promise, and found the promise true. We can bear witness to what we have known of the grace of Christ. This is the witness for which our Lord calls, and for want of which the world is perishing. {DA 340.1}

Christ presented to men that which was entirely contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress upon men the love of the Father, who "so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16. He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them and treated them despitefully. In all this He was revealing to them the character of the Father, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth. {CT 29.3}

There are souls perplexed with doubt, burdened with infirmities, weak in faith, and unable to grasp the Unseen; but a friend whom they can see, coming to them in Christ's stead, can be a connecting link to fasten their trembling faith upon Christ. {DA 297.2}

It is not possible for the heart in which Christ abides to be destitute of love. If we love God because He first loved us, we shall love all for whom Christ died. We cannot come in touch with divinity without coming in touch with humanity; for in Him who sits upon the throne of the universe, divinity and humanity are combined. Connected with Christ, we are connected with our fellow men by the golden links of the chain of love. Then the pity and compassion of Christ will be manifest in our life. We shall not wait to have the needy and unfortunate brought to us. We shall not need to be entreated to feel for the woes of others. It will be as natural for us to minister to the needy and suffering as it was for Christ to go about doing good. {COL 384.3}

Those who love God cannot harbor hatred or envy. When the heavenly principle of eternal love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, not merely because favors are received of them, but because love is the principle of action and modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and elevates and ennobles the affections. This love is not contracted so as merely to include "me and mine," but is as broad as the world and as high

as heaven, and is in harmony with that of the angel workers. This love cherished in the soul sweetens the entire life and sheds a refining influence on all around. Possessing it, we cannot but be happy, let fortune smile or frown. {4T 223.2}

The work of beneficence is twice blessed. While he that gives to the needy blesses others, he himself is blessed in a still greater degree. The grace of Christ in the soul is developing traits of character that are the opposite of selfishness,—traits that will refine, ennoble, and enrich the life. Acts of kindness performed in secret will bind hearts together, and will draw them closer to the heart of Him from whom every generous impulse springs. The little attentions, the small acts of love and self-sacrifice, that flow out from the life as quietly as the fragrance from a flower—these constitute no small share of the blessings and happiness of life. And it will be found at last that the denial of self for the good and happiness of others, however humble and uncommended here, is recognized in heaven as the token of our union with Him, the King of glory, who was rich, yet for our sake became poor. {MB 82.2}

Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another—this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. Only in the heart where Jesus reigns is it found. “We love Him, because He first loved us.” In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around. {AA 551.2}

Christ’s followers have been redeemed for service. 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}

Like our Saviour, we are in this world to do service for God. We are here to become like God in character, and by a life of service to reveal Him to the world. In order to be co-workers with God, in order to become like Him and to reveal His character, we must know Him aright. We must know Him as He reveals Himself. {MH 409.1}

A knowledge of God is the foundation of all true education and of all true service. It is the only real safeguard against temptation. It is this alone that can make us like God in character. {MH 409.2}

This is the knowledge needed by all who are working for the uplifting of their fellow men. Transformation of character, purity of life, efficiency in service, adherence to correct principles,

all depend upon a right knowledge of God. This knowledge is the essential preparation both for this life and for the life to come. {MH 409.3}

In the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus gave a picture of Himself and His mission. Man had been deceived, bruised, robbed, and ruined by Satan, and left to perish; but the Saviour had compassion on our helpless condition. He left His glory, to come to our rescue. He found us ready to die, and He undertook our case. He healed our wounds. He covered us with His robe of righteousness. He opened to us a refuge of safety, and made complete provision for us at His own charges. He died to redeem us. Pointing to His own example, He says to His followers, "These things I command you, that ye love one another." "As I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 15:17; 13:34. {DA 503.6}

Christ has identified His interests with those of His people. He has plainly stated that we can minister to Him by ministering to His suffering ones. Words of encouragement and cheer, spoken when the soul is sick and the pulse of courage is low, these are regarded by the Saviour as if spoken to Himself. . . . {RC 198.6}

The children of God are those who are partakers of His nature. It is not earthly rank, nor birth, nor nationality, nor religious privilege, which proves that we are members of the family of God; it is love, a love that embraces all humanity. {MB 75.2}

God takes men as they are, and educates them for His service, if they will yield themselves to Him. The Spirit of God, received into the soul, will quicken all its faculties. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the mind that is devoted unreservedly to God develops harmoniously, and is strengthened to comprehend and fulfill the requirements of God. The weak, vacillating character becomes changed to one of strength and steadfastness. Continual devotion establishes so close a relation between Jesus and His disciple that the Christian becomes like Him in mind and character. Through a connection with Christ he will have clearer and broader views. His discernment will be more penetrative, his judgment better balanced. He who longs to be of service to Christ is so quickened by the life-giving power of the Sun of Righteousness that he is enabled to bear much fruit to the glory of God. {DA 251.1}