

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

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

Lesson 11 “Jesus Bade Them, ‘Follow Me’”

Read for this week’s study

John 10:1–5, 16; Luke 9:2; Revelation 14:6, 7; Luke 19:1–10; Acts 26:11–27; Revelation 3:20.

Memory Text

“ ‘But they [the sheep] will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger’s voice’ ” (John 19 10:5, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. They Know His Voice
- III. We Are to Seek
- IV. The Bridge
- V. The Bidding
- VI. Seek and You Shall Find
- 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. Julian the Apostate suggested that Christianity took over the Roman Empire because pagan priests neglected the poor and the Christians devoted themselves to helping all poor, not just their own. Every more so today, people tend to assume the most selfish of motives whenever Christians seek to promote their faith (doing it for money, sex and power). In an era of great skepticism and suspicion, how should the church present itself to the city? Under what context is it appropriate to say “follow me?” (Sabbath afternoon)

2. Read John 10:1-5 and 16. How can we recognize the voice of the “Shepherd” today? How will the great urban areas of the world recognize that voice? Who are the “other sheep” that Jesus is talking about in John 10:16? How does what Jesus says in John 12:26 help answer these questions? Do you think Christians today witness as much as previous generations did? If not, why not? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read Luke 19:10, Mark 1:17, Luke 9:2 and Revelation 14:6-7. What is the key point that all of these texts have in common? How do we apply this point in today’s world? (Monday’s lesson)
4. Read Luke 19:1-10. Why was it necessary for Zacchaeus to climb a tree in order to see Jesus? Why did the crowd grumble about what Jesus said and did in relation to Zacchaeus? What is it that stands in the way of people receiving the gospel today? What is the best way to respond when you see new faces in church? (Tuesday’s lesson)
5. Some people feel comfortable with the first part of the above method, mingling, showing sympathy and meetings needs, but are not comfortable with asking people to “follow Me.” Is it a valid excuse to say you are not gifted with that? What parts of this method can everyone do? Read Paul’s testimony before kings in Acts 26:11-27. Using your own life experience how could you give a similar testimony? (Wednesday’s lesson)
6. Read Revelation 3:20, Matthew 7:7-8 and John 1:12. In what ways are these passages related, and what are they saying to us about what it means to seek and to find the Lord? (Thursday’s lesson)
7. Read Hosea 11:4. How did God go about leading His people in this passage? Can you think of a time when God dealt with His people differently? (Friday’s lesson)
8. What would you say to someone who said that he or she was afraid to ask others to make a commitment to Jesus? What is the source of such a fear and how can it be overcome? Read John 1:9. What implications does this have for evangelistic outreach? (Friday’s lesson)
9. When was the last time someone off the street simply walked into your church? How did the church respond?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: In this connection someone has already asked: “How can you really have a conversation about God? After all, how can we really know God? Take Paul’s statement in Romans 3:11: ‘How unsearchable are His judgments. How inscrutable are his ways,’ the *Revised Standard Version* translates it. If that’s the case, who are we to question? God is sovereign, so why should we be sitting here having conversations about God?”

Graham: Ah, who are we to question the inscrutable ways of God? And that's in Romans. But I notice in Romans 1, Paul says "you're without excuse if you don't know God." So on the principle of taking the Bible as a whole, and not "here a little and there a little," I would have to put Romans 1 alongside Romans 9 and the other places.

I think when he's saying God's thoughts are so far above ours that is a reverent recognition that God is infinite. Think of all he knows! We'll never fully understand God; we're mere creatures. And at times we need to be reminded of his infinite superiority. But then it's marvelous that the Infinite One would *want* to be known.

All through the Bible he says, "Israel is destroyed because they don't know me." And "I've come to this earth that you may know me." So it's pretty clear God wants to be known. But we shouldn't pretend we're gods who could know everything that he knows.

Lou: So we ought not to use that idea of God's sovereignty, as an excuse to not think about him.

Graham: Yes, and I think where that really comes from is Romans 9, where you have the verse, "who are you to question God? Who are you to answer back to God?"

And Romans 9, I believe, has been misunderstood by some very saintly people including a notable theologian in reformation days. One needs to really put Romans 9 in the whole context of Romans —certainly in the context of chapters 1 through 9.

In Romans 1-8, Paul has been saying to his audience (which is made up of both Jews and Gentiles), "I have great good news for you. God will save all who trust him—whether you are Jew or Gentile, bond or free, male or female. He'll save everybody who trusts him."

And as Paul was developing chapters 1-8, he could sense that certain members of his audience (descended from Abraham) were not taking this too kindly, because they thought that they had a *special relationship* with God. You know, God almost had made a deal with their ancestor. And that's why they were so concerned with their genealogy and other matters. And when Paul got to the end of chapter 8, he sensed that some in his audience were quite offended. So he turned to them and said, "I sense that some of you don't like what I've said, that God is the kind of God that would save all who trust him. I want to know (you people who object to this), are you suggesting you would run the universe better than God? Are you saying God cannot save all who trust him? Let me tell you something: God is going to run this universe precisely as he wishes. Just as the potter takes a lump of clay, and makes of the same clay a vessel for honor, and a vessel for dishonor, so God has the right—if he will exercise it—to run his universe any way he likes!" {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #1 with Lou Venden, "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>

Lou: In our Bible reference sheet we have the passage regarding Abraham, and James' reference to that. Abraham is referred to as a "man of faith." Couldn't you call it "blind faith" when Abraham set out to obey God—when God said, "Take your son. I want you to bring him and to offer him as a sacrifice"?

Graham: This is very similar to the example you just gave. We were not there at Creation to see. We do have confidence in the biblical record because it has proved in so many other ways to be trustworthy. Abraham's relationship with God—why, they were two of the best friends in all history! Abraham knew God well. He had had long experience with God. When God asked him to do things before, it had always worked out well and it made sense. So there was no *blind* faith on Abraham's part. God asked him to do something that puzzled him a great deal. At the moment he couldn't understand. But he said, "God, if it is you saying it (and I know you so well) I know this will make sense and there will be some solution, so I'm on my way." This kind of faith is saying, "God, I'm on my way, but may I ask you why?" And so on the way, he asked why. And as he thought it through, he thought, the one who gave me this son miraculously is well able to resurrect my son. Or maybe he will provide a substitute. And Hebrews says he was right. So instead of that being blind faith, I would say he knew God well enough to go—and to know that there would be a solution that would make sense. And so it did.

Lou: But there was in that experience an element of uncertainty. That is to say, how will it work out? There was pain, certainly.

Graham: He wondered.

Lou: Yes. So faith can include that kind of thing.

Graham: Because God is so trustworthy, we are willing to obey him when he asks us to do something beyond our present understanding. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #3 with Lou Venden, "All God Asks is Trust" 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/3MMCAG>*

Is that arbitrary of God—that he only saves those who trust him? Can a physician heal a patient who doesn't trust him? He can't save someone who won't come, won't listen, won't trust him enough to let him perform surgery, or prescribe medicine. If a patient thinks you're an untrustworthy quack and throws your medicine away every time he leaves your office you can't heal him. Neither can God save or heal anyone who doesn't trust him. There's nothing arbitrary in this. God will save anybody and everybody regardless of his condition if he's willing to trust, and trust him enough to say as the jailor did, "What must I do to be saved? What must I do to be well?"

Is this arbitrary? There's no other way to do it, and God is not willing that anyone should perish. He doesn't want anyone to be lost. He's very patient with us. Peter says so, Paul says so, and the prophets through the Old Testament. God does not wish to lose a single patient, a single one of his rebellious, sick children. But he cannot save anyone who does not trust him. And so first he reveals himself to us in many and various ways, and finally even through his son. And some of us do not like what we see. We still think he's untrustworthy, arbitrary, unforgiving and severe. And we will not listen to him and let him heal us. And we will be lost. There is no remedy for this (2 Chronicles). And God will let us go. He will say as he did of Israel, "You're bent on leaving me, there's nothing I can do for you. But why will you die? How can I give you up? How can I let you go?"

And the biblical word that describes God letting us go is wrath. And the biblical word for our trusting him enough, because he is so trustworthy, that we're willing to listen to him and let him heal us, is faith. But we need to explain these terms sometimes because they've come to have so many meanings. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 9, recorded December, 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/17MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/18MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

And then the awesome invitation from Jesus "Would you like to go now and see the Father?" And you say with some hesitation, "Well, if you'll go with me. You know I need someone to protect me." Will Jesus reprimand you for that? No, he doesn't do that sort of thing. He would say, "I understand. I'll go with you if that will make you feel better." And together you walk up the golden street toward where God dwells and you walk into his presence and you stand there looking at your feet. And there comes a voice that's a whole lot warmer and kinder than you expected to hear. And the kind voice says, "You can look at me if you like." And you look up and to your happy surprise the face is just as kind as the face of Jesus. And you say, "Oh, I'm sorry, God. I haven't always thought of you this way. Could I go back and tell my family, my children. I didn't picture you this way to my children. In fact, I was a grade school teacher and I'm afraid I led a lot of those children to serve you from fear and I didn't need to. And then there are all my neighbors. In fact, I know some saints in the church, they've been such faithful servants but they're so afraid." And God you know would reply kindly, "We both know that's too late now. I'm very glad you're here. I do wish you could have seen this earlier. Wouldn't you have loved relieving people's fears about me? Wouldn't you have loved doing that?"

Now some of us believe that we do see this right now. In fact, some of us would stake our lives on this as the very essence of the gospel which means good news. And I believe it is the special and highly privileged mission of God's friends on this earth today to share this message with

people all around the world who would love to hear about the freedom of knowing a friendly God who wants to treat us not as servants but as friends. I think there are many who would love to hear that. And those of you who have told this to others and they've been so overjoyed, the marvelous feeling that comes from seeing somebody else say, "I hadn't realized he was that good." I love it. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Friends of God, #5, "The Freedoms of Friendship" recorded June, 1987, Orlando, Florida} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/5MMFOG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

He who called the fisherman of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God. {DA 297.1}

We are to be laborers together with the heavenly angels in presenting Jesus to the world. With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our co-operation; for man must be the channel to communicate with man. And when we give ourselves to Christ in wholehearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God's love. {DA 297.3}

An angel guided Philip to the one who was seeking for light and who was ready to receive the gospel, and today angels will guide the footsteps of those workers who will allow the Holy Spirit to sanctify their tongues and refine and ennoble their hearts. The angel sent to Philip could himself have done the work for the Ethiopian, but this is not God's way of working. It is His plan that men are to work for their fellow men. {AA 109.2}

The religion of Christ reveals itself as a vitalizing, pervading principle, a living, working, spiritual energy. When the heart is opened to the heavenly influence of truth and love, these principles will flow forth again like streams in the desert, causing fruitfulness to appear where now are barrenness and dearth. {PK 234.1}

In the truths of His word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. {GC 465.1}

When Philip came to Jesus with the request, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," the Saviour answered him: "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?" Christ declares Himself to be sent into the world as a representative of the Father. In His nobility of character, in His mercy and tender pity, in His love and goodness, He stands before us as the embodiment of divine perfection, the image of the invisible God. {5T 739.1}

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not *desire* to be set free, if we *will* not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7, 8. {SC 34.2}

"He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. . . . And the sheep follow Him: for they know His voice." The Eastern shepherd does not drive his sheep. He depends not upon force or fear; but going before, he calls them. They know his voice, and obey the call. So does the Saviour-Shepherd with His sheep. The Scripture says, "Thou leddest Thy people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron." Through the prophet, Jesus declares, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." He compels none to follow Him. "I drew them," He says, "with cords of a man, with bands of love." Psalm 77:20; Jeremiah 31:3; Hosea 11:4. {DA 480.2}

Jesus took upon Himself our nature, laid aside His glory, majesty, and riches to perform his mission, to save that which was lost. He came not to be ministered unto, but to minister unto others. {2T 426.2}

Christ came to bring salvation within the reach of all. . . . The most erring, the most sinful, were not passed by; His labors were especially for those who most needed the salvation He came to bring. The greater their need of reform, the deeper was His interest, the greater His sympathy, and the more earnest His labors. His great heart of love was stirred to its depths for the ones whose condition was most hopeless and who most needed His transforming grace. {HP 291.4}

The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. A lost sheep never finds its way back to the fold of itself. If it is not sought for and saved by the watchful shepherd, it wanders until it perishes. What a representation of the Saviour is this! Unless Jesus, the Good Shepherd, had come to seek and to save the wandering, we should have perished. {LHU 212.3}

Christ never ceases to seek us when we wander from the fold. With unwearying steps He searches until He finds us, and brings us back to His fold. Again and again we would have perished, had it not been for His loving care. . . . Little do we realize the strength of the forces

that are now at work in this world. The whole heavenly host are seeking to save that which was lost; . . . {RC 250.6}

When He sent forth the seventy He commanded them to heal the sick, and next to preach that the kingdom of God had come nigh unto them. Their physical health was to be first cared for, in order that the way might be prepared for their minds to be reached by those truths which the apostles were to preach. {4T 225.1}

To take people right where they are, whatever their position, whatever their condition, and help them in every way possible—this is gospel ministry. . . . Those who are sick in body are nearly always sick in soul, and when the soul is sick, the body is made sick.—MS. 62, 1900. {MM 238.1}

The gospel which He taught was a message of spiritual life and physical restoration. Deliverance from sin and the healing of disease were linked together. {CT 465.2}

We speak with Jesus Christ as we walk by the way, and He says, “I am at thy right hand.” We may walk in daily companionship with Christ. When we breathe out our desire, it may be inaudible to any human ear, but that word cannot die away into silence nor can it be lost, though the activities of business are going on. Nothing can drown the soul’s desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the noise of machinery, to the heavenly courts. It is God to whom we are speaking, and the prayer is heard. Ask then; “Ask, and it shall be given you.” {HP 69.5}