

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Second Quarter 2017: “Feed My Sheep”: 1 and 2 Peter

Lesson 7 “Servant Leadership”

Read for this week’s study

1 Peter 5:1–10, Acts 6:1–6, Jeremiah 10:21, Matthew 20:24–28, Proverbs 3:34, Revelation 12:7–9.

Memory Text

“Casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you” (1 Peter 5:7, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Elders in the Early Church
- III. The Elders
- IV. Servant Leadership
- V. Clothed With Humility
- VI. Like a Roaring Lion
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read 1 Peter 5:1-10. Peter here addresses the matter of Christian leadership at the local church level, something most Christians are quite familiar with. How does this passage intersect with your own experience? What can you learn from Peter’s counsel? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Acts 6:1-6; 14:23; 15:6; 1 Timothy 5:17; and 1 Peter 5:2. What insight do these verses give regarding the role of church leaders in the time of the New Testament? What were these leaders expected to do? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read 1 Peter 5:1-4. What attitudes should leaders bring to their roles in the church? Which of these principles apply to everyone in the church, not just leaders? Read 1 Thessalonians 5:12-15. How does Paul describe the relationship between leaders and those they serve in the church? Read Jeremiah 10:21 and Ezekiel 34:8-10. What might these passages add to the New Testament counsels in Peter and Thessalonians? (Monday’s lesson)
4. Read 1 Peter 5:3 and Matthew 20:25-28. What is the most crucial Christian principle of leadership? How does that contrast with the kind of leadership often seen in the secular world? How does one actually practice “servant leadership” in the rough and

tumble of real human communities, both in and outside the church? (Tuesday's lesson)

5. Read 1 Peter 5:5-7. Given the ancient context, what is remarkable about what Peter wrote here? How was humility regarded in the ancient world? Has God ever modeled for us what true humility is like? Compare this passage with Philippians 2:1-8. How does what Paul says in Philippians relate to what Peter wrote? What examples have you seen of true humility in real people that you have known? (Tuesday's, Wednesday's and Friday's lessons)
6. Read 1 Peter 5:8-10 and Revelation 12:7-9. What do these texts teach us about the origin of evil and the work of Satan in this world? Read Matthew 4:1-11. How did Jesus resist the temptations of the devil? What does that teach us about the role of the devil in our lives and how we can also resist him the way Jesus did? (Thursday's lesson)
7. Read John 13:13-17. What does this act tell us about the character of God? How do we make that model real in our everyday lives today? (Friday's lesson)
8. What are the finest qualities of secular leaders that could be usefully applied in the church? Are there particular examples that you admire? What principles and examples in the secular world would the church best avoid? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And now, recorded in the gospel of John he's offering the same thing to the leaders of his church soon to be built, the ones who would go out and represent him to the world. He wanted them to have a clear picture of the ideal relationship God wants to have with us. And first of all, he tells them I want you to regard yourselves not as my servants, but as my friends. "Now," he said, "if you're my friends I can talk to you the way I talked to Moses, plainly and clearly." Look at John 16:25 when Jesus really does talk plainly and clearly to those early church leaders. John 16:25 and 26:

I have said this to you in figures [we looked at this last night, some of you had 'parables' or 'figures of speech' or 'metaphors' or something like that]: I have said this to you in figures: the hour is coming when I shall no longer speak to you in this way [in figures], but I shall tell you plainly [and clearly] of the Father [what were the disciples about to hear that would not be in some symbolic form or in some parable but plain and clear about the Father? Here it is]. In that day you will ask in my name [which is always very meaningful and appropriate]: and I do **not** say to you [does your Bible have a 'not' in it? I could tell you so many stories about times, important times in public places when this verse has been repeated without the word 'not'] I say **not** to you that I shall pray the Father for you [Why not?] For the Father himself loves you [he's as much your friend as I am].

Now what does that mean? We discussed a little last night how the Bible is full of our need, apparently, for someone in between and now Jesus is saying not if you're God's friend and if God is your friend. There is no need for me to pray the Father for you, for the Father loves you himself. The Father is just as friendly as you have found me to be.

But I heard a distinguished gentleman once say, "My, if Jesus is not there standing between me and the offended wrath of a holy God, all is lost! What hope do I have?" Tell me, which gives you more security, which makes you feel more safe, to know that we have a friend in Jesus to stand between us and the Father or to know that the Father himself is our friend? The second is even more so, not to minimize the first. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Friends of God, #2, "No Friendship without Trust" recorded June, 1987, Orlando, Florida} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/2MMFOG>

Through the years there have been religious leaders who have much preferred the servant model of a believer's relationship with God. Claiming to be God's representatives, they have derived much of their own authority from this understanding and have expected their own followers to behave like loyal servants. And remember, servants don't ask, "Why?" Servants don't need reasons. Servants just obey.

Jim Jones (Jim Jones was the leader of a religious cult that committed mass suicide in 1978 in the jungles of Guyana) persuaded his followers of this, and in obedience nine hundred of them drank cyanide and nine hundred of them died. If only they had asked some questions, many members of the People's Temple might still be alive. But in blind faith they submitted to the demands of their demented leader and sacrificed themselves in that 1978 mass religious suicide in the jungles of Guyana. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 18. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.} <http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter2.html>

Ellen White talks about leaders who make all the workers do things exactly the same way and I'm sure you've read about that. It isn't safe to do it because our congregations vary so, especially in the United States. Look at the tremendous variety. To be God-like is to know how to meet people exactly where they are and speak a language they can understand and lead them no faster than they're able to follow. We're not that versatile, but if we admire it in God we'll respect it in each other I think. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, We've Camped Around This Mountain Long Enough, #3, recorded July, 1989, South Dakota Conference Ministers Meeting} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/3MMCAMPED>

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, "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>*

Miriam and Aaron had become jealous of the special relationship Moses enjoyed with God, even though Moses himself is described as "very humble, more so than anyone else on the face of the earth." (Numbers 12:3, NRSV) I can recall thinking as a child that if Moses wrote that verse himself, it was not very humble of him to boast about his own humility! But later I came to realize that it takes a good deal of humility to admit to being meek. Meekness is rarely admired or trusted in a leader. During a presidential election, candidates do not extol their exceptional meekness and humility as especially qualifying them for high office!

One of the first poems my mother taught me began with the words, "Gentle Jesus, meek and mild, look upon this little child." I thought it was very beautiful at the time. I still do. But many of the people Jesus came to tell about his Father despised and rejected him for his gentleness, just as the prophet Isaiah had predicted they would. (See Isaiah 53:3, 7)

Centuries before, God had told meek Moses that some day he would raise up a special prophet from among the people of Israel, "a prophet like you." (See Deuteronomy 18:15-18) Jesus recognized this prediction as referring to himself.⁶ And Moses must have watched with increasing wonder and admiration as the Son of God dealt with all kinds of people, and especially his enemies, with such humility and grace.

Before Jesus went out to be crucified, Moses came to talk with him on the Mount of Transfiguration. The prophet Elijah joined them, and all three—two men and their Creator God, though now in human form—talked "face to face," as friends speak with each other. Luke says they talked about the cruel rejection and execution Jesus was about to endure. (See Luke 9:28-36; see also Matthew 17:1-8, Mark 9:2-8)

Though so many despised Jesus for his meekness, do you suppose Moses was ashamed to stand there with his Lord? What an honor to be identified with "gentle Jesus, meek and mild!" Moses

had not been ashamed to describe himself in the book of Numbers as more meek and humble “than anyone else on the face of the earth.” To be that kind of a person is to be like God. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends*, 73-74. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.} <http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter6.html>

The two main words for “wrath” in the Greek are ‘*orge*’ and there’s ‘*thumos*’, sometimes translated “passion.” Both words are used for God and for Satan, same words. Just as the word “faith” is used for “saving faith” and the faith the devils have that scares them. The only difference is when God expresses his wrath, he sadly gives us up. When the devil comes down with great wrath, he comes “Like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.” That’s the difference between the two. Same words. The context has to indicate.

Lou: It has to do with the kind of person the devil is and the kind of person that God is and what happens when they’re wrathful.

Graham: That’s the difference. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #16 with Lou Venden, “God’s Last Pleading with His Children” recorded May, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/16MMCAG>

But now, Peter says great trouble is coming. And he says they should not be surprised when it does. Look at 4:12:

Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you [It’s inevitable]. But rejoice in so far as you share Christ’s sufferings [and so on].

But he does say; verse 15, be sure you don’t deserve the suffering:

But let none of you suffer as a murderer, or a thief, or a wrongdoer, or a mischief-maker; yet if one suffers as a Christian, let him not be ashamed, but under that name let him glorify God. For the time has come for judgment to begin.

And he mentions this suffering several times, doesn’t he. It’s inevitable. And he indicates that the devil is at work here, in 5:8:

Be sober, be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. Resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experience of suffering is required of your brotherhood throughout the world. And after you have suffered a little while, the God of all grace, who has called you to his eternal glory in Christ, will himself restore, establish, and strengthen you.

If we believe in the great controversy, and we take our stand very firmly on the right side, trouble is inevitable, is what Peter's saying. It's just unavoidable. But just be sure you aren't deserving it, or receiving it for the wrong reason, is his point. I mean, just because one is in trouble, he can't say, "I must be a super saint. I'm always getting into trouble." No, you might deserve every bit of it! But be sure it's coming for the right reason. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – 1 & 2 Peter, & James, recorded July, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/75MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/76MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Now, evidence that Christ's diagnosis was right, was that when Satan heard that though God loved him so much, he couldn't take him back, because his condition was beyond all healing, he then announced his intention to destroy God's whole creation. And ever since he's gone about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. When Hitler realized he'd lost World War II, you remember he announced his intention to destroy the whole Third Reich and the world around it, everything, if he couldn't win. And the world said, "He's raving mad." And Satan is raving mad, with immense power and capacity and cunning. Though a defeated foe, he still has great power. And he goes about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. His condition is mortal. It is terminal. And if we persist in the same thing, our condition can be mortal. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – 1, 2, & 3 John, & Jude, recorded August, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/77MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/78MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

And then, picture Jesus in the upper room the night before he was crucified. The record says that the twelve disciples were squabbling as to which one of them was the greatest. If you look in Luke's account, he has it in this order. Jesus said to the twelve, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover supper with you. But the one who is to betray me is sitting with me at the table." They began to argue as to which one of them would do this terrible thing. But they also were arguing as to which one of them should be thought of as the most important. Can you imagine their arguing about such a subject mixed in with which one of them is going to betray him?

How did the Son of God treat them? Did he chide them for their childish behavior? Or scold them for their unwillingness to wash each other's feet? Instead, the whole universe watched as their Creator, the one they worshipped, arose, got a basin and a towel, and the Supreme Creator got down on his knees and washed a dozen pairs of dirty feet. He even washed the feet of his betrayer, Judas. Think what it says about God that he would treat them in this way. Jesus

could have looked up at them and said, “You don’t believe my Father would be willing to do this, do you?”

This is why during communion, I never like to do anything else but to think, and talk but very little. What moved the disciples was not that they washed each other’s feet. What moved them was that God washed their feet. And you imagine their experience as they looked down on his head bent over the basin and felt his strong carpenter hands on their feet. Then have him look up and say, “You don’t think my Father would do this, do you? But he would. If you’ve seen me, you’ve seen the Father. If you are comfortable with me, you will be just as comfortable with my Father.” This is what he was trying to say to them in the upper room.

But then, think what fools they were to miss the opportunity to wash the feet of the Son of God before he died. What a memory one of the disciples could have had for eternity! Imagine Jesus meeting him a million years into eternity and saying, “John, or Peter or James, I’ll never forget how you washed my feet the night before I was crucified.” That disciple would never get over it. And they missed it because of their misbehavior there in the upper room. {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>*

Further Study with Ellen White

Love to Jesus will be manifested in a desire to work as He worked for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. It will lead to love, tenderness, and sympathy toward all the creatures of our heavenly Father’s care. {SC 77.4}

And the effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption. He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their Creator. {SC 79.1}

Those who believe in Christ and walk humbly with Him, . . . who watch to see what they can do to help and bless and strengthen the souls of others, cooperate with the angels who minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Jesus gives them grace, and wisdom, and righteousness, making them a blessing to all with whom they are brought in contact. The more humble they are in their own estimation, the more blessings they receive from God, because receiving does not exalt them. They make a right use of their blessings, for they receive to impart. {TDG 356.5}

Had Lucifer really desired to be like the Most High, he would never have deserted his appointed place in heaven; for the spirit of the Most High is manifested in unselfish ministry. Lucifer desired God's power, but not His character. He sought for himself the highest place, and every being who is actuated by his spirit will do the same. Thus alienation, discord, and strife will be inevitable. Dominion becomes the prize of the strongest. The kingdom of Satan is a kingdom of force; every individual regards every other as an obstacle in the way of his own advancement, or a steppingstone on which he himself may climb to a higher place. {DA 435.2}

Jesus, the brightness of the Father's glory, thought "it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant." Philippians 2:6, 7, R.V., margin. Through all the lowly experiences of life He consented to pass, walking among the children of men, not as a king, to demand homage, but as one whose mission it was to serve others. There was in His manner no taint of bigotry, no cold austerity. The world's Redeemer had a greater than angelic nature, yet united with His divine majesty were meekness and humility that attracted all to Himself. {MB 14.2}

From earliest years to manhood, Christ lived a life that was a perfect pattern of humility and industry and obedience. He was always thoughtful and considerate of others, always self-denying. He came bearing the signature of heaven, not to be ministered unto, but to minister. . . {Ev 636.2}

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}

Recommended Reading:

Patriarchs and Prophets Chapter 4 – "The Plan of Redemption"

Desire of Ages Chapter 71 – "A Servant of Servants"

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