

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

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

Lesson 9 “Be Who You Are”

Read for this week’s study

2 Peter 1:1–15; Ephesians 2:8; Romans 5:3–5; Hebrews 10:38; Romans 6:11; 1 Corinthians 15:12–57.

Memory Text

“For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love” (2 Peter 1:5–7, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. A Precious Faith
- III. Love, the Goal of Christian Virtue
- IV. Be Who You Are
- V. Shedding the Tent
- VI. Faith in the Face of Death
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read 2 Peter 1:1-14. What are the main truths that jump out at you as you read this passage for the first time? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read 2 Peter 1:1-4. What is the meaning of the “grace” that is offered in verse 2? In what sense can grace be seen to grow and increase? What role does divine power play according to verse 3? How does verse 4 describe the Christian life? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Read 2 Peter 1:5-7, Romans 5:3-5, James 1:3-4 and Galatians 5:22-23. What do all these texts have in common? What is one significant difference between them? In what context of the ancient world do lists like these fit? Focusing on the text in 2 Peter, what do the words in the ladder of faith mean? How do believers progress through these stages of faith? How does one “make every effort” to accomplish these steps? (Monday’s lesson)

4. Read 2 Peter 1:8-11. What is the link between what has already been done for a Christian and how a Christian should be living? Read Romans 6:11 also. What does Paul say here that might be the basis for what Peter wrote in the above passage? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. Read 2 Peter 1:13-14. Adventists have a tendency with texts like this to go straight to doctrinal apologetics and sometimes miss the point of what Peter is saying. Is such an approach to this text needed? Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-57. What does Paul imply happens when people die? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. Read 2 Peter 1:12-15. What does Peter actually mean when he suggests that he is soon to put off his tent/body? How does Peter deal with the reality of his impending death, and what does that attitude teach us about faith? How does our faith help us deal with the terrible reality of death? (Thursday's lesson)
7. In light of all the Bible teaches about living holy lives, why do so many of us fail to "be what we are" in Christ? (Friday's lesson)
8. Considering what we know of Peter's life story as a follower of Jesus, his letters suggest that Christ had done a powerful work of transformation in him. What hope and comfort do you draw from Peter's life experience with Christ? (Friday's lesson)
9. In 2 Peter 1:12, Peter wrote about "the present truth." What was "present truth" in Peter's time and what is "present truth" today? (Friday's lesson)
10. Someone has written, "How surely are the dead beyond death, death is what the living carry with them." How should we as Christians carry death? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

That famous verse, "the just shall live by faith," is not discussing forgiveness or justification. The background for that verse is the one who is right with me—and my friend, will trust me and be willing to wait. And that's the kind of trust, and right relationship with God, that really counts. And when we come to Romans, that's the background for it.

The angels had such trust; the loyal ones. They had questions! But they said to God, "We trust you enough that we're willing to wait," and they waited all the way to Calvary for some of their answers. They even heard the promise to Adam and Eve that God was going to do something. And they were willing to wait because they trusted God. It certainly helps to understand "salvation by faith" and "righteousness by faith," to understand faith as trust in this way. We're not saved by faith; that is, faith does not save us. God saves us. But God can only save those who trust him. Like a physician, God stands ready to heal all the damage done. But he cannot force us to be well. If we don't trust him enough to listen, and to cooperate, and let him heal the damage done, there's no way he can heal us. Physicians cannot heal rebellious patients who stay away because they think the doctor is a quack. Only if there is trust — there needs to

be mutual trust—can healing really take place. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #3, “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>*

But to some of us, the cross is great good news. Yes it is true that sinners will die, but we have no need to be afraid of God; and He died to prove it. And this message has great power to win to repentance and to trust. Paul was so proud of this good news. Look at his understanding of it in the last verses. 1 Corinthians 1:17, 18:

For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel [What is the Gospel, the good news, about]. And not with eloquent wisdom lest the cross of Christ [that’s the Gospel], be emptied of its power [This good news has great power]. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (RSV)

Now compare with that Romans 1:16, that very famous righteousness by faith verse:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel [this good news]: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith . . . [wherein lies the power?] for in it [something is revealed] the righteousness of God is revealed. (RSV)

The good news is that God is not the unrighteous kind of person his enemies have made him out to be. And it’s so wonderful to see all through the Bible that even before the cross God had good friends who trusted him, always to do the right thing, the merciful thing, and they were proud to know him and proud to speak about him to others. Look at Jeremiah 9:24: “Let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight, declares the Lord.” (NIV)

Jeremiah was able to repeat those words with feeling long before the cross. But now such confidence in God has been confirmed by the way Jesus suffered and died. And among God’s friends whether angels or men this meaning of the cross will have power to hold God’s great family together in loyalty and in peace forever. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8, “The Most Costly And Convincing Evidence” recorded March, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>*

Lou: Well I wanted to ask you about that, because you have referred to involvement in cooperation. How do you keep away from the heresy, or the tendency to think in terms of your performance, of concentrating on how well you're doing, and evaluating it, and that kind of thing?

Graham: I think it goes back to things we've discussed before. What is it that went wrong, and what would it take to make things right, and what would it mean for God to set things right? If our problem is a legal one and our primary concern is somehow to set things legally right; which would mean, maybe, to please the Father and persuade him not to punish or destroy us, then if I'm trying to be perfect to turn away his wrath and improve my legal standing, then that's salvation by works.

But in the healing model, most of us have had a moment when we've not been well and have had to go to the physician. And we've heard the physician say, "Will you do the following?" And the most logical thing in the world is to go home and do it. And I don't feel I'm being a legalist. It seems to me that if you really trust your doctor, you will be willing to do many things. I think, actually, the one who is enjoying salvation and righteousness by faith may work harder than the legalist. The only difference is his work is all in harmony with the Divine Physician. He's not trying to please the doctor, nor is he trying to improve his legal standing with the doctor. He's trying to do what is for his own best good. The gracious Physician is saying, "Do the following. It will produce good results." And I go home and work hard to follow the regimen that he imposes.

Lou: So it really is a question of motivation making all the difference.

Graham: Very much, and the model, you see, that you have. The legal model has also cast a very regrettable shadow over the whole subject of salvation as healing and perfection as complete healing of the damage done. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #14 with Lou Venden, "God Can Completely Heal the Damage Done" 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/14MMCAG>*

We traditionally divide the experience and the provisions of righteousness by faith into two parts, don't we? We call one justification and the other sanctification. You won't find those words in scripture either. Those are English words from Latin derivation. They're different words in the Greek. Isn't it this, that the former rebel stands in the presence of God, in some one or more ways he has been led to see the truth about God? Perhaps the kindness of God has led him to repentance (Romans 2:4). Or he's heard the message about God and this has led him to faith. And the former rebel stands there in the presence of God and says, "God, as I see you now, I love you, I trust you, I admire you, I'm willing to listen, to accept what you offer and to

do what you wish. Just tell me and help me.” And God says, “If you really mean that, then you have faith.” If the former rebel should say, “God I’ve expressed my faith in you, but I still wake up early in the morning, worried about my sinful past, and wondering how you can possibly admit me to the kingdom with a record like that. God, is there anything you or I or the two of us could do about my sinful past?” What would God’s reply be?

My understanding is that God would say, “There is nothing we can do about your sinful past, because it’s history. We can’t eliminate it; we can’t destroy sections of history.” If the sinful past of every saint should be eliminated, there would be great gaps in history. In fact, there would be great holes in the Bible.

How about poor David in the hereafter? Isn’t his record going to be there, or are all the Bibles going to be burned at the second coming? This is history. We’ve been reading about the history of David’s sins all these years. Poor David. Is it fair? We have all contributed to the history of this sinful planet. I understand God to say, “I cannot eliminate that, but I’ll tell you what I will do. I’ll never hold it against you. I’ll never bring it up. I won’t worry about it if you won’t.”

In other words, God says, “I’ll not just forgive you, but I’ll treat you as if you’d never done any of those things. Now you know you’ve done them and I know that you’ve done them and your guardian angel knows you’ve done them and unfortunately Satan knows you’ve done them. He recounts all the sins he’s tempted you to commit before the heavenly council” (Revelation 12: 10). There are no secrets here. If we think God has forgotten, Satan hasn’t.

So this is not eliminated, but God says, “Even though I know the kind of person you are, and you know the kind of person you’ve been, I will treat you with dignity and respect as if you’d never sinned.” Then God hastens to say, “Since you’ve done so few good things, it might lead you to think I’ll have to treat you as if you hadn’t done anything.” He then says, “I will treat you as if you had lived as righteously as my Son. Now, you know you haven’t, and I know you haven’t; there’s no pretense here. We all know the truth, but in spite of that, I will treat you with dignity, grace and respect as if you had lived as righteously as my Son.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Faith, Righteousness and Salvation, #1 “The Meaning of Faith, The Only Requirement for Salvation”, recorded February, 1975, Lynwood, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

[http://pkp.cc/1MMFRS \(Part 1\)](http://pkp.cc/1MMFRS) [http://pkp.cc/2MMFRS \(Part 2\)](http://pkp.cc/2MMFRS)

Is faith a gift of God? Is that why some have faith and some don’t? He’s given it to some and not to others? If God gives faith, why do some have it and some don’t? And does he give more to some than to others? Does he practice favoritism here? Can faith actually be given? You say to God, “I don’t trust you. I think you’re an absolutely untrustworthy liar as the devil has said, but I

wish I trusted you and thought you told the truth. I'm praying that when I wake up in the morning I will trust you and not think you're a liar anymore."

You hop into bed, wake up in the morning, you love, trust and admire God, you now know he tells the truth. Would you trust that? Can God give us faith as an outright gift? And yet, if God had not given us the capacity to reason and to weigh evidence and to discern between the true and the false, if God had not given us the capacity to make decisions and commitments, if God had not given us the revelation of the truth about himself at such cost, if God did not preserve us from the enemy who would destroy us and confuse us and take away our chance to weigh the evidence, in fact, if God has not done all that he has done would there be any chance that we could see him as he is and trust him? In fact, who even instructs us and works with us and persuades us, and tries to lead us to truth and conviction? Aren't all these things the work of God and the work of the Holy Spirit? Is there anything, though, that God doesn't do in the matter of faith? Does he also cast our vote? Does God not only bring the evidence but also force our vote? If God has forced our vote then he's won the great controversy by stuffing the ballot box, hasn't he? He really hasn't won our vote. As Ellen White says repeatedly, our vote is offered in the highest sense of freedom. The vote is ours.

So God gives us every opportunity to have faith, but the decision to trust it is left with us. And many religions don't like that. They don't want anything left with us. But if it isn't left with us, how are we held accountable in the judgment? Are we not judged as to whether or not we've chosen to place our faith in the true God? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 12, recorded January, 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/23MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/24MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

Romans 12, you remember: "Be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may approve what is excellent." Jesus said there would be false prophets. John says test all the spirits. Then some people wonder, is Ellen White biblical on this point? She is so biblical on this point. "God never asks us to believe anything for which He does not provide adequate evidence. And it is evidence that appeals to the reason. We must bring everything," she says, "within the bounds of reason, lest the enemy so come as to set everything in a disorderly way." She says don't call blind credulity 'faith'. It's the devil's substitute for faith. Presumption is the devil's substitute for faith.

And yet, is it not in the realm of religion, that's the only one, where we are invited to believe without evidence? And that's called very wonderful, because that's 'faith'. And the more willing you are to believe without evidence, the more faith you have. Which would mean that the more you know what you believe in, the less faith you will need. Because eventually, when you

really know, you won't need any more faith because you know. So if you really know God, then you don't need any faith. That doesn't make much sense, does it?

We shouldn't be using the word "faith" at all, because faith has come to mean "believing in something you know isn't so," or believing something for which you have inadequate evidence. The word in the Bible is "trust." And the Bible warns us against trusting people we do not know. Don't even trust prophets who say, "I am a prophet of the Most High, and the angel of the Lord has told me this." "But he lied to him." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in all 66 – Philippians and 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)

That means we're willing to stand humbly in the presence of our God and ask, "What must I do to be well, to be saved?" And he says, "You need a new heart and a right spirit." And then we say, "Well then I'd be very happy to have one. Please give me one soon." Hosea understood what God wanted: To have peace in the universe once again. And his whole book is so magnificent. I think we'll find we've quoted it many times these many Friday evenings. Look at Hosea 6:6, 7:

It is true love that I have wanted, not sacrifice; the knowledge of God rather than burnt offerings [and as you know about Hebrew parallelism, the second line simply reaffirms or enlarges the point in the first line. That shows that true knowledge of God, and love for God mean the same thing. That's what He wants]. But they, like Adam have broken their agreement; again and again they have played me false. (Phillips)

They cheated. How much security can you have in the family when some of the children are playing false? Then you remember what Jesus said had to happen to Nicodemus before he would be safe to save. John 3:3: "Jesus answered him, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born anew, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'" (RSV)

"Born again" means a new heart and a right spirit. It's exactly what David said in the fifty-first Psalm. Do you notice that Jesus didn't say, "Unless you be forgiven?" "Except you be justified?" "Unless you have your legal standing adjusted, you cannot enter the kingdom"? He said, "Unless you be changed and become a trustworthy person, a teachable member of my family, you will not be safe to admit to the hereafter."

Now how can one tell if he's really been reborn, and has genuine trust and faith and all is well? This is a question which was much debated in early days, and is still debated to this day. It was much debated during the Reformation. And a leader in the early Christian church wrote a whole book to clear it up, a book that has troubled many saints: The book of James. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #3, "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/caqv>*

Lou: So do I have to be loving to be saved?

Graham: Jesus said to Nicodemus, “Unless you be born of the Spirit, you will not be saved.” And the man who is born of the Spirit, whose fruit is love and truth, will now have truth in the inner man. He will have a new heart and a right spirit. Yes. I would say unless one has the essence of the beginning of this experience of love and trustworthiness, he will not be saved. And that’s First John. “Hereby we know if we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” I mean, unless we see at the beginning a new regard for each other, we do not have the first symptom of salvation {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #12 with Lou Venden, “God’s Law is No Threat to Our Freedom” 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/caqv>*

When we talk about the state of the dead, that’s really not the thing we’re concerned about. We have good news about that. They’ll awaken the next minute. The doctrine of the state of the dead is the doctrine of the nature of man. Man is mortal, he can die. The devil’s lie is man is immortal. That’s the basis for his worst charge against God, that God will torture us for eternity. Our souls are immortal so what else can he do? So that doctrine is not just the state of the dead. The doctrine of the nature of man has been used by the adversary to put God in the worst possible light. And it’s had this most diabolical effect, even *religious* people; most religious people believe the soul is immortal. And that’s why most religious people who believe that God cannot save the wicked and therefore must send them to some unpleasant place, have to, because of their belief in the immortality of the soul, believe in some kind of a hell. And therefore most religious people worship a God who says, “You either love me and obey me, or I will punish you for eternity.” They’re stuck with that because of their error about the nature of man. It’s not just the state of the dead, you see, it’s a very important doctrine. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Three Angels’ Messages, #5, recorded October, 1981, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/5MM3ANGELSM>*

Further Study with Ellen White

The work of Christ is to redeem, to restore, to seek and to save that which was lost. If we are connected with Christ, we also are partakers of the divine nature and are to be laborers together with God. We are to bind up the bruised and wounded soul; and if a brother or a sister has erred, we are not to join with the enemy in destroying and ruining, but to work with Christ to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness. {HP 291.2}

But the work of human redemption is not all that is accomplished by the cross. The love of God is manifested to the universe. The prince of this world is cast out. The accusations which Satan has brought against God are refuted. The reproach which he has cast upon heaven is forever removed. Angels as well as men are drawn to the Redeemer. "I, if I be lifted up from the earth," He said, "will draw all unto Me." {DA 626.1}

He who places himself unreservedly under the guidance of the Spirit of God, will find that his mind expands and develops. He obtains an education in the service of God which is not one-sided and deficient, developing a one-sided character, but one which results in symmetry and completeness. {1SM 338.2}

The heart that receives the word of God is not as a pool that evaporates, not like a broken cistern that loses its treasure. It is like the mountain stream, fed by unfailing springs, whose cool, sparkling waters leap from rock to rock, refreshing the weary, the thirsty, the heavy-laden. It is like a river constantly flowing and, as it advances, becoming deeper and wider, until its life-giving waters are spread over all the earth. {PK 233.3}

So it is with the true child of God. 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}

The knowledge of God as revealed in Christ is the knowledge that all who are saved must have. It is the knowledge that works transformation of character. This knowledge, received, will recreate the soul in the image of God. It will impart to the whole being a spiritual power that is divine. {MH 425.2}

Christ is ready to impart all heavenly influences. He knows every temptation that comes to man, and the capabilities of every human agent. He weighs his strength. He sees the present and the future, and presents before the mind the obligations that should be met, and urges that common, earthly things shall not be permitted to be so absorbing that eternal things shall be lost out of reckoning. {SD 23.3}

The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labors for man's sanctification, and man is to co-operate with Him, putting forth persevering

efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them. {AA 532.2}

As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan's temptations. God works, and man works, that man may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God. Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places. The mind rests with peace and assurance in Jesus (RH April 24, 1900). {7BC 943.2}

Jesus came to the world not as an angel of light; we could not have endured His glory if He had come thus. One angel at the tomb of Christ was of such exceeding brightness that the Roman guard fell powerless to the ground. As the angel came from the heavens, he parted the darkness from his track, and the sentinels could not endure his glory; they fell as dead men to the earth. Suppose that Jesus had come in the glory of an angel, His brightness would have extinguished the feeble life of mortal men. {7BC 926.8}

For our sake Jesus emptied Himself of His glory; He clothed His divinity with humanity that He might touch humanity, that His personal presence might be among us, that we might know that He was acquainted with all our trials, and sympathized with our grief, that every son and daughter of Adam might understand that Jesus is the friend of sinners (ST April 18, 1892). {7BC 927.1}

God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe. Like rays of light from the sun, blessings flow out from Him to all the creatures He has made. In His infinite love 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 are brought nearest to their Creator who thus become participants in labors of love. R. & H., Dec. 6, 1887. {CS 23.3}

Christ has given His Spirit as a divine power to overcome all hereditary and cultivated tendencies to evil, and to impress His own character upon His church. {DA 671.2}

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Luke 10:27. To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means

that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored. {Ed 16.1}

When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the joy of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see, creates a new being in the image of God. {ML 46.3}

To be sanctified is to become a partaker of the divine nature, catching the spirit and mind of Jesus, ever learning in the school of Christ. “But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord.” It is impossible for any of us by our own power or our own efforts to work this change in ourselves. It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Jesus said He would send into the world, that changes our character into the image of Christ; and when this is accomplished, we reflect, as in a mirror, the glory of the Lord. That is, the character of the one who thus beholds Christ is so like His, that one looking at him sees Christ’s own character shining out as from a mirror. Imperceptibly to ourselves, we are changed day by day from our ways and will into the ways and will of Christ, into the loveliness of His character. Thus we grow up into Christ, and unconsciously reflect His image. {RC 20.3}

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith. {SC 105.2}

Recommended Reading:

The Acts of the Apostles Chapter 52 – “Steadfast Unto the End”

<https://egwwritings.org/>