

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2018: *The Book of Acts*

Lesson 9 “The Second Missionary Journey”

Read for this week’s study

Acts 16; Romans 3:28; Galatians 2:16; Acts 17; 1 Corinthians. 1:23; Acts 18:1–10.

Memory Text

“Do not be afraid; keep on speaking, do not be silent. For I am with you, and no one is going to attack and harm you, because I have many people in this city’ “ (Acts 18:9, 10, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Back in Lystra
- III. Philippi
- IV. Thessalonica and Berea
- V. Paul in Athens
- VI. Paul in Corinth
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Acts 16:1-13 in light of Galatians 2:11-14. Was Paul contradicting himself in Acts 16 when he had Timothy circumcised? When a belief or conviction hinders a church’s mission, how open should we be to reconsider? What do you think Luke meant when he talks about the Holy Spirit preventing their going somewhere? How does this kind of thing work? How would we know we were experiencing the same thing? What is the significance of the “they” and the “we” in this passage? (Sunday’s lesson)
2. Read Acts 16:11-24. Where did the missionaries go on Sabbath in Philippi and why? Why is Paul annoyed when the slave girl speaks the truth about him and his mission? When Paul was beaten by the magistrates of Philippi, why didn’t he claim Roman citizenship? Why does Luke switch from “we” to “they” again in this passage? (Monday’s lesson)
3. Read Acts 16:25-39. What did the jailer need to do in order to be saved? What does this teach us about our role in salvation? What are the implications for baptism and church membership today? Why did the magistrates change their minds about Paul

and Silas overnight? Why does Paul humiliate them the way he does? (Monday's lesson)

4. Read Acts 17:1-15. How did the Thessalonian Jews react to Paul's successful preaching among the Gentiles? What was the response of the Berean Jews in comparison? What does "diligently search the Scriptures" mean? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. Read Acts 17:16-34. How did Paul's preaching on Mars Hill differ from the way he preached in synagogues? To what degree is it appropriate to use different methods to reach different people? Why did Paul quote pagan poets while preaching to them? Can we do that too? What dangers might there be in that approach? What can we learn from the three responses to Paul's message in Athens? (Wednesday's lesson)
6. Read Acts 18:1-17. What was the result of Paul's missionary activities in Corinth? Re-read Acts 18:9-10. What does God's intervention to ensure Paul's safety tell us about God? Why doesn't God always intervene? (Thursday's lesson)
7. What is the relationship of denominational affiliation and the universal church of Christ? What impact should that have when we baptize someone? Why would Ellen White call for "more thorough preparation for baptism" (6T 91-92) if Paul could baptize a pagan a few hours after his first encounter with the gospel? (Friday's lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

But even of us damaged sinners who need so much help, all God asks is trust. Because if we only trusted God enough to be willing to listen, to stand humbly in his presence and ask, "What must I do to be saved? What must I do to be well?" You know that God is the Creator that readily and eagerly will heal all of the damage done. There is no substitute for trust. Nothing else is as important as trust. All the generous and gracious provisions of the plan of salvation are of no avail whatever if we don't trust God enough to let him do for us what he's so eager to do.

Now I think this helps explain Paul's very brief reply to the jailer in Philippi. You remember when the earthquake brought down the doors of that jail and the jailer, fearing that the prisoners had escaped (in which case he would be executed himself), ran in and fell down at the feet of Paul and Silas. And you can be sure he earnestly inquired, "What must I do to be saved?" At least, "What must I do to be safe?" And Paul replied, not, "If you have the time, I have 20 lessons for you. As we sit here among the rubble, I'll lead you through the doctrines of the church." No, all Paul said was, in the familiar wording, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you will be saved."

I thought one also had to have faith, as well as belief. Sometimes we go to great lengths to explain the difference between belief and faith. I think of all the illustrations I've heard during my life to explain the difference, probably the one that impressed me the most was the story of the man who strung a cable over the chasm at Niagara Falls, and then crossed it in a wheelbarrow and came back. And then he turned to the crowd and said, "Do you believe I can do that again?" And the man said, "Yes, I believe you can."

"Then climb in my wheelbarrow."

"Not on your life!" said the man.

"You see," said the preacher, "he believed he could make it across, but he didn't have faith."

I would say you could have all the faith in the world that he would go across every hour on the hour, but you wouldn't get me in that wheelbarrow. I don't like places like that; and have you looked into the chasm lately? Besides, there is no such difference between belief and faith in the Bible. There is only one word. If you'll forgive the Greek, it's *pistis* : p-i-s-t-i-s. And we must remember that conversation between the jailer and Paul was in Greek. And that's the reason for these different versions on the Bible Reference Sheet. Acts 16:30, 31. First from the *King James*, the verse we've all memorized: "Sirs, what must I do to be saved? And they said, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.'" (KJV)

But you'll notice in the *New English Bible*; "Put your trust in the Lord Jesus. . . ." (NEB) It's the same word. This word *pistis* can mean belief, faith, trust, confidence. And the versions vary, this just for variety. Then the *Berkeley* version has: "Have faith in the Lord Jesus. . . ." (Berkeley)

They are all exactly the same. {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 surely no story is more encouraging than the story of the thief on the cross. What did he do, for Jesus to say those wonderful words in Luke 23:42- 43, at the end of our Bible Reference Sheet? "And he said, 'Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, . . . 'You will be with me in Paradise.'" (RSV)

There was the thief hanging on the cross with a thief hanging on the other side and Jesus in the middle. And the two robbers were cursing and swearing and mocking Jesus, as were the crowds. Something happened to the thief. He listened to Jesus saying, "Father, forgive them." And he listened to Jesus say, "John, please look after Mother when I'm gone." And maybe the thief had a mother, and that really touched him. But then that saying, "Father forgive them" because over the head of Christ it said, "The King of the Jews." And the thief thought to himself,

“If Jesus ever really has a kingdom, and rules over a kingdom where the king says, ‘I forgive you,’ I’m a thief, I need to be forgiven. I wouldn’t be safe in any other kingdom than a kingdom where the king says, ‘I forgive you. I forgive you.’” And he said, “Jesus, if that’s the kind of kingdom you’re going to reign over, I’d like to live in it. Please, could you remember me?” And I think that was a little tentative. He didn’t know how Jesus was going to respond. And then there came back the words that confirmed his trust. “Yes, I’d be pleased to remember you.”

And the thief died—with his tithe unpaid, and all kinds of things in his stomach. He never made restitution to anybody, wasn’t baptized, never kept a Sabbath. But he’ll be in the kingdom! Because after he died, the next moment of consciousness in the resurrection, the thief will come face to face with that same person in the middle. And Jesus will say to him, “You have a lot to learn.” And the thief will say, “If you say so. That’s alright with me.” I hope that if anything should happen to any of us on the way home tonight, that we would die God’s trusting friend. Because if we do, we will arise the next moment of consciousness face to face with God. And we will not be afraid—because we know the truth. We trust him, know him, love him, and all those other things. We’ve been set right. And if when we see him face to face, and he should say to us, “You know, there’s a great deal for you to learn,” we would say, “We would be pleased to listen, because we trust you. We admire you. We want to be your friend.” You see, faith is just a word we use to describe a relationship with God as with a person well-known. And the better he is known, the better this relationship may be. Faith implies an attitude toward God of love, of trust, and deepest admiration. It means having enough confidence in God based upon the more than adequate evidence revealed, to be willing to believe what he says; to accept what he offers. And to do what he wishes, without reservation; no cheating, for the rest of eternity. Anyone who has such faith would be perfectly safe to save. This is why faith is the only requirement for Heaven, and for salvation. {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>*

Lou: Now I missed some words in your presentation this evening that I’ve heard often associated with the subject, as one way to solve the questions created by Jesus’ statement in the Sermon on the Mount: “Be ye perfect as your Father is perfect” (Matthew 5:48). Words like “imputed,” “Christ’s righteousness imputed,” or “the covering of Christ’s righteousness,” as though that was something that was placed over us and then God says, “You’re perfect.” As though maybe God didn’t understand what is underneath. Why didn’t you use phrases like that?

Graham: We need to be familiar with them and to use them at the right time, but actually those words belong to the legal model—the emergency model—“that the righteousness of Christ is

reckoned to us so that our account may look all right in the judgment,” and so on. And that’s often attributed to the verse, “Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned, imputed unto him for righteousness.” The Greek word there actually can mean, “considered, recognized.”

In the trust-healing model, I would translate that verse: “Abraham trusted God, and God said, ‘That’s good! That’s what I want. If you trust me, all is well.’” All God ever asked of us is trust. And he trusted him enough to become his firmest friend there, and Abraham really grew up and was not afraid of God, though reverent. Look at the relationship they had. That’s the ideal. And one does not need to explain that in legal terms at all.

It’s the same way with “covered.” Think what we’ve done with the word “covered” to suggest that I as a sinner—and we are all sinners—I stand in the presence of the Father, and he would be very angry with me and destructive toward me if I were not covered. So I am covered with something; and fortunately God does not have twenty/twenty vision. He doesn’t know the truth. I know what’s inside. The Lord knows what’s inside. My guardian angel knows what’s inside. And the devil is reminding them as the Accuser of the Brethren as to what’s inside. But the Father looks and I’m perfect.

He knows better. God knows exactly what I’m like. What does that mean in the legal model? You can see how it could have an emergency comforting message for people who are afraid of God. Don’t worry. God can’t really see you the way you are. That’s emergency talk.

In the trust-healing model, God looks at me and knows exactly what I’m like; but nevertheless, he treats me as if I had been as loyal as his own Son.

He treats me as if I had lived as righteously as Christ. I know I haven’t and so does he. But that’s how generous he is. Now, that’s for real. And that’s more marvelous than the other. {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>

Lou: That ties in; talking about the Bible and trusting the Bible. What do you say to a person who says, “Look, I just want to take the Bible as it reads! And when I read in the Bible that (as for example in Romans 11:33 in that doxology that Paul concludes there with) ‘God’s ways are inscrutable. How can anyone know the mind of God?’ Now, if I just accept the Bible, why can’t I just accept that statement and say, ‘why have conversations about God? How can we even know God? I’ll just believe the Bible.’”

Graham: Depending on the person who is saying this, one might reply differently, but let’s assume this is a very devout person. He really does accept the Scriptures. I would want to make

the most of that. I would want to say, “Well, what about these other places in the Bible? Do you accept those too? Or do you just accept this one? “

Lou: What other places?

Graham: Like places in Romans chapter one that say God can be known. In fact this individual is accepting one verse in Romans and skipping another one. If that doesn't work, then I might turn to a place that says, “Give wine to the poor, that they may forget their misery,” and verses like that, until maybe he is shocked into realizing you can't take *here a little* and *there a little*. When you say you accept the Bible, you accept it all the way through. And probably that's what he meant when he said, “I accept God's word. If it says it, I believe it, and that's all there is to it.” Then I would want to point to these other verses that say that God can be known—and if he can't be known, why all this content of Scripture? Why did Christ come to make his Father known? So this use of one little verse can lead us down all kinds of pathways I'm sure he wouldn't want to go.

Lou: So you are saying that the basic attitude of “I want to accept the Bible as it reads,” is a good attitude provided it takes the Bible as a whole, all sixty-six books, the total message of Scripture. {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:*

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Lou: But that raises another question that comes up. Here we had this third angel's message, the bottom paragraph on our Bible Reference Sheet on the front page, and I'm tempted to ask why not just take this message as it reads? You are talking about having to take all sixty-six and interpret it in the light of all sixty-six, but if the Bible can, *should* be taken just as it reads, why not read it and just believe it the way it says, that people are going to be burned forever, the smoke goes up forever and ever and so on?

Graham: Well, I would just have read in Jude, the name of the book right before, that Sodom and Gomorrah were destroyed with eternal fire—and that fire went out a long time ago. So the book of Jude has helped prepare me for these words in Revelation. Moreover, as I go through the Bible, I find the servant who doesn't want to be set free, having a hole punched through the lobe of his ear, and he serves his master forever. So I've already been prepared by the rest of the Bible to understand this fire and its smoke that goes up forever and ever.

Lou: But you're saying then that I have to interpret.

Graham: That's right—to find its real meaning.

Lou: I can't just take those words right there? They have a content and history, so you say that I have to work at understanding Scripture?

Graham: Now some folk will say, "We must take that just the way it reads." And I'll say, "Well, let's turn over here to Deuteronomy 14 which says, 'Take the tithe and buy strong drink with it and rejoice before the Lord.'"

And they'll say, "Oh no, don't take that just the way it reads; let's interpret that with care."

And then we turn over to where it says, "Give wine to the poor, that they may forget their misery."

And they will say, "Now, let's interpret that."

And, "It would be better not to marry; it's all right if you can't control yourself."

"Oh, let's interpret that."

"Women shouldn't speak in church."

"Let's interpret that."

The third angel's message. "Let's take it just how it reads."

Let's be consistent all the way through. We want to find the meaning. We don't want to escape the meaning. We don't want to cheat. I want to know exactly what it means. {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>*

In many [very many] and various [very various] ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets. . . . [You see that is demonstrating in many and various ways over a long period of time, and under a great variety of circumstances; that's what Hebrews 1:1 is saying.] In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son [or by his Son]. (RSV)

You don't find claims in there. You find demonstration, over many centuries of time and certainly under a great variety of circumstances. The very length of the sixty-six books speaks well of our God. The very existence of the Bible says that God is not trying to lead us to trust him without evidence. If God offered us only claims, the Bible would be only a paragraph long. How moving it is to us to realize that the Infinite One has chosen to win his family by being a humble teacher. By stooping to meet us where we are, speaking a language we can understand, leading us no faster than we are able to follow, and running grave risks of being misunderstood—especially when we are so noisy that he has to raise his voice to get our

attention, and then tell us that he does not like to raise his voice at all! A teacher like that could be trusted. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #4, “God’s Way of Restoring Trust” recorded February, 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/4MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

The words of truth will grow in importance, and assume a breadth and fullness of meaning of which we have never dreamed. The beauty and riches of the word have a transforming influence on mind and character. The light of heavenly love will fall upon the heart as an inspiration. {COL 132.4}

The appreciation of the Bible grows with its study. Whichever way the student may turn, he will find displayed the infinite wisdom and love of God. {COL 132.5}

The truths of God’s word are not mere sentiments, but the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin has clouded the understanding is removed. {CT 452.2}

The words, “A new heart also will I give you” (Ezekiel 36:26), mean, A new mind will I give you. This change of heart is always attended by a clear conception of Christian duty, an understanding of truth. The clearness of our view of truth will be proportionate to our understanding of the word of God. He who gives the Scriptures close, prayerful attention will gain clear comprehension and sound judgment, as if in turning to God he had reached a higher plane of intelligence. {CT 452.3}

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}

There is no excuse for any one in taking the position that there is no more truth to be revealed, and that all our expositions of Scripture are without an error. The fact that certain doctrines have been held as truth for many years by our people, is not a proof that our ideas are infallible. Age will not make error into truth, and truth can afford to be fair. No true doctrine will lose anything by close investigation. {RH, December 20, 1892 par. 1}

Faith in a lie will not have a sanctifying influence upon the life or character. No error is truth, or can be made truth by repetition, or by faith in it. Sincerity will never save a soul from the

consequences of believing an error. Without sincerity there is no true religion, but sincerity in a false religion will never save a man. I may be perfectly sincere in following a wrong road, but that will not make it the right road, or bring me to the place I wished to reach. The Lord does not want us to have a blind credulity, and call that the faith that sanctifies. The truth is the principle that sanctifies, and therefore it becomes us to know what is truth. We must compare spiritual things with spiritual. We must prove all things, but hold fast only that which is good, that which bears the divine credentials, which lays before us the true motives and principles which should prompt us to action.—Letter 12, 1890. {2SM 56.1}

He [Christ] maintained his disguise till he had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in his life, his character, his mission to earth, and his death and resurrection. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, **not** because it was supported by his personal testimony, but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of his life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth. When the object of his labors with the two disciples was gained, he revealed himself to them that their joy might be full, and then vanished from their sight. {3SP 214.2} (Emphasis supplied)

Even the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart is to be tested by the Word of God. The Spirit which inspired the Scriptures, always leads to the Scriptures.—*General Conference Daily Bulletin*, April 13, 1891. {1SM 43.2}

All whom God has blessed with reasoning powers are to become intellectual Christians. They are not requested to believe without evidence; therefore Jesus has enjoined upon all to search the Scriptures. Let the ingenious inquirer, and the one who would know for himself what is truth, exert his mental powers to search out the truth as it is in Jesus. Any neglect here is at the peril of the soul. We must know individually the prescribed conditions of entering into eternal life. . . . We cannot allow these questions to be settled for us by another's mind, or another's judgment. . . . We cannot trust the salvation of our souls to ministers, to idle traditions, to human authorities, or to pretensions. . . . The Lord positively demands of every Christian an intelligent knowledge of the Scriptures. {RH, March 8, 1887 par. 1}

The Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty it is left with us to decide our course. {RH, July 17, 1888 par. 4}

Today the truths of Scripture are to be brought before the great men of the world in order that they may choose between obedience to God's law and allegiance to the prince of evil. God sets everlasting truth before them—truth that will make them wise unto salvation, but He does not force them to accept it. If they turn from it, He leaves them to themselves, to be filled with the fruit of their own doings. {AA 241.2}

Jesus came in personal contact with men. He did not stand aloof and apart from those who needed His help. He entered the homes of men, comforted the mourner, healed the sick, aroused the careless, and went about doing good. And if we follow in the footsteps of Jesus, we must do as He did. We must give men the same kind of help that He did. {ML 227.4}

Christ came to our world with a consciousness of more than human greatness, to accomplish a work that was to be infinite in its results. Where do you find Him when doing this work? In the house of Peter the fisherman. Resting by Jacob's well, telling the Samaritan woman of the living water. He generally taught in the open air, but sometimes in the Temple, for He attended the gatherings of the Jewish people. But oftenest He taught when sitting on a mountainside, or in a fisherman's boat. He entered into the lives of these humble fishermen. His sympathy was enlisted in behalf of the needy, the suffering, the despised; and many were attracted to Him. . . . And to those who are longing for rest and peace today just as truly as those who listened to His words in Judea, He is saying, "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (*Signs of the Times*, June 24, 1897). {LHU 167.6}

Though He was a Jew, Jesus mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of His nation. In face of their prejudices He accepted the hospitality of this despised people. He slept with them under their roofs, ate with them at their tables—partaking of the food prepared and served by their hands—taught in their streets, and treated them with the utmost kindness and courtesy. {LHU 183.3}

The religion of Jesus softens whatever is hard and rough in the temper, and smooths whatever is rugged and sharp in the manners. It makes the words gentle and the demeanor winning. Let us learn from Christ how to combine a high sense of purity and integrity with sunniness of disposition. A kind, courteous Christian is the most powerful argument that can be produced in favor of Christianity. {GW 122.1}