

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

### Third Quarter 2020: *Making Friends for God: The Joy of Sharing in His Mission*

#### Lesson 1 “Why Witness?”

#### Read for this week’s study

James 5:19, 20; Luke 15:6; Zephaniah 3:17; John 7:37, 38; 1 Timothy 2:3, 4; 2 Corinthians 5:14, 15.

#### Memory Text

“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth” (1 Timothy 2:3, 4, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Providing Opportunities for Salvation
- III. Making Jesus Glad
- IV. Growing by Giving
- V. Faithfulness to Christ’s Command
- VI. Motivated by Love
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. In your experience, how has the idea of “witnessing” changed or stayed the same? Read Ecclesiastes 3:11 and John 1:9. What impact should these texts have on the way we go about witnessing? (Lesson Introduction)
2. What is the original meaning of the word “witness” and how did that get applied to sharing the gospel with others? (Sabbath afternoon)
3. Compare Luke 19:10 with James 5:19-20. What was Christ’s purpose in coming to earth? How can we best cooperate with Christ in His work of saving the lost? Do people have any chance of salvation if we don’t go to them first? If yes, what is our role in the process of salvation? (Sunday’s lesson)
4. If you were to ask God, “How is your day going?” what do you think He might answer on most days? Is there anything in this world that might make God rejoice? Read Luke 15:6-10, 22-24 and 32. What do the endings of these stories tell you

about God? Read Zephaniah 3:17. What is God's response when we accept His saving grace? (Monday's lesson)

5. Witnessing is rooted in sharing what God has done for us, how the gospel has changed our lives. But when that which has meant so much to us is not perceived as relevant to our neighbors, how do we make connection with them? Read John 7:37-38 and Luke 6:38. What natural features of the Bible lands might illustrate these two Bible passages? What kind of experiences have you had in witnessing to others? How have these experiences impacted your own faith? (Tuesday's lesson)
6. Read 1 Timothy 2:3-4 and 2 Peter 3:9. What do these passages tell us about the heart of God? What is His highest priority? If conversion is the result of the Holy Spirit, why does God need us to witness at all? Read Isaiah 49:6, Luke 2:28 and Acts 13:47. What use did Luke make of this Old Testament concept? Is the institutional church today in any danger of becoming inwardly focused? (Wednesday's lesson)
7. To pursue the title of this lesson, why witness at all? Read 2 Corinthians 5:14-15 and 18-20. What motivated Paul to experience trials, tribulations, difficulties, and hardship for the sake of the gospel? How can this same motivation prompt our service for Christ? Under what circumstances are you most likely to witness? (Thursday's lesson)
8. Can witnessing and service ever become a substitute for genuine spirituality? If so, how so, and how can we avoid that trap? On the other hand, are many churches in danger of being satisfied with the status quo? How would you appeal to such a church? (Friday's lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

To see and to present the plan of salvation in the larger setting of the great controversy over the character and government of God is, I believe, the highest privilege of God's friends on this planet today.

It's perhaps understandable that as beginners, (recognizing that we're sinners and we need to be saved) at first we should tend to be preoccupied with what God has done for you and me that we might be saved. But then as we grow up, and we learn to take the Bible as a whole, it becomes apparent that our own personal salvation (important as that is) is only a small part of the far larger plan that involves the peace and security of the whole vast universe; the confirmation of the truth about our God himself. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1, "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>*

Lest we underestimate the seriousness of these final times of confusion and deception and lest we underestimate Satan's cunning and persuasive power, there are vivid descriptions of this time to come, both in the Old Testament and New, beyond even the ones that we included in our Bible Reference Sheet last time. Look, for example, at the first one, Daniel 12:1, 3, familiar words to many of us:

There will be a time of distress such as has not happened from the beginning of nations until then [remember the book of Revelation 13, last time? The whole world will worship the adversary except those whose names were written in this book.]. But at that time your people—everyone whose name is found written in the book—will be delivered. . . . Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever. (NIV)

Notice in this passage as in many others, the saints who survive the time of deception and confusion not only survive themselves, but they are always described as leading others to righteousness. Our concern is not only to survive, but to bear an encouraging witness to the truth about our God. {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>

And Moses was so concerned for God's reputation that he actually dared talk to God like this. "God you couldn't do it." And I wish God's reply was on the record but I can almost hear him saying, "Moses I love to hear you talk like that. Who else knows me that well? You really are my friend, jealous for my reputation. You were concerned about what the heathen would think of me." Why are we Adventists so concerned about what the world thinks about Adventists? And not concerned about what the world thinks about God? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, We've Camped Around This Mountain Long Enough, #2, 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/2MMCAMPED>

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

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 earth was dark through misapprehension of God. That the gloomy shadows might be lightened, that the world might be brought back to God, Satan's deceptive power was to be broken. This could not be done by force. The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. This work only one Being in all the universe could do. Only He who knew the height and depth of the love of God could make it known. Upon the world's dark night the Sun of Righteousness must rise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 22.1}

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. Through the eternal ages He is linked with us. "God so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son." John 3:16. He gave Him not only to bear our sins, and to die as our sacrifice; He gave Him to the fallen race. To assure us of His immutable counsel of peace, God gave His only-begotten Son to become one of the human family, forever to retain His human nature. This is the pledge that God will fulfill His word. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon His shoulder." God has adopted human nature in the person of His Son, and has carried the same into the highest heaven. It is the "Son of man" who shares the throne of the universe. It is the "Son of man" whose name shall be called, "Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." Isaiah 9:6. The I AM is the Daysman between God and humanity, laying His hand upon both. He who is "holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners," is not ashamed to call us brethren. Hebrews 7:26; 2:11. In Christ the family of earth and the family of heaven are bound together. Christ glorified is our brother. Heaven is enshrined in humanity, and humanity is enfolded in the bosom of Infinite Love. {DA 25.3}

God saw that a clearer revelation than nature was needed to portray both His personality and His character. He sent His Son into the world to reveal, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. . . . {8T 265.5}

Looking upon man, God saw his desperate rebellion, and He devised a remedy. Christ was His gift to the world for man's reconciliation. The Son of God was appointed to come to this earth to take humanity and by His own example to be a great educating power among men. His experience in man's behalf was to enable men to resist Satan's power. He came to mold character and to give mental power, to shed abroad the beams of true education, that the true aim of life might not be lost sight of. The sons of men had had a practical knowledge of evil;

Christ came to the world to show them that He had planted for them the tree of life, the leaves of which are for the healing of the nations. {CT 33.3}

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. {DA 311.2}

Christ's favorite theme was the paternal character and abundant love of God. This knowledge of God was Christ's own gift to men, and this gift He has committed to His people to be communicated by them to the world. {6T 55.1}

From the beginning it has been Satan's studied plan to cause men to forget God, that he might secure them to himself. Therefore he has sought to misrepresent the character of God, to lead men to cherish a false conception of Him. The Creator has been presented to their minds as clothed with the attributes of the prince of evil himself—as arbitrary, severe, and unforgiving—that He might be feared, shunned, and even hated by men. . . . {HP 8.2}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, a God of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. By the world's Redeemer the thick darkness with which Satan had enshrouded the throne of the Deity was swept away, and the Father was again manifest to men as the Light of life. . . . {HP 8.3}

In word and in deed the Messiah, during His earthly ministry, was to reveal to mankind the glory of God the Father. Every act of His life, every word spoken, every miracle wrought, was to make known to fallen humanity the infinite love of God. {PK 696.3}

Jesus came into the world to illustrate the character of God in His own life, and He swept back the misrepresentations that Satan had originated, and revealed the glory of God. It was only by living among men that He could reveal the mercy, compassion, and love of His heavenly Father; for it was only by actions of benevolence that He could set forth the grace of God. The unbelief of men was deep seated, and yet they could not resist the testimony of His God-like example, and His deeds of love and truth. {SD 139.3}

Satan led men to conceive of God as a being whose chief attribute is stern justice—one who is a severe judge, a harsh, exacting creditor. He pictured the Creator as a being who is watching with jealous eye to discern the errors and mistakes of men that He may visit judgments upon them. It was to remove this dark shadow, by revealing to the world the infinite love of God, that Jesus came to live among men.—SC 11 (1892). {1MCP 250.1}

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {Ed 76.3}

So far from making arbitrary requirements, God's law is given to men as a hedge, a shield. Whoever accepts its principles is preserved from evil. Fidelity to God involves fidelity to man. Thus the law guards the rights, the individuality, of every human being. It restrains the superior from oppression, and the subordinate from disobedience. It ensures man's well-being, both for this world and for the world to come. To the obedient it is the pledge of eternal life, for it expresses the principles that endure forever. {Ed 76.4}

Christ came to demonstrate the value of the divine principles by revealing their power for the regeneration of humanity. He came to teach how these principles are to be developed and applied. {Ed 77.1}

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}

God might have committed the message of the gospel, and all the work of loving ministry, to the heavenly angels. He might have employed other means for accomplishing His purpose. But in His infinite love He chose to make us co-workers with Himself, with Christ and the angels, that we might share the blessing, the joy, the spiritual uplifting, which results from this unselfish ministry. {SC 79.2}

God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image. {DA 294.4}

All heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. {6T 63.3}

The Lord does not leave His wounded and bruised sheep to the power of Satan to be torn in pieces. He is ever strengthening His own when they are weak. He delivers the tried and

tempted ones from the enemy's power. The Lord Jesus never forsakes any soul that puts his trust in Him. {UL 150.4}

The long night of gloom is trying, but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God's unwillingness to have His people perish, has been the reason of so long delay.—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 194. (1868) {Ev 694.2}

Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own. {COL 69.1}

And while Christ opens heaven to man, the life which He imparts opens the heart of man to heaven. Sin not only shuts us away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. All this work of evil it is Christ's mission to undo. The faculties of the soul, paralyzed by sin, the darkened mind, the perverted will, He has power to invigorate and to restore. He opens to us the riches of the universe, and by Him the power to discern and to appropriate these treasures is imparted. {Ed 28.3}

Having undertaken the work of man's redemption, the Father would spare nothing, however dear, which was essential for the completion of His work. He would make opportunities for men; He would pour upon them His blessings; He would heap favor upon favor, gift upon gift, until the whole treasury of heaven was open to those whom He came to save. Having collected all the riches of the universe, and laid open all the resources of His divine nature, God gave them all for the use of man. They were His free gift. What an ocean of love is circulating, like a divine atmosphere, around the world! What manner of love is this, that the eternal God should adopt human nature in the person of His Son, and carry the same into the highest heaven! {TMK 19.2}

Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly going out in a clear, refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others (MS 33, 1911). {6BC 1076.2}

Wherever there is union with Christ there is love. Whatever other fruits we may bear, if love be missing, they profit nothing. Love to God and our neighbor is the very essence of our religion. No one can love Christ and not love His children. When we are united to Christ, we have the mind of Christ. Purity and love shine forth in the character, meekness and truth control the life. The very expression of the countenance is changed. {RC 104.2}

Christ abiding in the soul exerts a transforming power, and the outward aspect bears witness to the peace and joy that reign within. We drink in the love of Christ, as the branch draws nourishment from the vine. If we are grafted in Christ, if fiber by fiber we have been united with the Living Vine, we shall give evidence of the fact by bearing rich clusters of living fruit. If we are

connected with the Light, we shall be channels of light, and in our words and works we shall reflect light to the world. {RC 104.3}

Christ brings all true believers into complete oneness with Himself, even the oneness which exists between Him and His Father. The true children of God are bound up with one another and with their Saviour. They are one with Christ in God. {SD 293.5}

True sanctification unites believers to Christ and to one another in the bonds of tender sympathy. This union causes to flow continually into the heart rich currents of Christlike love, which flows forth again in love for one another. {5BC 1141.2}

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}