

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Third Quarter 2020: *Making Friends for God: The Joy of Sharing in His Mission*
Lesson 8 “Ministering Like Jesus”

Read for this week’s study

Matthew 5:13, 14; Philippians 2:15; Mark 12:34; Ephesians 4:15; Matthew 4:23–25;
Matthew 25:31–46.

Memory Text

“But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd” (Matthew 9:36, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Jesus’ Attitude Toward People
- III. Jesus’ Treatment of People
- IV. Jesus’ Healing Ministry: Part 1
- V. Jesus’ Healing Ministry: Part 2
- VI. What Matters to Jesus
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Jesus recognized that the world needed a demonstration of the gospel as much as it needed its proclamation. The living witness of a Christ-like life committed to ministering to others is a powerful testimony to the words we speak and gives credibility to our witness.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What does it mean that we are to be ‘ministering like Jesus’? In what sense are his mission and our mission different? In what sense are they similar?
3. How is Jesus defining religion vis-à-vis his religious contemporaries? When something has been repeated for centuries and generally accepted as truth, how do you go about challenging it? How did Jesus manage to challenge centuries’ long notions of what a truly religious person looked like?
4. Jesus calls his followers “salt” & “light”. (Sunday’s lesson) What associations did the first hearers of those words likely make?

5. God had called Israel to be the salt of the earth; but Israel was behaving like everyone else, with its power politics, factional squabbles, and oppression of the weak. How could God keep the world from going bad – the main function of salt in the ancient world – if Israel, his chosen ‘salt’, had lost its distinctive taste?
6. God called Israel to be ‘the light of the world’ (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6), intending them to shine his bright light into the world’s darkest corners enabling people in darkness to find a better way. But what if the people called to be the light-bearers had become part of the darkness? Jerusalem, the city set on a hill, was supposed to be a beacon of hope to the world.
7. Remarkably, Jesus brought all his teachings into reality in his own person. He was the salt of the earth. He was the light of the world. He became a beacon of hope and new life for everybody, embodying the way of self-giving love which is the deepest fulfillment of the law and the prophets.
8. Monday’s lesson uses the Roman centurion (Matthew 8:5-10) and the Jewish scribe (Mark 12:28-34) as two examples of Jesus’ treatment of people. Why would Matthew put the stories of chapters 8 & 9 between the two sermons of Jesus (5-7; 10)? What does he want to achieve with the two people (leper and centurion) in chapter 8? How does the authority of Jesus function in these stories? What is the main difference between how Jesus uses his authority and how authority was used in his day (and is used in our day)?
9. Tuesday and Wednesday’s lessons discuss Jesus’ healing ministry. In what sense was his healing ministry different from ours? What are we supposed to learn from all these healing miracles for our lives and witnessing today?
10. Thursday’s lesson concentrates on what matters to Jesus, based on the parables of Matthew 24 & 25. What are we supposed to learn from these parables that informs our witnessing in today’s world? What is Jesus looking for in our society? How can he provide it through us both individually and as a community of believers?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

So these priests, who brought this woman, God didn’t want to embarrass them. Maybe he’d win one. And then he turns to Mary and says, “Where are your accusers?” And she wasn’t noticing what was going on. She was waiting for the stones to arrive, as Achan did. And she looked up and said, “They’re gone. No one accuses me.” And though she’d committed adultery, Jesus said, “I don’t condemn you, either. You go home and be a better girl from now on.” And Ellen White loves to add that from then on, Mary became one of Christ’s firmest friends. The way he treated her, with incredible dignity and respect under those circumstances. She’d given up, and she had no respect for herself. She knew she’d been caught in the very act. She didn’t have a chance. And yet he treated her this way. Now, what do you think that says about God?

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – John, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/57MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/58MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Think of the story of Simon, the leper healed by Jesus. He invited Jesus to a dinner at his house. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were also invited. Luke says that Mary was known for living an immoral life in the town. Some understand that this is the same woman taken in adultery. You remember during the feast, this woman anointed Jesus' feet with expensive perfume.

She tried to keep it private, but forgot that the fragrance would fill the air. It became public. Simon said, "within himself", the record says, "If Jesus were a prophet, he would know what kind of woman this is that is touching him. He would know what kind of sinful life she lives." Jesus spoke up and said, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Speak on," he said. And Jesus told the story of the two debtors. Simon realized that Jesus knew his innermost thoughts—which meant that Jesus knew what a sinner he had been! Simon held his breath to see if Jesus would expose him before the crowd. Surely, self-righteous Simon deserved to be exposed. Jesus handled it privately. He maintained Simon's dignity and reputation with his associates. He did not expose him and meanwhile he graciously accepted Mary's impulsive act. Think what these stories tell us about our God. {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>

Graham: What worries so many people about guilt is the fear that goes with it. I mean, I was caught with my hand in the cookie jar—what is he going to do to me? There is a lot of fear mixed in there. There is also a feeling of loss of dignity and self-worth. The woman taken in adultery felt very guilty and felt very ashamed. And the first thing Jesus did was to restore her dignity and self-respect. He did that time after time. How can we act with dignity, as people created in God's image if we have had our self-respect destroyed? Guilt has been allowed to torture people much too much because of the curse of the legal model, in my view.

In the great controversy larger view, the emphasis is on the truth about God. How does God regard his child who is in trouble? Look at the prodigal son. The father says, "Look, don't even finish your speech of repentance. Come home and get a shower and put on the best clothes I've got and look, I'll give you back your privilege of going to the bank and drawing out the rest of the estate." He gave him that ring of authority. He sought to give him back his self-respect. And

the son said, "But I am guilty; look what I have done." And he said, "Look, I'm willing to forget it if you will."

Who is the one who wanted the son to have it rubbed in from time to time? The pious older brother, you know. But as far as our God is concerned, he's our physician, he doesn't want to talk about guilt. He doesn't even want to dwell long on forgiveness. He says, "Son, you're my patient; you've come home; you trust me. Let's not waste any time on the past. Let's work from here on. I want to make you well. And if you're depressed about what you've done, it's going to retard your healing. So please forget it the way I am."

Lou: Are you saying then that the real answer to the gnawing anguish of guilt is a closer acquaintance with God and trust in him?

Graham: The remedy for everything is the truth about God. The remedy for guilt is to know what God is like. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #20 with Lou Venden, "At Peace with Our Heavenly Father" 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/20MMCAG>

Recommended Listening:

Conversations About God #13 "How God Treats His Erring Children" is available at: <http://pkp.cc/13MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

When love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, not because of favors received from them, but because love is the principle of action. Love modifies the character, governs the impulses, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love is as broad as the universe, and is in harmony with that of the angel workers. Cherished in the heart, it sweetens the entire life and sheds its blessing upon all around. It is this, and this only, that can make us the salt of the earth. {MB 38.1}

Christ has made provision that His church shall be a transformed body illumined with the light of heaven, possessing the glory of Immanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. {HP 283.6}

"God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved." John 3:17. Looking upon men in their suffering and degradation, Christ perceived ground for hope where appeared only despair and ruin. Wherever there existed a

sense of need, there He saw opportunity for uplifting. Souls tempted, defeated, feeling themselves lost, ready to perish, He met, not with denunciation, but with blessing. {Ed 79.2}

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {8T 286.4}

Satan has ascribed to God all the evils to which flesh is heir. He has represented Him as a God who delights in the sufferings of His creatures, who is revengeful and implacable. It was Satan who originated the doctrine of eternal torment as a punishment for sin, because in this way he could lead men into infidelity and rebellion, distract souls, and dethrone human reason. {CT 27.2}

Heaven, looking down and seeing the delusions into which men were led, knew that a divine Instructor must come to the earth. Through the misrepresentations of the enemy, many were so deceived that they worshiped a false god, clothed with the attributes of the satanic character. Those in ignorance and moral darkness must have light, spiritual light; for the world knew not God, and He must be revealed to their understanding. Truth looked down from heaven and saw not the reflection of her image; for dense clouds of spiritual darkness and gloom enveloped the world. The Lord Jesus alone was able to roll back the clouds; for He is the light of the world. By His presence He could dissipate the gloomy shadow that Satan had cast between man and God.—First published Nov. 17, 1891. {CT 28.1}

In Christ's parable teaching the same principle is seen as in His own mission to the world. That we might become acquainted with His divine character and life, Christ took our nature and dwelt among us. Divinity was revealed in humanity; the invisible glory in the visible human form. Men could learn of the unknown through the known; heavenly things were revealed through the earthly; God was made manifest in the likeness of men. So it was in Christ's teaching: the unknown was illustrated by the known; divine truths by earthly things with which the people were most familiar. {COL 17.1}

The infinite love of God has been manifested in the gift of His only-begotten Son to redeem a lost race. Christ came to the earth to reveal to men the character of His Father, and His life was filled with deeds of divine tenderness and compassion. {PP 469.2}

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 manifest, so far as could be endured by human sight, the nature and the attributes of the invisible God. {MH 419.4}

Up to the time of Christ's first advent, men worshiped cruel, despotic gods. Even the Jewish mind was reached through fear and not love. Christ's mission on the earth was to reveal to men that God was not a despot but a heavenly Father, full of love and mercy for His children.—MS 132, 1902. {1MCP 183.1}

Through the plan of salvation, a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and result of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. {ST, December 22, 1914 par. 4}

While we rejoice that there are worlds which have never fallen, these worlds render praise, and honor, and glory to Jesus Christ for the plan of redemption to save the fallen sons of Adam, as well as to confirm themselves in their position and character of purity. The arm that raised the human family from the ruin which Satan had brought upon the race through his temptations, is the arm which has preserved the inhabitants of other worlds from sin. Every world throughout immensity engages the care and support of the Father and the Son; and this care is constantly exercised for fallen humanity. Christ is mediating in behalf of man, and the order of unseen worlds also is preserved by his mediatorial work. Are not these themes of sufficient magnitude and importance to engage our thoughts, and call forth our gratitude and adoration to God? {RH, January 11, 1881 par. 4}

The Sun of Righteousness did not burst upon the world in splendor, to dazzle the senses with His glory. It is written of Christ, "His going forth is prepared as the morning." Hosea 6:3. Quietly and gently the daylight breaks upon the earth, dispelling the shadow of darkness, and waking the world to life. So did the Sun of Righteousness arise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {DA 261.3}

Jesus assumed humanity that He might meet humanity. He brings men under the transforming power of truth by meeting them where they are. He gains access to the heart by securing sympathy and confidence, making all feel that His identification with their nature and interest is complete. The truth came from His lips beautiful in its simplicity, yet clothed with dignity and power. What a teacher was our Lord Jesus Christ! How tenderly did He treat every honest inquirer after truth, that He might gain admission to his sympathies and find a home in his heart. {TM 190.1}

A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins. The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a transforming power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word—a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God. {MB 128.3}

The love of God alone can open and expand the heart, and give to love and sympathy a breadth and height that is without measure. Those who love Jesus will love all the children of God. The sense of personal infirmities and imperfections will lead the human agent to look away from

self to Christ; and the Saviour's love will break down every cold, Pharisaical barrier, it will banish all harshness and selfishness, and there will be a blending of soul with soul, even with those who are opposite in temperament. {OHC 183.3}

God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe. Like rays of light from the sun, like the streams of water bursting from a living spring, blessings flow out from Him to all His creatures. And wherever the life of God is in the hearts of men, it will flow out to others in love and blessing. {SC 77.1}

The life of Christ was a life charged with a divine message of the love of God, and He longed intensely to impart this love to others in rich measure. Compassion beamed from His countenance, and His conduct was characterized by grace and humility, love and truth. {OHC 366.4}

He spoke a word of sympathy here and a word there as He saw men weary and compelled to bear heavy burdens. He shared their burdens and repeated to them the lessons He had learned from nature, of the love, the kindness, the goodness of God. He sought to inspire with hope the most rough and unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them manifest as children of God. . . . Jesus sat an honored guest at the table of the publicans, by His sympathy and social kindness showing that He recognized the dignity of humanity; and men longed to become worthy of His confidence. Upon their thirsty souls His words fell with blessed, life-giving power. New impulses were awakened, and the possibility of a new life opened to these outcasts of society. {HP 181.3}

His [Christ's] work gave character to His mission, showing that it was of divine appointment. In His every word and act were revealed tender compassion, love, and mercy. The poorest and humblest were not afraid to approach Him. He always noticed the little children, and they were attracted to Him. {UL 145.3}

Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another—this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. Only in the heart where Jesus reigns is it found. "We love Him, because He first loved us." In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around. {AA 551.2}

True courtesy blended with truth and justice makes the life not only useful but beautiful and fragrant. Kind words, pleasant looks, a cheerful countenance, throw a charm about the Christian that makes his influence almost irresistible. In forgetfulness of self, in the light and peace and happiness that he is constantly bestowing on others, he finds true joy. {HP 180.5}

It was taught by the Jews that before God's love is extended to the sinner, he must first repent. In their view, repentance is a work by which men earn the favor of Heaven. And it was this thought that led the Pharisees to exclaim in astonishment and anger. "This man receiveth sinners." According to their ideas He should permit none to approach Him but those who had repented. But in the parable of the lost sheep, Christ teaches that salvation does not come through our seeking after God but through God's seeking after us. "There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way." Romans 3:11, 12. We do not repent in order that God may love us, but He reveals to us His love in order that we may repent. {COL 189.1}

The fall of man, with all its consequences, was not hidden from the Omnipotent. Redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam, but an eternal purpose, suffered to be wrought out for the blessing not only of this atom of a world, but for the good of all the worlds that God had created. . . . {TMK 18.2}

He [Christ] came as an expression of the perfect love of God, not to crush, not to judge and condemn, but to heal every weak, defective character, to save men and woman from Satan's power. {MM 20.1}

Christ never ceases to seek us when we wander from the fold. With unwearied steps He searches until He finds us, and brings us back to His fold. {RC 250.6}

The Lord has His eye upon every soul that is seeking Him. He is interested in every soul needing help, and He will not leave one in the darkness of error, but step by step will lead him into the full light of the truth that is shining from every page of the Scriptures. . . . The Lord sees our every act. He knows just what progress we have made in the Christian pathway. How kind, how tender, our Great Shepherd is! With intense interest He looks down from His exalted throne upon the sheep of His pasture, and gives them grace and strength. . . . {HP 322.3}

Through influences seen and unseen, our Saviour is constantly at work to attract the minds of men from the unsatisfying pleasures of sin to the infinite blessings that may be theirs in Him. To all these souls, who are vainly seeking to drink from the broken cisterns of this world, the divine message is addressed, "Let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." Revelation 22:17. {SC 28.1}

Christ came to reveal God to the world as a God of love, full of mercy, tenderness, and compassion. The thick darkness with which Satan had endeavored to enshroud the throne of Deity was swept away by the world's Redeemer, and the Father was again manifest to men as the light of life. {5T 738.4}

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world as the unwearied servant of man's necessity. He "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses," that He might minister to every need of humanity. Matthew 8:17. The burden of disease and wretchedness and sin He came to remove. It was His

mission to bring to men complete restoration; He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character. {MH 17.1}

God is love; God is, in Himself, in His essence, love. He makes the very best of what appears an injury, and gives Satan no occasion for triumph by making the worst appear and exposing our weakness to our enemies. {TM 265.1}

The enemy can never take out of the hand of Christ the one who is simply trusting in His promises. If the soul is trusting and working obediently, the mind is susceptible to divine impressions, and the light of God shines in, enlightening the understanding. What privileges we have in Christ Jesus! {SD 351.4}

Those who accept Christ as their personal Saviour are not left as orphans, to bear the trials of life alone. He receives them as members of the heavenly family; He bids them call His Father their Father. They are His "little ones," dear to the heart of God, bound to Him by the most tender and abiding ties. He has toward them an exceeding tenderness, as far surpassing what our father or mother has felt toward us in our helplessness as the divine is above the human. {DA 327.2}