

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2021: *Rest in Christ*

Lesson 3 “The Roots of Restlessness”

Read for this week’s study

Matthew 10:34–39; Luke 12:13–21; Philippians 2:5–8; Luke 22:14–30; Matthew 23:1–13.

Memory Text

“For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice”
(James 3:16, ESV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Jesus Brings Division
- III. Selfishness
- IV. Ambition
- V. Hypocrisy
- VI. Uprooting Restlessness
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read James 3:16 (the memory text). Jealousy and selfish ambition are seen as the roots of “disorder” and “every vile practice” (ESV). What is jealousy and what role can it play in spiritual life? How is jealousy different from selfish ambition? What is “disorder”? What does the apostle mean by “every vile practice”? James seems to see the first two as the underlying cause of the latter two. How would you understand this? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Matthew 10:34-39. What does Jesus mean when He says that He did not come to bring peace but to bring a sword? How do you square this with His title “Prince of Peace”? How is it that the preaching of love can lead to division and strife? What did Jesus mean when He told His followers to “take up your cross”? How do you do that in practice? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. The lesson suggests three main roots of restlessness; selfishness, ambition, and hypocrisy, which are taken up in 3, 4, and 5 here. Read Luke 12:13-21. Is planning for the future selfish? Does it express disregard for God's kingdom? What exactly is Jesus warning about here? How does Philippians 2:1-8 offer a key to avoiding selfishness and greed? We all need a certain amount of money in order to survive. But why does it seem that no matter how much we have we always want more? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read Luke 22:14-30. Why on this solemn occasion did the disciples get sidetracked to focus on human greatness? Why is this digression mentioned in the Gospel of Luke's version of the story? How does a focus on the cross impact our natural human desire for self-exaltation? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. What does the word "hypocrisy" mean? Read Matthew 23:1-13. What are the four main characteristics of a hypocrite mentioned by Jesus? Is hypocrisy limited to religious leaders? How can one learn to see hypocrisy in oneself and eliminate it from one's life? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read John 14:1-6. In the midst of so much restlessness today, what are we encouraged to do in order that our hearts will not feel troubled? What is the key to overcoming division, selfishness, ambition, and hypocrisy? To put it in other terms, what is the key to truly finding rest? Since Jesus is speaking in that context, how does the promise of the Second Coming impact restlessness? How does Jeremiah 3:22 speak to the same issue? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. Think of some practical ways of overcoming selfishness. Would it help for us to keep each other accountable in this area? (Friday's Lesson)
8. Ambition is not wrong in and of itself. How can anyone anticipate and imagine great things from God without falling into the trap of being consumed by ambition? Is there such a thing as godly ambition? How would that be different from the negative kind? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

How successful would you say God has been in restoring peace to his universe? How about in heaven? Does peace prevail? Read the whole book of Revelation. They never cease to celebrate God's victory in the great controversy and how trustworthy and righteous he is. How about peace in the hereafter? Read Isaiah and the last two chapters in Revelation and many of the other prophetic books, the marvelous descriptions of the peace to come. How successful has God been in restoring peace on this earth? Because so many have perversely chosen to twist or even reject the truth, instead of producing peace, it has produced argument, debate—even to the point of violence and persecution. Jesus warned of this. Look at his words in Matthew 10:34-36. He foresaw what his demonstration of the truth would cause: "I did not come to

bring peace, but a sword. I came to set sons against their fathers, daughters against their mothers, daughters-in-law against their mothers-in-law; a man's worst enemies will be the members of his own family." (GNB)

Look at what the members of Jesus' own family did to him. Look at John 1:11: "He came to His home and His own family did not welcome Him." (Goodspeed) In fact, they told him he had a devil to be so describing his Father. And they killed him to silence him. We need to remember as we have mentioned several times in these conversations, that the ones who rejected Christ and preferred Satan's picture of God, were the most pious group of seventh-day Sabbath-keeping, tithe-paying, health-reforming, Bible-studying, "adventists" the world has ever known. Peter warns that those who accept the true picture of God may expect similar treatment and even suffer somewhat as Christ did. Look at 1 Peter 4:12-14:

Do not be surprised at the painful test you are suffering. . . . Rather be glad that you are sharing Christ's suffering. . . . Happy are you if you are insulted because you are Christ's followers; this means that the glorious Spirit, the Spirit of God, is resting on you. (GNB)

Where will such trouble come from for those who hold the true picture of God? Could such trouble come again from the same sort of pious, Sabbath-keeping, tithe-paying, health-reforming, Bible-quoting, "adventists" as before? Could one entertain such a thought? It happened once before. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #20, "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>

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

How did the Son of God treat them? Did he chide them for their childish behavior? Or scold them for their unwillingness to wash each other's feet? Instead, the whole universe watched as their Creator, the One they worshiped, arose, got a basin and a towel, and the Supreme Creator got down on his knees and washed a dozen pairs of dirty feet. He even washed the feet of his betrayer, Judas. Think what it says about God that he would treat them in this way. Jesus could have looked up at them and said, "You don't believe my Father would be willing to do this, do

you?” {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>*

Lou: Can you say just a word on this question that has come up about prayers that God says he won't hear? For example, in Isaiah 1:15: “You spread forth your hands. I will hide my eyes from you. Even though you make many prayers, I will not listen.” What kind of prayers does God refuse to hear?

Graham: Ah, that's most significant. In 1 John it says a similar thing. The prayer of hypocrisy, the prayer that really isn't asking for any help, the prayer that is cheating with God. What else can God do? Now, he loves the cheater; he loves the hypocrite. He simply cannot help them, and so he says, “I will have to give you up.” So prayer must be honest. We must walk humbly with our God and tell the truth. Same way with a physician—a physician cannot help a cheating patient who won't tell the truth, and God is the same. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15 with Lou Venden, “Talking to God as a Friend” 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/15MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

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}

The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife. {HP 35.3}

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}

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}

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}

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of “the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal.” Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God’s throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. {DA 22.2}

When the mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite, the effect on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate. In such communion is found the highest education. It is God's own method of development. "Acquaint now thyself with Him" (Job 22:21), is His message to mankind. {AA 126.1}

"If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new." 2 Corinthians 5:17. {SC 57.1}

While the work of the Spirit is silent and imperceptible, its effects are manifest. If the heart has been renewed by the Spirit of God, the life will bear witness to the fact. While we cannot do anything to change our hearts or to bring ourselves into harmony with God; while we must not trust at all to ourselves or our good works, our lives will reveal whether the grace of God is dwelling within us. A change will be seen in the character, the habits, the pursuits. The contrast will be clear and decided between what they have been and what they are. The character is revealed, not by occasional good deeds and occasional misdeeds, but by the tendency of the habitual words and acts. {SC 57.2}

While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. 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 light 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. {DA 173.1}

Received into the heart, the leaven of truth will regulate the desires, purify the thoughts, and sweeten the disposition. It quickens the faculties of the mind and the energies of the soul. It enlarges the capacity for feeling, for loving. {COL 101.1}

Jesus has given us an example in His life of purity and perfect holiness. The most exalted being in heaven, He was the most ready to serve. The most honored, He humbled Himself to minister to those who a short time before had been disputing as to who should be the greatest in His kingdom. {TDG 192.6}

The Son of God came to the world as a restorer. He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Every word He uttered was spirit and life. He spoke with authority, conscious of His power to bless humanity, and deliver the captives bound by Satan; conscious also that by His presence He could bring to the world fullness of joy. He longed to help every oppressed and suffering member of the human family, and show that it was His prerogative to bless, not to condemn. {LHU 37.2}

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. The greater the sinner's guilt, the more he needs the Saviour. His heart of divine love and sympathy is drawn out most of all for the one who is the most hopelessly entangled in the snares of the enemy. {MH 89.3}

Wherever hearts are open to receive the truth, Christ is ready to instruct them. He reveals to them the Father, and the service acceptable to Him who reads the heart. For such He uses no parables. To them, as to the woman at the well, He says, "I that speak unto thee am He." {MH 28.2}

Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Whosoever will, may take hold of God's strength, and make peace with Him, and He will make peace. {MH 90.1}