

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
First Quarter 2023: *Managing for the Master—Till He Comes*
Lesson 7 “Unto the Least of These”

Read for this week’s study

Luke 4:16–19; Isaiah 62:1, 2; Deuteronomy 15:11; Matthew 19:16–22; Luke 19:1–10; Job 29:12–16.

Memory Text

“Then the King will say to those on His right hand, “Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world” ’ ” (Matthew 25:34, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Life and Ministry of Jesus
- III. God’s Provision for the Poor
- IV. The Rich Young Ruler
- V. Zacchaeus
- VI. Consider the Man Job
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. In this week’s lesson we explore the role of stewardship in our ministry to “the least of these”. In biblical terms, the least of these is often described as strangers, the fatherless and the widows. How would you define each of these groups and what do all three of these groups have in common? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Luke 4:16-19 and compare it with Isaiah 61:1-2. Did Jesus choose to read this passage at that moment or was the selection made for Him? Who is speaking in the Isaiah passage originally and Who does Jesus apply it to? Why do you think Jesus ended the reading where He did? What was Luke’s purpose in including this story? Why is this story not included in Matthew and Mark? Why would a physician (Dr. Luke), of all people, focus so much on ministry to the poor and the outcast? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. In the Old Testament, God made special provisions for the poor, the fatherless, and the foreigner in the land of Israel. Read Exodus 23:10-11, Leviticus 23:22, Psalm

- 82:3-4, Deuteronomy 15:11. What implications does this have for the contemporary approach sometimes called social Darwinism? In light of that, why would so many evolutionists today be involved in issues of social justice? Is it possible to advocate for social justice on selfish grounds? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read the story of the Rich Young Ruler in all three versions (Matthew 19:16-22; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18-23). Notice what all three stories have in common. Then notice what each version of the story adds and leaves out. What implications do these additions and omissions have for the theologies of Matthew, Mark and Luke? How do we apply Jesus' statement, "sell all you have and give it to the poor", to our lives today? Read Mark 8:35-37. What does it mean to lose your life for the sake of the gospel? (Tuesday's Lesson)
 5. Read Luke 19:1-10. Note that this story is in fairly close context with the story of the Rich Young Ruler (18:18-23). What are the similarities and differences between the Zacchaeus story and that of the rich young ruler? In what way does the latter story clarify Jesus' purpose in asking the young ruler for everything he had? (Wednesday's Lesson)
 6. Read Job 1:8. How was Job described by God Himself? What does Job 29:12-16 tell us about Job's character? What aspects of his behavior are applicable today? How does Isaiah 56:6-8 expand on the themes of this lesson? In practical terms, what can we do to be more like Job in today's world? (Thursday's Lesson)
 7. When Deuteronomy 15:11 says that the poor will never cease from the land, why should helping the poor be such an important emphasis among followers of God? Might it not create more guilt than good? (Friday's Lesson)
 8. Read 1 Timothy 6:17-19. What does this passage imply is the biggest danger that comes to people who have accumulated significant wealth? How does one avoid this danger? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And this idea, if you're good you're blessed; if you're bad you're punished, runs all the way through the Bible, and it's the basis for the story of the rich man and the eye of the camel. Jesus said, "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom." And the disciples said, "Well if that's true, who can be saved?" And you know, the background for that is this: You see, if you're rich, it's because you're blessed. And you're blessed because you're good. Therefore, if you're rich, you're good. So if a rich man cannot be saved, a good man cannot be saved. That's the way they'd worked it out. And so Jesus had to tell them that story. This belief prevailed right on down to the first members of the General Conference committee. That when you see a man who is poor, he is a sinner. The hand of God is on him. Now isn't that a pretty widespread view to this day?

When somebody is sick, folk in the hospital right now say, "Well the Lord has laid his hand on me." Even on television programs, a disaster occurs. You know why? I must have done something bad. Even in "The Sound of Music", when something good happens to the heroine, "I must have done something good," she sings. Right? That's been our simple view all along. When the disciples saw the blind man, they said, "Who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" That's had a very dominant influence on our theology. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Esther & Job, recorded January 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/25MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/26MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

How marvelous that he was willing to go out and eat with these people who were regarded as the dregs of society, even stopping under the tree and saying, "Zacchaeus, I want to have dinner with you today."

Can you imagine, though, the Lord turning up at your front door and saying, "Could I have dinner with you today?" What would you say? Zacchaeus was overcome, wasn't he? He came down out of that tree, and he promised, not just restitution. He said, "I will give four times as much." He was really overwhelmed. He never got over it. And that was a very wonderful occasion. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Mark, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/53MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/54MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

The scene at the very beginning is crucial for the reading of Job. If a person started out in the middle, I don't know how he could carry on, although there are some very exciting statements in there. But the meaning is very much dependent on chapters one and two. This good man; God said he was perfect. He also said, "He will never let me down." We have the picture of the heavenly council meeting. If Moses wrote this, the Great Controversy is portrayed page one in the Bible. Well, of course it's in Genesis, isn't it? Isn't the conflict right there when Satan lied about God and accused God of lying to Adam and Eve. Either way, Genesis or Job. The Bible begins with the great controversy over the trustworthiness of God. And God says, "Who is on Job's side, by the way?" God speaks with pride of his friend Job and says to Satan, "Have you considered my friend Job?" And Satan says, "Well, you know why he serves you. He's got that key text that if he pays his tithes faithfully, you'll open the windows of Heaven and reward him. Don't reward him one time, and he'll quit paying his tithes. In fact, he'll curse you, and he'll

trust you no longer.” God says, “You can take away all that he has, and he won’t give up his friendship with me.” And you remember what happened.

And so at the next meeting, God said, “Have you considered my servant Job, a wonderful man? You took away everything that he has, but he didn’t sin with his lips, and he still trusts me.” And Satan says, “Well, that’s because you’ve protected him so much. You let me get at him personally. I’ll break him down.” And God says, “You can do everything you like to him short of taking his life, and he will not let me down.”

And Satan went out to do his work. And Job lost everything. Was it because he lacked faith, that he got into so much trouble? I thought if you paid your tithe faithfully and worshiped regularly, and did all that you should, the locusts would go through your neighbor’s field, but not yours. This is no bedtime story, the book of Job. All the good things that should have happened didn’t. It was all reversed, and it made no sense, because he used to be prosperous, he used to be healthy, and had a wonderful family. He even offered prayers for his children lest they sin and be unaware of it. He was that concerned about his family. There was no stone he left unturned, in order to do every good thing he knew he should. And yet he lost everything. He even lost his health. And he sat down on, do you have ‘a rubbish heap’ or ‘a dung heap’? Anyway, a very unpleasant place, and he tore his clothes and he threw ashes on himself, and he was covered with boils. And he began to express his utter depression over what had occurred. “Of course,” he said, “the Lord gives, and the Lord takes away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” He didn’t condemn God for doing this. Did he blame God for doing this? Or was he puzzled as to why God was doing this? Or puzzled as to why God would allow this? Because when he said, “The Lord gives, the Lord takes away,” was he not saying what we’ve read before so many times, “This couldn’t happen if God’s hand were not in it somehow.”

See, he knew God could control things, that God was omnipotent, the Sovereign of the universe. This couldn’t happen if God were not somehow involved, and God’s involvement puzzled him. And he sat there in this utter depression. Even his wife couldn’t bear to see him suffer so, and said, “Why don’t you curse God and die?”

“But he said to her, ‘You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?’ In all this Job did not sin with his lips.”

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

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Further Study with Ellen White

Jesus stood before the people as a living expositor of the prophecies concerning Himself. Explaining the words He had read, He spoke of the Messiah as a reliever of the oppressed, a liberator of captives, a healer of the afflicted, restoring sight to the blind, and revealing to the world the light of truth. His impressive manner and the wonderful import of His words thrilled the hearers with a power they had never felt before. The tide of divine influence broke every barrier down; like Moses, they beheld the Invisible. {DA 237.2}

Jesus was the fountain of healing mercy for the world; and through all those secluded years at Nazareth, His life flowed out in currents of sympathy and tenderness. The aged, the sorrowing, and the sin-burdened, the children at play in their innocent joy, the little creatures of the groves, the patient beasts of burden,—all were happier for His presence. He whose word of power upheld the worlds would stoop to relieve a wounded bird. There was nothing beneath His notice, nothing to which He disdained to minister. {DA 74.1}

Jesus began His work by breaking Satan's power over the suffering. He restored the sick to health, gave sight to the blind, and healed the lame, causing them to leap for joy and to glorify God. He restored to health those who had been infirm and bound by Satan's cruel power many years. With gracious words He comforted the weak, the trembling, and the desponding. The feeble, suffering ones whom Satan held in triumph, Jesus wrenched from his grasp, bringing to them soundness of body and great joy and happiness. He raised the dead to life, and they glorified God for the mighty display of His power. He wrought mightily for all who believed on Him. {EW 159.3}

Christ stood at the head of humanity in the garb of humanity. So full of sympathy and love was His attitude that the poorest was not afraid to come to Him. He was kind to all, easily approached by the most lowly. He went from house to house, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the mourners, soothing the afflicted, speaking peace to the distressed.— Letter 117, 1903. {WM 170.2}

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}

His tender compassion fell with a touch of healing upon weary and troubled hearts. Even amid the turbulence of angry enemies He was surrounded with an atmosphere of peace. The beauty of His countenance, the loveliness of His character, above all, the love expressed in look and tone, drew to Him all who were not hardened in unbelief. Had it not been for the sweet, sympathetic spirit that shone out in every look and word, He would not have attracted the large congregations that He did. The afflicted ones who came to Him felt that He linked His interest with theirs as a faithful and tender friend, and they desired to know more of the truths He

taught. Heaven was brought near. They longed to abide in His presence, that the comfort of His love might be with them continually. {DA 254.4}

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}

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}

What a wonderful reverence for human life Jesus expressed in His life mission! He stood not among the people as a king, demanding attention, reverence, service, but as one who wished to serve, to uplift humanity. He said He had not come to be ministered unto but to minister. . . . {OHC 176.3}

God is love, God is life. It is the prerogative of God to redeem, reconstruct, and restore. . . . The work of Christ is to redeem, to restore, to seek and to save that which was lost. {HP 291.2}

The Spirit of God does not create new faculties in the converted man, but works a decided change in the employment of those faculties. When mind and heart and soul are changed, man is not given a new conscience, but his will is submitted to a conscience renewed, a conscience whose dormant sensibilities are aroused by the working of the Holy Spirit. {OHC 104.2}

Through yielding to sin, man placed his will under the control of Satan. He became a helpless captive in the tempter's power. God sent His Son into our world to break the power of Satan, and to emancipate the will of man. {OHC 104.3}