

EGW Notes - Lesson 7

Mission to My Neighbor



Sabbath Afternoon, November 11

The Old Testament Scriptures were the lesson book of Israel. When the lawyer came to Christ with the question "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" . . . the Saviour said, "What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbor as thyself." Christ said, "Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live" (Luke 10:25-28).

If there were not another text in the Bible, this statement carries sufficient light and knowledge and assurance for every soul. The lawyer had answered his own question, but willing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "Who is my neighbor?" (Verse 29). Then by the parable of the Good Samaritan, Christ showed who is our neighbor, and gives us an example of the love we should manifest toward those suffering and in need. The priest

and Levite, whose duty it was to minister to the needs of the stranger, passed by on the other side.—*The Upward Look*, p. 215.

A true disciple of Christ will seek to imitate the Pattern. His love will lead to perfect obedience. He will study to do the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven. He whose heart is still defiled with sin cannot be zealous of good works; and is not careful to abstain from evil, is not vigilant and watchful over his own motives and conduct, is not jealous over his unruly tongue; he is not careful to deny self and lift the cross of Christ. These poor, deceived souls fail to keep the first four precepts of the decalogue, defining the duty of man to God, neither do they keep the last six commandments, defining the duty of man to his fellow men.

The fruits of the Spirit, ruling in the heart and controlling the life, are love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, bowels of mercies, and humbleness of mind. True believers walk after the Spirit, and the Spirit of God dwells in them.—*This Day With God*, p. 291.

There are practical lessons in the Word of God. That Word teaches living, holy principles, which prompt men to do unto others as they would have others do unto them, principles which they are to bring into the daily life here, and carry with them into the school above. The altar and the plough are the experiences for all who seek eternal life. We know altogether too little of the greatness of the love and compassion of God. . . . Heaven is our home. Our citizenship is above, and our lives must not be devoted to a world which is soon to be destroyed.

We need the Word of God revealed in living characters. What pure, excellent language is found in the Word of God! What elevating, ennobling principles!—*The Upward Look*, p. 215.

Sunday, November 12

The Question of Questions

The question which the lawyer put to Christ was one of vital consequence. The Pharisees who had prompted the lawyer to ask this question were expecting the Lord Jesus to answer it in such a way that they could find something against Him whereby they might accuse and condemn Him before the people. The self-possession of Christ, the wisdom and authority by which He spake, was something they could not interpret.

When this question was asked by the lawyer, Christ knew that the suggestion came from His bitterest enemies, who were setting a trap to catch Him in His words. The Lord Jesus responded to the question by placing the burden upon the lawyer to answer his own question before that crowd. “What is written in the law? how readest thou? And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself. And he said unto him, Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live” (Luke 10:26–28). Obedience to the commandments of God is the price of eternal life.—*The Upward Look*, p. 221.

Let all remember that there is not a motive in the heart of any man that the Lord does not clearly see. The motives of each one are weighed as carefully as if the destiny of the human agent depended upon this one result. We need a connection with divine power, that we may have an increase of clear light and an understanding of how to reason from cause to effect. We need to have the powers of the understanding cultivated, by our being partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. Let each one consider carefully the solemn truth, God in heaven is true, and there is not a design, however intricate, nor a motive, however carefully hidden, that He does not clearly understand.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 3, p. 1160.

Do not allow anything to draw your attention from the question, “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 10:25). This is a life and death question, which we must each settle for eternity. Let the mind be weighted with the importance of the solemn truth which we possess. . . .

God desires men and women to think soberly and candidly. They are to ascend to a higher and still higher grade, commanding a wider and still wider horizon. Looking unto Jesus, they are to be changed into His image. They are to spend their time in searching for the deep, everlasting truths of heaven. . . . And as they learn of Him, their motives and sympathies become firm and unchanging; for the impressions made by the All-wise are substantial and enduring. The living water, which Christ gives, is not like a surface spring, which babbles

for a short time, and then dries up. The living water springs up unto everlasting life—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 171, 172.

Monday, November 13

Jesus' Method and Response

Everywhere men are unsatisfied. They long for something to supply the need of the soul. Only One can meet that want. The need of the world, "The Desire of all nations," is Christ. The divine grace which He alone can impart, is as living water, purifying, refreshing, and invigorating the soul.

Jesus did not convey the idea that merely one draft of the water of life would suffice the receiver. He who tastes of the love of Christ will continually long for more; but he seeks for nothing else. The riches, honors, and pleasures of the world do not attract him. The constant cry of his heart is, More of Thee. And He who reveals to the soul its necessity is waiting to satisfy its hunger and thirst. Every human resource and dependence will fail. The cisterns will be emptied, the pools become dry; but our Redeemer is an inexhaustible fountain. We may drink, and drink again, and ever find a fresh supply. He in whom Christ dwells has within himself the fountain of blessing,—“a well of water springing up into everlasting life.” From this source he may draw strength and grace sufficient for all his needs.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 187.

[Christ] will make plain His word to all who seek Him in sincerity of heart. Those who study the word of God

with hearts open to the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit, will not remain in darkness as to the meaning of the word. “If any man willeth to do His will,” Christ said, “he shall know of the teaching whether it be of God, or whether I speak from Myself.” John 7:17, R.V. All who come to Christ for a clearer knowledge of the truth will receive it. He will unfold to them the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, and these mysteries will be understood by the heart that longs to know the truth. A heavenly light will shine into the soul temple, and will be revealed to others as the bright shining of a lamp on a dark path.—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 35.

God’s messengers are commissioned to take up the very work that Christ did while on this earth. They are to give themselves to every line of ministry that He carried on. With earnestness and sincerity they are to tell men of the unsearchable riches and the immortal treasures of heaven. They are to be filled with the Holy Spirit. They are to repeat Heaven’s offers of peace and pardon. They are to point to the gates of the city of God, saying, “Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city” (Revelation 22:14).—*This Day With God*, p. 30.

Tuesday, November 14

To Inherit Eternal Life

The lawyer was not satisfied with the position and works of the Pharisees. He had been studying the scriptures with a desire to learn their real meaning. He had a vital interest in the matter, and he asked in sincerity, "What shall I do?" In his answer as to the requirements of the law, he passed by all the mass of ceremonial and ritualistic precepts. For these he claimed no value, but presented the two great principles on which hang all the law and the prophets. The Saviour's commendation of this answer placed Him on vantage ground with the rabbis. They could not condemn Him for sanctioning that which had been advanced by an expositor of the law. . . .

Christ knew that no one could obey the law in his own strength. He desired to lead the lawyer to clearer and more critical research that he might find the truth. Only by accepting the virtue and grace of Christ can we keep the law. Belief in the propitiation for sin enables fallen man to love God with his whole heart and his neighbor as himself.

The lawyer knew that he had kept neither the first four nor the last six commandments. He was convicted under Christ's searching words, but instead of confessing his sin he tried to excuse it. Rather than acknowledge the truth, he endeavored to show how difficult of fulfillment the commandment is. Thus he hoped both to parry conviction and to vindicate himself in the eyes of the people.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp.

377, 378.

In all His lessons, Christ sought to impress upon the minds and hearts of His hearers the principles which underlie His great standard of righteousness. He taught them that if they would keep God's commandments, love for God and for their fellow men must be manifested in their daily life. He sought to instill into their hearts the love He felt for humanity. Thus He sowed the seeds of truth, the fruits of which will produce a rich harvest of holiness and beauty of character. The holy influence will not only be far-reaching while time shall last, but its results will be felt throughout eternity. It will sanctify the actions, and have a purifying influence wherever it exists.—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 61.

Any neglect of duty to the needy and to the afflicted is a neglect of duty to Christ in the person of His saints. When the cases of all come in review before God, the question What did they profess? is never asked, but, What have they done? Have they been doers of the Word? Have they lived for themselves? or have they been exercised in works of benevolence, in deeds of kindness, in love preferring others before themselves, and denying themselves that they might bless others? If the record shows that this has been their life, that their characters have been marked with tenderness, self-denial, and benevolence, they will receive the blessed assurance and benediction from Christ, "Well done."—*That I May Know Him*, p. 334.

Wednesday, November 15

Loving Others as We Love Ourselves

To leave a suffering neighbor unrelieved is a breach of the law of God. He who loves God will not only love his fellow men, but will regard with tender compassion the creatures which God has made. When the Spirit of God is in man it leads him to relieve rather than to create suffering. We are to care for every case of suffering, and to look upon ourselves as God's agents to relieve the needy to the very uttermost of our ability. We are to be laborers together with God. There are some who manifest great affection for their relatives, for their friends and favorites, who yet fail to be kind and considerate to those who need tender sympathy, who need kindness and love. With earnest heart, let us inquire, Who is my neighbor? Our neighbors are not merely our neighbors and special friends, are not simply those who belong to our church or who think as we do. Our neighbors are the whole human family. We are to do good to all men, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. We are to give to the world an exhibition of what it means to carry out the law of God. We are to love God supremely and our neighbors as ourselves.—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 52.

False teachers had brought to the Galatians doctrines that were opposed to the gospel of Christ. Paul sought to expose and correct these errors. . . . He therefore sought to impress upon his brethren the importance of trying to help one another in love. He declared that all the requirements of the law setting forth our duty to our

fellow men are fulfilled in love to one another. . . . They must by constant prayer seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which would lead them to love and unity.—
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, p. 243.

When the law of God is written in the heart it will be exhibited in a pure and holy life. The commandments of God are no dead letter. They are spirit and life, bringing the imaginations and even the thoughts into subjection to the will of Christ. The heart in which they are written will be kept with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life. All who love Jesus and keep the commandments will seek to avoid the very appearance of evil; not because they are constrained thus to do, but because they are copying a pure model, and feel averse to everything contrary to the law written in their hearts. They will not feel self-sufficient, but their trust will be in God, who alone is able to keep them from sin and impurity. The atmosphere surrounding them is pure; they will not corrupt their own souls or the souls of others. It is their pleasure to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly before God.—*This Day With God*, p. 146.

Thursday, November 16

The Good Samaritan Story Today

There are many who ask, as did the lawyer, “Who is my neighbor?” . . . Everyone who is in suffering need is our neighbor. Every straying son and daughter of Adam, who has been ensnared by the enemy of souls, and bound in the slavery of wrong habits that blight the God-given manhood or womanhood, is my neighbor. . . .

We are to think and care for others who need our love, our tenderness, and care. We should ever remember that we are representatives of Christ, and that we are to share the blessings that He gives, not with those who can recompense us again, but with those who will appreciate the gifts that will supply their temporal and spiritual necessities. . . .

Good deeds are the fruit that Christ requires us to bear: kind words, deeds of benevolence, of tender regard for the poor, the needy, the afflicted. When hearts sympathize with hearts burdened with discouragement and grief, when the hand dispenses to the needy, when the naked are clothed, the stranger made welcome to a seat in your parlor and a place in your heart, angels are coming very near, and an answering strain is responded to in heaven.—*Reflecting Christ*, p. 252.

Without a living faith in Christ as a personal Saviour it is impossible to make our influence felt in a skeptical world. We cannot give to others that which we do not ourselves possess. It is in proportion to our own devotion and consecration to Christ that we exert an

influence for the blessing and uplifting of mankind. If there is no actual service, no genuine love, no reality of experience, there is no power to help, no connection with heaven, no savor of Christ in the life. . . . “If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love, I am become sounding brass, or a clanging cymbal. And if I have the gift of prophecy, and know all mysteries and all knowledge; and if I have all faith, so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. And if I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and if I give my body to be burned, but have not love, it profiteth me nothing.” 1 Corinthians 13:1-3 , A.R.V.

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.—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 37, 38.

Friday, November 17

For Further Reading

Faith and Works, “What God Requires,” pp. 52, 53;

The Acts of the Apostles, “Called to Reach a Higher Standard,” pp. 318–320.