

EGW Notes - Lesson 8

Mission to the Needy



Sabbath Afternoon, November 18

The Saviour taught this principle [the golden rule] to make mankind happy, not unhappy; for in no other way can happiness come. God desires men and women to . . . improve their higher powers by doing the work He has entrusted to mankind—the work of searching out and relieving the necessities of their fellow men. Man should not work for his own selfish interest, but for the interest of everyone about him, blessing others by his influence and kindly deeds. This purpose of God is exemplified in Christ's life.

Seize every opportunity to contribute to the happiness of those around you, sharing with them your affection. Words of kindness, looks of sympathy, expression of appreciation, would to many a struggling, lonely one be as a cup of cold water to a thirsty soul. A word of cheer, an act of kindness, would go far to lighten the burdens that are resting heavily upon weary shoulders. It is in

unselfish ministry that true happiness is found. And every word and deed of such service is recorded in the books of heaven as done to Christ. Live in the sunshine of Christ's love. Then your influence will bless the world.—*My Life Today*, p. 165.

We are to follow the example set by Christ, and make Him our pattern, until we shall have the same love for others as He has manifested for us. He seeks to impress us with this profound lesson of love. If your hearts have been given to selfishness, let Christ imbue you with His love. He desires that we shall love Him fully, and encourages, yes, even commands, that we shall love others as He has given us an example. He has made love the badge of our discipleship. This is the measurement to which you are to reach,—“Love one another; as I have loved you.” What height, what depth and breadth of love! This love is not simply to embrace a few favorites, it is to reach to the lowliest and humblest of God's creatures. Jesus says, “Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.”—*Sons and Daughters of God*, p. 147.

Do you in your words, in your spirit, in your actions, resemble Christ? If in word and spirit you represent the character of Christ, then you are Christians; for to be a Christian is to be Christlike. The tongue will testify of the principles that characterize the life; it is the sure test of what power controls the heart. We may judge our own spirit and principles by the words that proceed from our lips. The tongue is always to be under the control of the Holy Spirit.

When poor, wounded, bruised souls come to you for words of hope, you are to speak to them the words of Christ. Do you refuse to give them pleasant, courteous, kind words? Those who speak as Christ spoke will never plant bitter words like barbed arrows in the wounded soul.—*Lift Him Up*, p. 148.

Sunday, November 19

The Faith of Friends

God estimates man not by the circumstances of his birth, not by his position or wealth, not by his advantages in educational lines, but by the price paid for his redemption. . . . However misshapen has been his character, although he may have been counted as an outcast among men, the man who permits the grace of Christ to enter his soul will be reformed in character and will be raised up from his condition of guilt, degradation, and wretchedness. God has made every provision in order that the lost one may become His child. The frailest human being may be elevated, ennobled, refined, and sanctified by the grace of God. . . .

[Those] who are workers together with God, who are filled with divine compassion, will see and estimate men in the same way that God sees and estimates them. Whatever may be the nationality or color, whatever may be the social condition, the missionary for God will look upon all men as the purchase of the blood of Christ, and will understand that there is no caste with God. No one is to be looked upon with indifference or to be regarded as unimportant, for every soul has been purchased with

an infinite price.—*The Southern Work*, p. 31.

Again and again the bearers of the paralytic tried to push their way through the crowd, but in vain. The sick man looked about him in unutterable anguish. When the longed-for help was so near, how could he relinquish hope? At his suggestion his friends bore him to the top of the house and, breaking up the roof, let him down at the feet of Jesus. The discourse was interrupted. The Saviour looked upon the mournful countenance, and saw the pleading eyes fixed upon Him. He understood the case; He had drawn to Himself that perplexed and doubting spirit. While the paralytic was yet at home, the Saviour had brought conviction to his conscience. When he repented of his sins, and believed in the power of Jesus to make him whole, the life-giving mercies of the Saviour had first blessed his longing heart. Jesus had watched the first glimmer of faith grow into a belief that He was the sinner's only helper, and had seen it grow stronger with every effort to come into His presence.

Now, in words that fell like music on the sufferer's ear, the Saviour said, "Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 268.

A great work is to be done, and those who know the truth should make mighty intercession for help. . . .

The Lord demands that in His servants shall be found a spirit that is quick to feel the value of souls, quick to discern the duties to be done, quick to respond to the obligations that the Lord lays upon them. There must be a devotion that will regard no earthly interest of

sufficient value to take the place of the work to be done in winning souls to a knowledge of the truth.—
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 123.

Monday, November 20

Christ's Method Alone

The sick man was lying on his mat and occasionally lifting his head to gaze at the pool, when a tender, compassionate face bent over him, and the words, "Wilt thou be made whole?" arrested his attention. Hope came to his heart. . . .

Jesus bids him, "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk." With a new hope the sick man looks upon Jesus. The expression of His countenance, the tones of His voice, are like no other. Love and power seem to breathe from His very presence. The cripple's faith takes hold upon Christ's word. Without question he sets his will to obey, and, as he does this, his whole body responds.

Every nerve and muscle thrills with new life, and healthful action comes to his crippled limbs. Springing to his feet, he goes on his way with firm, free step, praising God and rejoicing in his new-found strength. . . .

Never feel that Christ is far away. He is always near. His loving presence surrounds you. Seek Him as One who desires to be found of you. He desires you not only to touch His garments, but to walk with Him in constant communion.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 83–85.

There is need of coming close to the people by personal effort. If less time were given to sermonizing,

and more time were spent in personal ministry, greater results would be seen. The poor are to be relieved, the sick cared for, the sorrowing and the bereaved comforted, the ignorant instructed, the inexperienced counseled. We are to weep with those that weep, and rejoice with those that rejoice. Accompanied by the power of persuasion, the power of prayer, the power of the love of God, this work will not, cannot, be without fruit. . . .

We are to encourage the sick and suffering to look to Jesus and live. Let the workers keep Christ, the Great Physician, constantly before those to whom disease of body and soul has brought discouragement. Point them to the One who can heal both physical and spiritual disease. Tell them of the One who is touched with the feeling of their infirmities. Encourage them to place themselves in the care of Him who gave His life to make it possible for them to have life eternal. Talk of His love; tell of His power to save.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 143, 144.

Christ [teaches] that we should regard ourselves as inseparably bound to our Father in heaven. Whatever our position, we are dependent upon God, who holds all destinies in His hands. He has appointed us our work, and has endowed us with faculties and means for that work. So long as we surrender the will to God, and trust in His strength and wisdom, we shall be guided in safe paths, to fulfill our appointed part in His great plan—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 209.

Tuesday, November 21

Refugees and Immigrants

By our churches there is a work to be done of which many have little idea, a work as yet almost untouched. "I was an hungered," Christ says, "and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me; I was in prison, and ye came unto Me." Matthew 25:35, 36. Some think that if they give money to this work, it is all they are required to do; but this is an error. . . . [A]ccording to their strength and opportunities, personal service is required of all.

The work of gathering in the needy, the oppressed, the suffering, the destitute, is the very work which every church that believes the truth for this time should long since have been doing. We are to show the tender sympathy of the Samaritan in supplying physical necessities, feeding the hungry, bringing the poor that are cast out to our homes, gathering from God every day grace and strength that will enable us to reach to the very depths of human misery and help those who cannot possibly help themselves. In doing this work we have a favorable opportunity to set forth Christ the crucified One.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, pp. 275, 276.

God has given a special command that we should regard the stranger, the outcast, and the poor souls who are weak in moral power. Many who appear wholly indifferent to religious things are in heart longing for

rest and peace. Although they may have sunken to the very depths of sin, there is a possibility of saving them.

Christ's servants are to follow His example. As He went from place to place, He comforted the suffering and healed the sick. Then He placed before them the great truths in regard to His kingdom. This is the work of His followers. As you relieve the sufferings of the body, you will find ways for ministering to the wants of the soul. You can point to the uplifted Saviour, and tell of the love of the great Physician, who alone has power to restore.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 233.

Christ for our sakes became poor that we through His poverty might be made rich. He made a sacrifice that He might provide a home for pilgrims and strangers in the world seeking for a better country, even an heavenly. Shall those who are subjects of His grace, who are expecting to be heirs of immortality, refuse, or even feel reluctant, to share their homes with the homeless and needy? Shall we, who are disciples of Jesus, refuse strangers an entrance to our doors? . . .

I am daily pained with exhibitions of selfishness among our people. There is an alarming absence of love and care for those who are entitled to it. . . . Angels are waiting to see if we embrace opportunities within our reach of doing good—waiting to see if we will bless others.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 2, pp. 27, 28.

Wednesday, November 22

To Help the Hurting

God requires His people to be far more pitiful and considerate of the unfortunate than they are. God requires that the same consideration which should be given to the widow and fatherless be given to the blind and to those suffering under the affliction of other physical infirmities. Disinterested benevolence is very rare in this age of the world. It is strange that professed Christian men should disregard the plain, positive teachings of the Word of God and feel no compunction of conscience. God places upon them the responsibility of caring for the unfortunate, the blind, the lame, the widow, and the fatherless; but many make no effort to regard it.

There is a great work to be done in our world, and as we approach the close of earth's history, it does not lessen in the least degree; but when the perfect love of God is in the heart, wonderful things will be done.—*My Life Today*, p. 243.

The Lord has a great work for us to do, and He invites us to look to Him, to trust in Him, to walk with Him, to talk with Him. He invites us to make an unreserved surrender of all that we have and are to Him, that when He shall call upon us to sacrifice for Him, we may be ready and willing to obey. We shall enjoy the fullness of divine grace only as we give all to Christ. We shall know the meaning of true happiness only as we keep the fire burning on the altar of sacrifice. God will bequeath the

most in the future to those who have done the most in the present. Each day, under different circumstances, He tries us; and in each truehearted endeavor He chooses His workers, not because they are perfect, but because they are willing to work unselfishly for Him.—*Our High Calling*, p. 191.

While the world needs sympathy, while it needs the prayers and assistance of God's people, while it needs to see Christ in the lives of His followers, the people of God are equally in need of opportunities that draw out their sympathies, give efficiency to their prayers, and develop in them a character like that of the divine pattern.

It is to provide these opportunities that God has placed among us the poor, the unfortunate, the sick, and the suffering. They are Christ's legacy to His church, and they are to be cared for as He would care for them. In this way God takes away the dross and purifies the gold, giving us that culture of heart and character which we need. . . .

In placing among us the poor and the suffering, the Lord is testing us to reveal to us what is in our hearts. . . .

The world will be convinced not so much by what the pulpit teaches as by what the church lives. The preacher announces the theory of the gospel, but the practical piety of the church demonstrates its power.—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 324.

Thursday, November 23

Greater Love

How did Christ manifest His love for poor mortals? By the sacrifice of His own glory, His own riches, and even His most precious life. Christ consented to a life of humiliation and great suffering. He submitted to the cruel mockings of an infuriated, murderous multitude, and to the most agonizing death upon the cross. Said Christ: “This is My commandment, That ye love one another, as I have loved you. Greater love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends. Ye are My friends, if ye do whatsoever I command you.” We give evidence of being the friends of Christ when we manifest implicit obedience to His will. . . . Who are obeying the commandment to love one another as Christ has loved them? [We] must have a firmer, deeper, and more unselfish love than [we] have ever yet possessed, if [we] obey the commandment of Christ.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 1, p. 690.

Our love is frequently selfish, for we confine it to prescribed limits. When we come into close union and fellowship with Christ, our love and sympathy and our works of benevolence will reach down deeper and will widen and strengthen with exercise. The love and interest of Christ’s followers must be as broad as the world. Those who live merely for “me and mine” will fail of heaven. . . .

There are those all around you who have woes, who need words of sympathy, love, and tenderness, and our

humble, pitying prayers. Some are suffering under the iron hand of poverty, some with disease, and others with heartaches, despondency, and gloom. Like Job, you should be eyes to the blind and feet to the lame, and you should inquire into the cause which you know not and search it out with the object in view to relieve their necessities and help just where they most need help.—
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, pp. 529, 530.

The more closely we resemble our Saviour in character, the greater will be our love toward those for whom He died. Christians who manifest a spirit of unselfish love for one another are bearing a testimony for Christ which unbelievers can neither gainsay nor resist. It is impossible to estimate the power of such an example. Nothing will so successfully defeat the devices of Satan and his emissaries, nothing will so build up the Redeemer's kingdom, as will the love of Christ manifested by the members of the church. . . .

No matter how high his profession, he whose heart is not imbued with love for God and for his fellow men is not a disciple of Christ. Though he should possess great faith, and even have power to work miracles, yet without love his faith would be worthless. He might display great liberality, but should he from some other motive than genuine love bestow all his goods to feed the poor, the act would not commend him to the favor of God.—
Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 167, 168.

Friday, November 24

For Further Reading

My Life Today, “My Spirituality Strengthened and My Health Improves,” p. 246;

The Ministry of Healing, “Healing of the Soul,” pp. 73–79.