

Lesson 8
Sabbath Afternoon, May 16
Having Faith

We are to fit ourselves with the self-same spirit that was in Christ Jesus. Christ is working for us; will we work for Christ in His lines? Children, cultivate patience and faith and hope. May the Lord increase our joy of faith in this ever-living Intercessor. Try to let no day pass in which you fail to realize your accountability to God through the sacrifice of His only begotten Son. Jesus does not receive glory from any one who is an accuser of the brethren. Let not a day pass that we are not healing and restoring old wounds. Cultivate love, and let no words of evil sur-mising escape our lips. Close this door quickly, and keep it closed; open the door where Christ presides, and keep it open, because we know the value of Christ's sacrifice and His unchangeable love. Drink in the ever-refreshing waters of life from the wells of Lebanon, but refuse the murky waters from the valley—the dark, suspicious feelings. There is much truthfulness in the cause, but shall we spoil our fragrance of spirit because others clothe themselves with bitterness? God forbid. There is not one tith of the imaginings of evil that is worth the time we give to consider it and repeat it. Cut away from our speech all severity; talk sweetly; and hold our confidence in Jesus firmly.

We have an ever-living Advocate who is making intercession for us. Then let us become advocates in principle in behalf of those who err. "And having an high priest over the house of God [here is His intercession in our behalf]; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience; and our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering." He is a "faithful high priest in things pertaining to God."

Then as He is working for us, let us work just as earnestly and interestedly to promote union with one another. Christ prayed that we might be of that same nature and oneness as that existing between Himself and His Father. Try in everything we do to secure confidence and love one for another, and thus we will answer the prayer of Christ Jesus. . . . Not all your suppositions and your ideas of your brethren are correct. . . . Let us put away these ugly supposings and imaginings; keep close on the side of Christ, and think of the rich encouragement He has given us, that we may in our turn give to others. . . . Let envy and jealousy be quenched in the flow of love from the fountain of God's love. The cry of them that are ready to perish finds swift entrance into His ear. "He shall deliver the needy when he crieth, the poor also and him that hath no helper." —*Lift Him Up*, p. 321.

Sunday, May 17
Just Give Me a Sign!

Like a flash of light, the Saviour's words to the nobleman laid bare his heart. He saw that his motives in seeking Jesus were selfish. His vacillating faith appeared to him in its true character. In deep distress he realized that his doubt might cost the life of his son. He knew that he was in the presence of One who could read the thoughts, and to whom all things were possible. In an agony of supplication he cried, "Sir, come down ere my child die." His faith took hold upon Christ as did Jacob, when, wrestling with the Angel, he cried, "I will not let thee go, except thou bless me" (Genesis 32:26).

Like Jacob he prevailed. The Saviour cannot withdraw from the soul that clings to Him, pleading its great need. "Go thy way," He said: "thy son liveth." The nobleman left the Saviour's presence with a peace and joy he had never known before. Not only did he believe that his son would be restored, but. . . he trusted in Christ as the Redeemer.

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Like the afflicted father, we are often led to seek Jesus by the desire for some earthly good; and upon the granting of our request we rest our confidence in His love. The Saviour longs to give us a greater blessing than we ask; and He delays the answer to our request that He may show us the evil of our own hearts, and our deep need of His grace. He desires us to renounce the selfishness that leads us to seek Him. Confessing our helplessness and bitter need, we are to trust ourselves wholly to His love.

The nobleman wanted to see the fulfillment of his prayer before he should believe; but he had to accept the word of Jesus that his request was heard and the blessing granted. This lesson we also have to learn.

The day is just before us when Satan will . . . present numerous miracles to confirm the faith of all those who are seeking this kind of evidence. How terrible will be the situation of those who close their eyes to the light of truth and ask for miracles to establish them in deception! —*Conflict and Courage*, p. 295.

The enemy is preparing to deceive the whole world by his -miracle-working power. He will assume to personate the angels of light, to personate Jesus Christ.

So far as his power extends, he will perform actual miracles. Says the Scripture: "He . . . deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles which he had power to do," not merely those which he pretends to do. Something more than mere impostures is brought to view in this scripture. But there is a limit beyond which Satan cannot go, and here he calls deception to his aid and counterfeits the work which he has not power actually to perform. In the last days he will appear in such a manner as to make men believe him to be Christ come the second time into the world. He will indeed transform himself into an angel of light. —*Maranatha*, p. 207.

Monday, May 18
Jesus Sees Our Faith

If Nathanael had trusted to the rabbis for guidance, he would never have found Jesus. It was by seeing and judging for himself that he became a disciple. So in the case of many today whom prejudice withholds from good. How different would be the result if they would "come and see"!

While they trust to the guidance of human authority, none will come to a saving knowledge of the truth. Like Nathanael, we need to study God's word for ourselves, and pray for the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit. He who saw Nathanael under the fig tree will see us in the secret place of prayer. Angels from the world of light are near to those who in humility seek for divine guidance. . . .

All who are consecrated to God will be channels of light. God makes them His agents to communicate to others the riches of His grace. His promise is, "I will make them and the places round about My hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing." Ezekiel 34:26.

Philip said to Nathanael, "Come and see." He did not ask him to accept another's testimony, but to behold Christ for himself. Now that Jesus has ascended to heaven, His disciples are His representatives among men, and one of the most effective ways of winning souls to Him is in exemplifying His character in our daily life. Our influence upon others depends not so much upon what we say as upon what we are. Men may combat and defy our logic, they may resist our appeals; but a life of disinterested love is an argument they cannot gainsay. A consistent life, characterized by the meekness of Christ, is a power in the world. . . .

Nathanael's first expression of his faith, so full and earnest and sincere, fell like music on the ears of Jesus. And He "answered and said unto him, Because I said unto thee, I saw thee under the fig tree, believest thou? thou shalt see greater things than these." The Saviour looked forward with joy to His work in preaching good tidings to the meek, binding up the brokenhearted, and proclaiming liberty to the captives of Satan. At thought of the precious blessings He had brought to men, Jesus added, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Hereafter ye shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man."

Here Christ virtually says, On the bank of the Jordan the heavens were opened, and the Spirit descended like a dove upon Me. That scene was but a token that I am the Son of God. If you believe on Me as such, your faith shall be quickened. You shall see that the heavens are opened, and are never to be closed. I have opened them to you. The angels of God are ascending, bearing the prayers of the needy and distressed to the Father above, and descending, bringing blessing and hope, courage, help, and life, to the children of men.

The angels of God are ever passing from earth to heaven, and from heaven to earth. The miracles of Christ for the afflicted and suffering were wrought by the power of God through the ministration of the angels. And it is through Christ, by the ministration of His heavenly messengers, that every blessing comes from God to us. In taking upon Himself humanity, our Saviour unites His interests with those of the fallen sons and daughters of Adam, while through His divinity He grasps the throne of God. And thus Christ is the medium of communication of men with God, and of God with men. —*The Desire of Ages*, pp. 140–143.

Tuesday, May 19
Faith Is Not a Feeling

My head is weary this morning. Mist and clouds hang over my mind; but the suggestions of the enemy to distrust the Lord shall not be cherished. Now is my time to fight the good fight of faith. Now is the very occasion that needs the steady faith that works by love and purifies my soul. I seek the Lord more earnestly. . . .

The message was brought to Asa by the Lord's prophet: "The Lord is with you, while ye be with him; and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you" (2 Chronicles 15:2; cf. Jeremiah 29:11-13). My heart goes out in faith. Faith is not feeling; faith is not sight. "Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1).

I spoke in the Rechabite's hall at 3:00 P.M. from Philippians 4:4-7: "Rejoice in the Lord always: and again I say, Rejoice. Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God. And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus." I believe the promise is for me, and I appropriate the same personally. The promise itself is of no value unless I fully believe that He that has made the promise is abundantly able to fulfill, and infinite in power to do all that He has said.

The message the Lord gave me was a message of faith. We cannot dishonor God more than in distrusting His Word. Feeling is not at all reliable. A religion fed and kept alive by emotions is valueless. God's Word is the foundation upon which our hopes may safely rest, and in the confidence we have in the Word of God we are established, strengthened, settled, riveted to the Eternal Rock. Then the prayer of Paul will be answered:

"For this cause we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to desire that ye might be filled with the knowledge of his will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, and increasing in the knowledge of God" (Colossians 1:9, 10). —*This Day With God*, p. 156.

Wednesday, May 20
Examples of Faith

Those who closely connect with God may not be prosperous in the things of this life; they may often be sorely tried and afflicted. Joseph was maligned and persecuted because he preserved his virtue and integrity. David, that chosen messenger of God, was hunted like a beast of prey by his wicked enemies. Daniel was cast into a den of lions because he was true and unyielding in his allegiance to God. Job was deprived of his worldly possessions and so afflicted in body that he was abhorred by his relatives and friends, yet he preserved his integrity and faithfulness to God. Jeremiah would speak the words which God had put into his mouth, and his plain testimony so enraged the king and princes that he was cast into a loathsome pit. Stephen was stoned because he would preach Christ and Him crucified. Paul was imprisoned, beaten with rods, stoned, and finally put to death because he was a faithful messenger to carry the gospel to the Gentiles. The beloved John was banished to the Isle of Patmos “for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ.”

These examples of human steadfastness, in the might of divine power, are a witness to the world of the faithfulness of God’s promises—of His abiding presence and sustaining grace. As the world looks upon these humble men, it cannot discern their moral value with God. It is a work of faith to calmly repose in God in the darkest hour—however severely tried and tempest-tossed, to feel that our Father is at the helm. The eye of faith alone can look beyond the things of time and sense to estimate the worth of eternal riches.

The great military commander conquers nations and shakes the armies of half the world, but he dies of disappointment and in exile. The philosopher who ranges through the universe, everywhere tracing the manifestations of God’s power and delighting in their harmony, often fails to behold in these marvelous wonders the Hand that formed them all. “Man that is in honour, and understandeth not, is like the beasts that perish.” No hope of glorious immortality lights up the future of the enemies of God. But those heroes of faith have the promise of an inheritance of greater value than any earthly riches—an inheritance that will satisfy the longings of the soul. They may be unknown and unacknowledged of the world, but they are enrolled as citizens in the record books of heaven. An exalted greatness, an enduring, eternal weight of glory, will be the final reward of those whom God has made heirs of all things. —*Lift Him Up*, p. 328.

Thursday, May 21
The Faith of Jesus

God is leading a people out from the world upon the exalted platform of eternal truth, the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. He will discipline and fit up His people. They will not be at variance, one believing one thing, and another having faith and views entirely opposite, each moving independently of the body. Through the diversity of the gifts and governments that He has placed in the church, they will all come to the unity of the faith. If one man takes his views of Bible truth without regard to the opinions of his brethren, and justifies his course, alleging that he has a right to his own peculiar views, and then presses them upon others, how can he be fulfilling the prayer of Christ? And if another and still another arises, each asserting his right to believe and talk what he pleases without reference to the faith of the body, where will be that harmony which existed between Christ and His Father, and which Christ prayed might exist among His brethren?

God is leading out a people and establishing them upon the one great platform of faith, the commandments of God and the testimony of Jesus. He has given His people a straight chain of Bible truth, clear and connected. This truth is of heavenly origin and has been searched for as for hidden treasure. It has been dug out through careful searching of the Scriptures and through much prayer. . . .

The heart of God never yearned toward His earthly children with deeper love and more compassionate tenderness than now. There never was a time when God was ready and waiting to do more for His people than now. And He will instruct and save all who choose to be saved in His appointed way. Those who are spiritual can discern spiritual things and see tokens of the presence and work of God everywhere. Satan, by his skillful and wicked strategy, led our first parents from the Garden of Eden—from their innocence and purity into sin and unspeakable wretchedness. He has not ceased to destroy; all the forces which he can command are diligently employed by him in these last days to compass the ruin of souls. He seizes every artifice that he can use to deceive, perplex, and confuse the people of God. . . .

But in order to be saved you must accept the yoke of Christ and lay off the yoke which you have fashioned for your neck. The victory that Jesus gained in the wilderness is a pledge to you of the victory that you may gain through His name. Your only hope and salvation is in overcoming as Christ overcame. —*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 446, 447, 455, 457.

Friday, May 22
For Further Reading

Our Father Cares, "We Have the Blessed Assurance," October 27, p. 312.
The Faith I Live By, "Faith Not Feeling," April 28, p. 124.