

Share Him



SABBATH AFTERNOON

Read for This Week’s Study: *Matt. 28:18–20, 2 Pet. 3:18, 1 Pet. 3:8–15, Hosea 7, Zechariah 10.*

Memory Text: “The Lord God has given Me the tongue of the learned, that I should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary. He awakens Me morning by morning, He awakens My ear to hear as the learned.” (*Isaiah 50:4, NKJV*).

It was a busy Sabbath morning for Pastor G. He had awakened early, preparing for both Sabbath School and the sermon, and he was also leading an evangelistic series in the afternoon. He grabbed his keys, ran out the door, and sped away.

He drove through the city traffic, annoyed that so many people were out on a Saturday morning and could make him late for church. *Where were they all going?* Then, out of nowhere, one car cut in front of him. He slammed on the brakes and held up his fist in frustration and anger, yelling at the driver.

Finally, Pastor G. arrived at the church. As he stood up to teach the lesson, his eyes scanned his class and came to rest on a familiar face: the driver of the car he was angry at just 20 minutes earlier.

Later, when a church member introduced the driver as a non-Adventist who was visiting relatives, Pastor G. realized once again how every interaction, to both acquaintances and strangers, should be bathed in love that flows from an abiding relationship with God. You never know how your actions, especially as a believer, can impact others.

* Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, June 20.

Out of the Overflow

Read the Great Commission in Matthew 28:18–20. Write down the different messages of Jesus when He says “all” or “always” (which in Greek is the same word *pas*).

Jesus gave us a mandate to share His message with the world: “Go therefore and make disciples.” The mission of the Seventh-day Adventist Church is to make disciples, who can then make other disciples. That way we are all proclaiming the everlasting gospel and the three angels’ messages (*Rev. 14:6–12*) to prepare our world for Jesus’ soon return.

Anyone who has received a new life in Christ is called to witness. Yet, too often, people think about witnessing as something that they can’t do or don’t want to do. You might picture yourself preaching on a street corner or giving a complex Bible study, and so you shake your head. “Not me! No way! I’m an introvert; witnessing isn’t my comfort zone.”

However, true witnessing is often the result of being an eyewitness to what God is doing in your life, of noticing what He is teaching you as you grow in Him, and then simply sharing your experience with others. God is so good, and what He has done for us is the best news that this world can hear. We cannot and should not be silent! He has redeemed you; He has called you by name—you are His. Could there be any better news for anyone anywhere?

Although the disciples in the early church weren’t educated in the Rabbinical schools or eloquent in the oral traditions, we can still learn from them.

Read Acts 1:8 and Acts 4:13. What was witnessing like for the early church? What impact did Peter and John have on those who heard them witness?

Peter and John went on to declare, “ ‘For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard’ ” (*Acts 4:20, NKJV*). “They had been with Jesus” (*Acts 4:13*) and were compelled to share. The Holy Spirit gave them boldness and a convincing power in their words.

Spend some time in prayer right now. Ask God for courage to share Him with people He puts in your life. Ask Him for wisdom to know when to share and what to say. Read 1 John 4:7–11 and pray for this kind of love.

Unforced but With Power

Have you ever wondered how Jesus maintained the motivation to labor, heal, comfort, preach, and teach so many people day after day? We're told that "when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd" (*Matt. 9:36, NKJV*). It was Jesus' love and compassion toward humanity that drove His labor. In a similar way, God's love in us should compel us to feel the burden of leading souls to Him and to His truth (*2 Cor. 5:14*).

Have you ever looked at the faces of strangers in a crowd and thought ahead to eternity, to wonder if they know Jesus? Have you ever felt what can only be the love of God in you toward a stranger in need? God's love in us compels us to feel the burden of leading souls to Him. Jeremiah expressed this when he said, " 'His word was in my heart like a burning fire shut up in my bones; I was weary of holding it back, and I could not' " (*Jer. 20:9, NKJV*).

However, when we share God with others, we should never try to force someone to accept God or His Bible truth. Coercion goes against the very heart of God's character. God didn't force Adam and Eve to stay away from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (*Gen. 2:16, 17*). He didn't force people into the ark to be saved from the Flood (*Gen. 7:1*). He didn't force the Israelites to remain in their covenant with Him (*Deut. 4:29–31*). Instead, He met their needs (*Matt. 4:23–25*) and then invited them to follow Him. Jesus never forced anyone to follow Him or His truth, but He never gives up on us (*Matt. 23:37*).

As we witness, our approach should always mirror Jesus' approach. Ellen G. White says, "It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, that seek to compel the conscience. . . . There can be no more conclusive evidence that we possess the spirit of Satan than the disposition to hurt and destroy those who do not appreciate our work, or who act contrary to our ideas."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 487.

We must allow ourselves to be a conduit for God's service. We live in a world that hates the truth, but that reality shouldn't prevent us from sharing it in thoughtful, loving ways. Remember that it's often our own personal testimony that will carry the most weight, particularly in the early stages of witnessing (*Rev. 12:11*).

Read 2 Peter 3:18. In what ways are you growing in grace and knowledge? How is this evident in your interactions with those around you?

Tips for Sharing Jesus

The question for each of us is: With whom are you sharing Jesus—the postal carrier, a store clerk, someone you see daily when you're out walking? God calls every believer to help Him with this work, and He promises to give you “ ‘the tongue of the learned, that [you] should know how to speak a word in season to him who is weary’ ” (*Isa. 50:4, NKJV*). It is also the duty of the Christian to always be prepared to give a defense (*apologia*) for the faith and hope that is in us (*1 Pet. 3:15*).

Read 1 Peter 3:8–15. What is the Word of God telling us in these verses?

Here are some simple tips to keep in mind as you consider how to be more intentional about sharing Jesus with others:

- Get to know someone and build a friendship over time. Your warmth, kindness, and genuine interest in them (being “lovable”) will help draw them to God. (Some call this “friendship evangelism.”)
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to work on the person’s heart. Pray for the right opportunities to interact with them.
- Look for natural ways to talk about your own faith experiences or offer a prayer for them. Ask God to give you boldness but gentleness in your approach.
- Find ways to connect your new friend with others from your church, so that they can experience the embrace of your church community. A social or small group Bible study is a good next step.
- Pray about the specific needs or questions your new friend might have and look for an opportunity to show them how the Bible offers comfort, advice, and guidance in our lives. You might simply share one Bible promise at first or answer one question, which will open the door for deeper discussions. Pray for those too.
- There will come a time you’ll want to ask if your friend would like to take a next step (Bible study and, eventually, baptism). Don’t rush these steps but also don’t lag. Pray about this.
- Our actions should reveal whose we are. How we treat others in our lives will speak volumes. As our characters are shaped in His likeness (sanctification), we will live to draw all people to Him.

A Wandering Child

Many know firsthand the pain and heartache of having a child who—despite the strong, spiritual home they were raised in—has chosen to walk away from a relationship with the Lord.

Ephraim, as part of God’s chosen nation, strayed from the Lord. What do Hosea 4:17 and Hosea 7 tell us about the sins of Ephraim?

Furthermore, we read that Rachel, the grandmother of Ephraim, metaphorically weeps because Ephraim has walked away from a relationship with the Lord (*Jer. 31:15*). The Lord responds to her great sadness with these words in Jeremiah 31:16, 17: “Refrain your voice from weeping, and your eyes from tears; for your work shall be rewarded, says the LORD, and they shall come back from the land of the enemy. There is hope in your future, says the LORD, that your children shall come back to their own border’ ” (*NKJV*).

Instead of weeping over her wayward child, Rachel is told to have hope. What else does Jeremiah tell us? Read Jeremiah 31:18, 19.

Through Ephraim's story, we learn that there is always hope, because God doesn't give up. Although He rebukes His wayward people time and time again, God's compassion never fails, and His message in this chapter continues (*see Jer. 31:20*).

We might feel great pain, frustration, and discouragement, or even speak negatively of those who are close to us who have walked away from a relationship with God. Yet, God reminds us that He has not forgotten the wayward child—not at all! God's thoughts for such a person are not fleeting but instead are heartfelt and sincere. In fact, God says that His heart yearns for such individuals. He longs for them to return to Him, and His mercy is great.

How does knowing that this is God’s response to Rachel’s pain over Ephraim’s waywardness make you feel about those you know who have walked away from a relationship with the Lord? How does this challenge or encourage you?

Bring Them Back

We've all had weak or wavering moments in our walk with God—the valleys where our heart has been unfaithful or where we've merely been lukewarm for too long. What was it that brought you back into an abiding relationship with Him?

Zechariah 10 shares some beautiful messages about God bringing His people back to Him. Read this chapter now slowly and take note of the main messages.

In a practical sense, knowing how to relate to, and interact with, a loved one who has walked away from a relationship with the Lord can be challenging. You might wonder how things could have evolved for a different outcome; you might wonder how to interact with them now that they have a different worldview; and you might feel frustrated and helpless about the poor decisions they may still be making. These thoughts will always impact how you treat your loved one, and it's therefore so important to live and speak from the overflow of your personal time with your Savior.

The testimony of your life, your actions, your words, and your prayers for your spouse or child who has walked away from God can radically change their lives and future. (Read in Luke 22:31, 32 and John 21:15–17 how Jesus' prayers for Peter changed his future.) Surrender any sadness, judgment, or condemnation you might feel toward them, and instead ask God to replace these feelings with love that only He can give. Ask God to cover you with His character so that you can model a loving, unselfish attitude. Remember that “no other influence that can surround the human soul has such power as the influence of an unselfish life. The strongest argument in favor of the gospel is a loving and lovable Christian.”—Ellen G. White, *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 470.

Through our example of a consistent life that points others to Christ, those who have rejected Christ will see in us something that can come only from God. They will see a peace that passes understanding, love that will never let go, and hope that believes against all odds. God's love for us and our loved ones never wavers. We can give this love, which we receive every day, to those around us.

What does Ephesians 3:17–19 encourage us to do?

Further Thought: “Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously.”—Ellen G. White, *Christ’s Object Lessons*, p. 384.

“Those who are most actively employed in doing with interested fidelity their work to win souls to Jesus Christ, are the best developed in spirituality and devotion.”—Ellen G. White, *Evangelism*, p. 356.

“Strength to resist evil is best gained by aggressive service.”—Ellen G. White, *The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 105.

“In order to enter into His joy—the joy of seeing souls redeemed by His sacrifice—we must participate in His labors for their redemption.”—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Ages*, p. 142.

“Those who reject the privilege of fellowship with Christ in service, reject the only training that imparts a fitness for participation with Him in His glory.”—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 264.

Discussion Questions:

- ❶ Why is love so foundational and essential for any kind of effective witnessing?
- ❷ When have you found this to be true: that soul winning is linked to a personal and vibrant walk with God?
- ❸ Is there a baseline or basic understanding that is needed to share God with others? If so, what might this be?
- ❹ When it comes to giving a Bible study to a nonbeliever, where would you begin? What is your initial focus: proving certain doctrines or inviting someone to know Jesus?
- ❺ Sing or listen to the words from the hymn “Redeemed!” (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 338) and reflect on the ways you are proclaiming it.

Summary: When God’s love and His living, powerful Word fill our daily lives, we will be compelled to love and share Him with those around us. We should be prayerful, thoughtful, and intentional about witnessing, believing that His Word, which goes forth from His mouth, shall not return to Him void, but it shall accomplish what He pleases, and it shall prosper in the things for which He sent it (*see Isa. 55:11*).

Stranger in the Parking Lot

People ask Zeth Louis Lekatompessy how he supports his wife and three children without a salaried job in Indonesia. He says it is God's providence.

Zeth decided to volunteer as a Bible worker after feeling convicted that he needed to trust more in God and less on himself during the COVID-19 pandemic. He had a heart for souls, and he put into motion a plan that he had used to lead many of his siblings to Christ.

He and his wife put together a list of every person whom they knew on Ambon Island, where they lived. Then they prayed for the names daily. They also got on their motorcycle every morning and visited the people on the list. The visits prompted Bible studies, and the Bible studies led to baptisms.

Zeth and his wife visited about three families a day, and the discussions sometimes lasted until late at night.

Many people couldn't understand how the family was making ends meet.

"How do you survive with no job or savings or property that you can sell to help with your financial needs?" someone asked.

"It's impossible to live without a paying job," said another. "I can't believe it. Please prove it."

Zeth acknowledges that his family has faced challenges. One Friday, the money ran out, and he and his wife prayed for God to intervene. Their prayers stretched into Sabbath. "We don't have anything but You," they prayed. "We can only trust in You." That Sabbath, a stranger approached Zeth in the church parking lot and handed him an envelope. "This is for you so you can cheerfully continue your ministry," he said.

At home, Zeth and his wife thanked God and opened the envelope. Inside they found enough money to cover their needs for several months.

To those who seek evidence, Zeth recounts the experience, saying, "Out of hundreds of experiences of God's providence, this is just one of them."

Today, Zeth is studying theology at Klabat University in hope of learning how to give better Bible studies. He said God is still covering his family's expenses. When he graduates, he is ready to serve as a pastor, a Bible worker, or in another position from God.

"Pray for me and my family," he said. "Pray that when I finish my studies, I can bring more souls to God's kingdom."



Thank you for your Thirteenth Sabbath Offering, also known as the Quarterly Mission Project Offering, that is helping people like Zeth prepare for gospel ministry. Klabat University, located near Manado, Indonesia, is a previous offering recipient. This quarter's offering will help similar schools in the East-Central Africa Division. Watch a YouTube video of Zeth at bit.ly/Zeth-IS.

Part I: Overview

Key Text: *Isaiah 50:4*

Study Focus: *Matt. 28:16–20; 1 Pet. 3:8–15, 21, 22.*

We ended last week with Job’s vision of the Redeemer, who “shall stand at the latter day upon the earth” (*Job 19:25*). This week, we will learn how to share this extraordinary vision with the people on this earth. For that purpose, we will focus on two important biblical passages.

The first passage is Matthew 28:16–20, in which Jesus charges His disciples—and us—with the Great Commission. This passage, which reports Jesus’ last words, marks the climax of the whole gospel. It is an important text that confronts us with our responsibility to share the hope of Jesus Christ with all the nations. This mission, which is based on the divine authority of Jesus, has a universal scope and ensures God’s presence on our side till the end of time (*Matt. 28:20*).

The second passage is 1 Peter 3:8–18, 21, 22. Here, the apostle urges us to work on the formation of our personal character. He also exhorts us to work within our communities and to learn to love one another, thus preparing ourselves spiritually to share the good news of the gospel with the world. This work aims to foster unity in the church, as well as encourages the resilience of its members in times of persecution. This work also confronts us with our responsibility to Jesus Christ, who died for us and saves us through His resurrection and His intercession in the heavenly sanctuary (*Heb. 7:25*).

Part II: Commentary

The Great Commission (*Matt. 28:16–18*). The resurrection of Jesus (*Matt. 28:1–7*) constitutes the immediate backdrop to the Great Commission. In this context, three events are reported. The first event is the worship of Jesus by the women (*Matt. 28:9*) and then the 11 disciples (*Matt. 28:16, 17*). The second event is when the Roman soldiers who had been guarding Christ’s tomb visit the chief priests (*Matt. 28:11–15*). The third event is Jesus’ presence throughout the course of the previous two incidents. These three events prepare for and justify the Great Commission. The worship of Jesus anticipates His reference to His divine authority “‘in heaven and on earth’ ” (*Matt. 28:18, NKJV*). The deceptive report to the chief priest by the guards of the tomb prepares for the shift from the exclusive covenant, with Israel as the only recipient, to the universal covenant with “all the

nations” (*Matt. 28:19, NKJV*) of the earth. The actual presence of Jesus, with the women and the disciples, prepares His church for the fulfillment of His promise to be with them “to the end” (*Matt. 28:20, NKJV*).

The Authority of Jesus. As soon as the 11 disciples see the resurrected Christ, they worship Him. They understand that He has triumphed over death (*see Rev. 1:18*) and that He is God. In fact, the phrase “spoke to them, saying” (*Matt. 28:18, NKJV*), which introduces Jesus’ words, is a replica of the key phrase that regularly introduces the word of God in the book of Exodus (*Exod. 6:10; compare with Exod. 6:29, Exod. 7:8, etc.*). Jesus’ words confirm the disciples’ understanding of His identity and of His divine authority “in heaven and on earth” (*Matt. 28:18, NKJV*). The domain, or reach, of His authority encompasses all of creation, granting Him the universal sovereignty of Creator (*Gen. 1:1*). The word “all” is repeated three times (*Matt. 28:18, 19, 20*), just as in the conclusion of the Creation story (*Gen. 2:1–3*). The word “all,” which applies to His authority, occurs twice in His commission (*Matt. 28:19, 20*). It is precisely because of “all” of His divine authority that Jesus is entitled to charge His disciples with the commission to reach “all” nations and to teach “all” that He has commanded.

The Universal Covenant. In light of this discussion, it is also important to remember that we are bringing disciples to Jesus, not to ourselves. That is, we, as pastors, teachers, evangelists, or even as a particular church, must not gather our own personal following or clique. Rather, we must baptize disciples for Christ, who is above all nations and will come to gather His own in the future.

Baptism signals the shift to a new life. The ritual of baptism recalls the very act of the divine Creation out of the chaos of the primal waters, thus pointing to the generative work of the Lord in the beginning chapters of Genesis. At the same time, baptism is a ritual that points to the future creation of a new heaven and a new earth after the coming of the Son of man. Baptism is not only a sign of God’s presence and a symbol of spiritual regeneration; it is also an eschatological sign that Jesus’ presence is guaranteed, “‘even to the end of the age’” (*Matt. 28:20, NKJV*). Before coming as the Son of man in the clouds of heaven, Jesus is Immanuel, “God with us.” Thus, the Great Commission ends with the hope of Jesus’ presence here and now (*compare with Matt. 1:23*).

Preparation for Sharing the Good News (1 Pet. 3:8–15, 21, 22). Peter introduces 1 Peter 3:8–15, 21, 22 with the word “finally” (*telos*), thus indicating the conclusion of the previous section dealing with the testimony of the church to the world (*1 Pet. 2:11–3:7*). The passage in 1 Peter 3:8–15, 21, 22 is, therefore, particularly relevant to the mission of the church. Yet, whereas the text of the Great Commission is concerned with *why* we must reach out to the nations, Peter’s letter focuses on *how* to prepare ourselves for that mission. First, he addresses the problem of relationships

within the community of believers (*1 Pet. 3:8, 9*). Next, he addresses the challenge of relationships with unbelievers, who do not share with us the same spiritual goals and values in life (*1 Pet. 3:13–17*). To encourage his brothers and sisters to endure suffering in doing good, Peter refers to the example of Jesus (*1 Pet. 3:18*).

Appeal for Unity and Love. Peter begins with the most important, and probably the most challenging, aspect of our preparation for sharing the gospel. He invites “all of you” (*1 Pet. 3:8, NKJV*)—that is, all the members of the church—to work on how we relate to one another. To that end, Peter emphasizes the need for unity and love. Peter has in mind the disputes that divide groups within the church. For Peter, the solution to this problem is brotherly love, which he does not define as mere sentimental emotion. Five adjectives are used in his description of what it means to be united in a spirit of love:

First, we must be “of one mind” (*1 Pet. 3:8*), a term that refers to the need to be in harmony with one another.

Second, believers should also be sympathetic toward one another. That is, we must be sensitive to one another’s needs and concerns.

Third, the phrase “love as brothers” (*1 Pet. 3:8, NKJV*) implies the kindness that exists between siblings in the same family. Based on our common connection with Christ, we are part of the family of God. As such, we are enjoined to love one another.

Fourth, church members should be “compassionate”; that is, they should be merciful and willing to forgive one another, just as Christ has forgiven them.

Last but not least, they should be “humble” (*NIV*), the fifth and final criterion on Peter’s list. Humility consists in deference. Being deferential involves the willingness to esteem one’s brother more highly than oneself.

The next lines elaborate on the practical application of these qualities. Concretely speaking, this ideal of love means that we should not return evil for evil to the brother or sister who harmed us (*1 Pet. 3:9*). On the contrary, we should bless them in response, as Jesus urged us to do (*Luke 6:29*). To support his argument, Peter quotes from Psalm 34, which focuses on the potential harm of the tongue when we gossip or insult (*Ps. 34:13*). Peter contrasts this potential harm with the blessing that accompanies those who seek peace (*1 Pet. 3:11, 12*). The *shalom*, or peace, that unites the members of the church will bring a blessing from God, so that the world may know that He sent Jesus and has loved us as He has loved the Son (*John 17:22, 23*).

Suffering Persecution. Continuing in the same line of thought, Peter considers the case of the one who suffers persecution for his or her faith at the hands of the wicked unbeliever (*1 Pet. 3:13, 14*). Even then, argues Peter, if you are innocent and you suffer unjustly, you should not return

evil for evil for two reasons. First, because the suffering of the righteous is a blessing, God is on your side. Second, because affliction affords you a great opportunity to witness and to defend your faith (*1 Pet. 3:15*). Peter reasons that it is better to suffer for doing good than to suffer for doing evil (*1 Pet. 3:17*). The underlying ethical principle of these recommendations is that it is better to suffer as a victim than to cause suffering as an oppressor. To support his argument about the positiveness of suffering, Peter refers to Christ, the Just One, who suffered for the unjust and, through His suffering, brought salvation to the unjust (*1 Pet. 3:18*). As a result, Christ is exalted and now sits at the right hand of God.

Part III: Life Application

Teacher’s Tip: Divide the class into small groups and assign them one of the following activities. Give them time, as a group, to discuss the activities and questions, and then present their insights to the class. Encourage class members to incorporate the principles of these activities in their own spiritual walk throughout the week. (Please note that some of the following activities are better suited for personal reflection than for group participation and are marked as such.)

Activity 1: A Contemplation of Worship (*read Lam. 3:29*).

1. (For personal reflection outside of class.) When you pray, kneel down or prostrate yourself; realize that you are dust (*Ps. 103:14*). Out of this dust, God will resurrect you if you should die before He comes. With this humbling and wondrous thought in mind, ask God to change your character and turn it into a living reflection of His own.
2. (For small group[s] or class.) Ask yourselves the following question: Why should worship motivate me to reach out to other people? Think of possible answers, including, for instance: because the God you serve is also the God who created them in His image and longs to save them.

Activity 2: “Go!” (*Matt. 28:19*).

1. What does the word “Go!” suggest to you?
2. Compare Jesus’ command “Go” to God’s command to Abraham to “go.” Make a list of similarities and differences. For instance, Abraham goes to a *place* he does not know, whereas you go to *people* you do not know, et cetera.
3. How does your list of comparisons deepen your appreciation for, and understanding of, the Great Commission?

Activity 3: “Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (*Matt. 28:20, NKJV*).

1. List the “things” that Jesus has commanded you to do. For example, love, show grace, remember His truths. What other “things” can you add to this list?
2. Think of ways to put these commands into practice this week.

Activity 4: “I am with you” (Matt. 28:20). (Please note that this activity can be done as a group, or someone may be selected to sing the hymn as a solo.)

1. Sing the hymn “No, Never Alone” (for lyrics and MIDI recording, see www.Hymnary.org).
2. How does this hymn make you feel?
3. What comfort and hope does it give you?

Activity 5: Read Psalm 141:3 and Psalm 19:14. (Please note that this activity may be assigned for personal reflection outside of class.)

1. At the end of the day, ask yourself these questions: How did God help me guard my tongue today? Were there particular words that I said for which I need to repent?
2. Resolve to ask the Lord to help you to do better with your words and in all forms of communications with others. Pray: “Lord, guard my tongue. Inspire my thinking. With the help of Your Spirit, may the words that issue from my heart and mind glorify You. Amen.”

Activity 6: Read 1 Peter 3:15 and answer the questions below.

1. Why do you believe in God?
2. Why are you a Seventh-day Adventist?
3. Why do you not believe in the immortality of the soul?
4. Prepare arguments to defend your faith in areas where your knowledge is weak. (This last exercise also may be assigned as a project to be accomplished outside of class.)

Notes
