

Adult

Sabbath School

Bible Study Guide

Jan | Feb | Mar 2024

NAME

THE PARADOXES OF CHRIST



STUDENT'S PERSONAL
STUDY NOTES

OVERVIEW

1st Quarter 2024

General Introduction Lessons for 1st Quarter, 2024

'The most humbling lesson that man has to learn is the nothingness of human wisdom, and the folly of trying, by his own unaided efforts, to find out God. He may exert his intellectual powers to the utmost, he may have what the world calls a superior education, yet he may still be ignorant in God's eyes. The ancient philosophers boasted of their wisdom; but how did it weigh in the scale with God? Solomon had great learning; but his wisdom was foolishness; for he did not know how to stand in moral independence, free from sin, in the strength of a character moulded after the divine similitude. Solomon has told us the result of his research, his painstaking efforts, his persevering inquiry. He pronounces his wisdom altogether vanity.' Selected Messages, book 1, page 249.

'The apostle Paul tells us, "After that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21). This was the carrying out of God's plan for the conviction and conversion of men, who are constantly tempted to magnify their own powers. The Lord would make it manifest whether men by their own finite wisdom could acquire a knowledge of the truth, whether they could know God, their Creator. When Christ came to our world, the experiment had been fully made, and it proved the boasted wisdom to men to be but foolishness. Finite wisdom was utterly unable to come to right conclusions in regard to God, and therefore man was wholly incompetent to judge in regard to His law. The Lord has allowed matters in our day to come to a crisis, in the exaltation of error above truth, that He, the God of Israel, might work mightily for the greater elevation of His truth in proportion as error is exalted.' Selected Messages, book 2, page 371.

'The first great lesson in all education is to know and understand the will of God. Take the knowledge of God with you through every day of life. Let it absorb the mind and the whole being. God gave Solomon wisdom, but this God-given wisdom was perverted when he turned from God to obtain wisdom from other sources. We need the wisdom of Solomon after we have learned the wisdom of One greater than Solomon. We are not to go through human wisdom, which is termed foolishness, to seek true wisdom.' Special Testimonies on Education, page 15.

Compiler's note: This series of lessons looks at the apparent contradictions, the paradoxes, in the life and teachings of Christ. Some have made shipwreck of their faith because they have failed to see that these paradoxes are only apparent contradictions. The great Teacher incorporated these things into His teaching to make us think more deeply about the great truths of His kingdom. He wanted us to see that the way of heaven, the way of His kingdom, is unlike the ways of this sinful earth; thus, if we are to be fit to be citizens of that eternal kingdom, we have to leave behind the ways of the world and start to think as our Saviour does and see things as He presented them. The lessons in this quarter consider these paradoxes, these apparent contradictions, and asks you to see how the Bible resolves them in order to teach eternal truths.

Please note:

In addition to the writings of Ellen White, the works of a number of other authors have been used in the notes for some of these lessons. While these notes were chosen by the compiler of these lessons, and therefore reflect his own views, they should be seen as providing topics for discussion and further study, rather than authoritative.

INDEX

The Paradoxes of Christ		October to December 2023
Lesson No.	Lesson Title	Lesson Date
	Index	
	Overview	
1	He Taught Them as One Having Authority	Dec 30 — Jan 5
2	The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven	Jan 6 — Oct 12
3	What Shall it Profit a Man	Jan 13 — Jan 19
4	That Your Joy Might Be Full	Jan 20 — Jan 26
5	I Have No Pleasure in the Death of the Wicked	Jan 27 — Feb 2
6	Unto Everyone That Has Shall Be Given	Feb 3 — Feb 9
7	My Yoke is Easy and My Burden is Light	Feb 10 — Feb 16
8	He That Humbles Himself Shall Be Exalted	Feb 17 — Feb 23
9	Resist Not Evil . . . Resist The Devil	Feb 24 — Mar 1
10	You Shall Be Free Indeed	Mar 2 — Mar 8
11	The Judgment Seat of Christ	Mar 9 — Mar 15
12	My Strength is Made Perfect in Weakness	Mar 16 — Mar 22
13	Thought it Not Robbery to be Equal With God	Mar 23 — Mar 29


SABBATH RECORD

- / / *Lesson 1*
- / / *Lesson 2*
- / / *Lesson 3*
- / / *Lesson 4*
- / / *Lesson 5*
- / / *Lesson 6*
- / / *Lesson 7*
- / / *Lesson 8*
- / / *Lesson 9*
- / / *Lesson 10*
- / / *Lesson 11*
- / / *Lesson 12*
- / / *Lesson 13*

LESSON 1

“HE TAUGHT THEM AS ONE HAVING AUTHORITY”

December 30 — January 5

 **MEMORY VERSE :** “For He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes.” Matthew 7:29

? STUDY HELP : [Desire of Ages, page 253](#)

 **SCRIPTURE :** Matthew 13:9-17

8 LESSON AIM : To see Christ as the great Teacher.

INTRODUCTION : 'Christ's teaching was simplicity itself. He taught as one having authority. . . . The great Teacher proclaimed the truth to humanity, many of whom could not be educated in the schools of the rabbis, neither in Greek philosophy. Jesus uttered truth in a plain, direct manner, giving vital force and impressiveness to all His utterances. . . . In His discourses Christ did not bring many things before them at once, lest He might confuse their minds. He made every point clear and distinct. He did not disdain the repetition of old and familiar truths in prophecies if they would serve His purpose to inculcate ideas.' Evangelism, pages 55-56.

Sabbath Afternoon

1. What was the principal characteristic of Christ's teaching?

➤ **Mark 1:22 —**

NOTE : ‘Jesus taught the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority. Whatever His subject, it was presented with power, as if His words could not be controverted. Yet He was earnest, rather than vehement. He spoke as one who had a definite purpose to fulfil. He was bringing to view the realities of the eternal world. In every theme God was revealed. Jesus sought to break the spell of infatuation which keeps men absorbed in earthly things. He placed the things of this life in their true relation, as subordinate to those of eternal interest; but He did not ignore their importance. He taught that heaven and earth are linked together, and that a knowledge of divine truth prepares men better to perform the duties of everyday life. He spoke as one familiar with heaven, conscious of His relationship to God, yet recognising His unity with every member of the human family.’ *Desire of Ages, pages 253-254.*

Sunday

1. In what respect did Christ's teaching differ from that of the scribes?

- **Matthew 5:21-22** —
- **Matthew 5:27-28** —
- **Matthew 5:33-34** —
- **Matthew 5:38-39** —
- **Matthew 5:43-44** —

NOTE : ‘ Jesus had nothing to do with the various subjects of dissension among the Jews. It was His work to present the truth. His words shed a flood of light upon the teachings of patriarchs and prophets, and the Scriptures came to men as a new revelation. Never before had His hearers perceived such a depth of meaning in the word of God. Jesus met the people on their own ground, as one who was acquainted with their perplexities. He made truth beautiful by presenting it in the most direct and simple way. His language was pure, refined, and clear as a running stream. His voice was as music to those who had listened to the monotonous tones of the rabbis. But while His teaching was simple, He spoke as one having authority. This characteristic set His teaching in contrast with that of all others. The rabbis spoke with doubt and hesitancy, as if the Scriptures might be interpreted to mean one thing or exactly the opposite.’ *Desire of Ages, page 253.*

2. What challenge did Christ face over his teaching?

- **Matthew 21:23** —

NOTE : ‘ On the first day of His presence at the feast, the rulers had come to Him, demanding by what authority He taught. They wished to divert attention from Him to the question of His right to teach, and thus to their own importance and authority.’ *Desire of Ages, page 455.*

‘In the Jewish nation those whom the Lord had made depositaries of truth had proved unfaithful to their trust, and the Lord chose others to do His work. In their blindness these leaders gave full sway to what they called righteous indignation against the ones who were setting aside cherished fables. They would not admit that there was a possibility that they themselves did not rightly understand the Word, or that they had misinterpreted or misapplied the Scriptures. They acted like men who had lost their reason. What right have these men, they reasoned, some of them mere fishermen, to present ideas contrary to the doctrines which we teach the people? The God of heaven sometimes commissions men to preach that which is contrary to established doctrines. Men in authority are not always to be obeyed, even though they may profess to be teachers of Bible truth.’ *Signs of the Times, September 20, 1899.*

Monday

1. How did Jesus respond to this challenge?

➤ **Matthew 21:24-27** —

NOTE : ‘Christ answered them by asking a question. “I also will ask you one thing,” He said, “which if ye tell Me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?” The priests and rulers were perplexed. “They reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; He will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him? But if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people; for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered Jesus, and said, We cannot tell. And He said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.” In His wonderful deeds of healing, Christ had answered the question of the priests and elders. He had given them evidence of His authority, which could not be controverted. But it was not evidence that they wished. They were anxious that He should proclaim Himself as possessing divine authority, that they might misapply His words, and stir up the people against Him. They wished to destroy His influence and put Him to death. Christ knew that if this people could not recognise God in Him, they would not believe His assurance that He was the Christ. They had seen the sick healed, and the dead raised to life. They had witnessed the resurrection of Lazarus after he had been in the grave four days. The moral supremacy of Christ was revealed in all His words, in every work of love and power, but they recognised it not. They thought to take Him by guile, and cause Him to speak something that they could use to His condemnation. But Christ not only evades the issue they hope to bring about, but turns the condemnation upon them. In the purity and self-denial of John's life, they had felt the power of God. Conviction had been sent to every soul. If they would not heed John's warning, they would not heed the words of Christ.’ *Review & Herald, February 13, 1900.*

2. What was the reaction of many who heard Jesus' teaching?➤ **Matthew 13:54** —

NOTE : ‘All wondered at His knowledge of the law and the prophecies; and the question passed from one to another, “How knoweth this Man letters, having never learned?” No one was regarded as qualified to be a religious teacher unless he had studied in the rabbinical schools, and both Jesus and John the Baptist had been represented as ignorant because they had not received this training. Those who heard them were astonished at their knowledge of the Scriptures, “having never learned.” Of men they had not, truly; but the God of heaven was their teacher, and from Him they had received the highest kind of wisdom.’ *Desire of Ages, page 453.*

*Tuesday***1. What did this reaction lead to?**➤ **Matthew 13:55-57** —

NOTE : ‘The fact that Jesus spoke the truth, and that with certainty, was why He was not received by the Jewish leaders. It was the truth that offended these self-righteous men. The truth exposed the fallacy of error; it condemned their teaching and practice, and it was unwelcome. They would rather close their eyes to

the truth than humble themselves to confess that they had been in error. They did not love the truth. They did not desire it, even though it was truth.' *Desire of Ages*, page 467.

2. What was the reaction of the common people to Christ's teaching?

➤ **Mark 12:37** —

NOTE : 'The people were very attentive to Him, and it was said of Him that He spake not as the Scribes and Pharisees, for His word was as of one who had authority. The people were astonished at His doctrine, and after hearing Him, the verdict was, "Never man spake like this man." [John 7:46.] Jesus' manner of teaching was beautiful and attractive, and it was ever characterised by simplicity. He unfolded the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven through the use of figures and symbols with which His hearers were familiar, and the common people heard Him gladly; for they could comprehend His words. There were no high-sounding words used, to understand which it was necessary to consult a dictionary. He illustrated the glories of the kingdom of God by the use of the experiences and occurrences of earth. In compassionate love and tenderness He cheered and comforted and instructed all who heard Him; for grace was poured upon His lips that He might convey to men in the most attractive way the treasures of truth.' *Christian Education*, page 126.

Wednesday

1. What picture are we given of the relationship between Jesus and the common people?

➤ **Matthew 14:13-14** —

NOTE : 'From the hillside He looked upon the moving multitude, and His heart was stirred with sympathy. Interrupted as He was, and robbed of His rest, He was not impatient. He saw a greater necessity demanding His attention as He watched the people coming and still coming. He "was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd." Leaving His retreat, He found a convenient place where He could minister to them. They received no help from the priests and rulers; but the healing waters of life flowed from Christ as He taught the multitude the way of salvation. The people listened to the words of mercy flowing so freely from the lips of the Son of God. They heard the gracious words, so simple and so plain that they were as the balm of Gilead to their souls. The healing of His divine hand brought gladness and life to the dying, and ease and health to those suffering with disease. The day seemed to them like heaven upon earth.' *Desire of Ages*, pages 364-365.

'Jesus looked upon the retreating multitude with yearning compassion. He felt that they were as scattered sheep without a shepherd. . . . When He was left alone, He went up into the mountain, and, for many hours, bent in supplication before the Father with bitter agony and tears. Not for Himself were those earnest prayers, but for man, depraved and lost but for redeeming grace. It was for man that the Son of God wrestled with His Father, asking that the poor sinful creature might turn from his guilt to the light of salvation.' *Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 2, page 266.

2. What style of teaching did Jesus frequently employ?

➤ **Mark 4:2** —

NOTE : ‘Christ had truths to present which the people were unprepared to accept or even to understand. For this reason also He taught them in parables. By connecting His teaching with the scenes of life, experience, or nature, He secured their attention and impressed their hearts. Afterward, as they looked upon the objects that illustrated His lessons, they recalled the words of the divine Teacher. To minds that were open to the Holy Spirit, the significance of the Saviour's teaching unfolded more and more. Mysteries grew clear, and that which had been hard to grasp became evident. Jesus sought an avenue to every heart. By using a variety of illustrations, He not only presented truth in its different phases, but appealed to the different hearers. Their interest was aroused by figures drawn from the surroundings of their daily life.’ *Christ's Object Lessons, page 21.*

*Thursday***1. What reason did Jesus give for choosing this method of teaching?**➤ **Matthew 13:10-15** —

NOTE : ‘Among the multitudes that gathered about Him, there were priests and rabbis, scribes and elders, Herodians and rulers, world-loving, bigoted, ambitious men, who desired above all things to find some accusation against Him. Their spies followed His steps day after day, to catch from His lips something that would cause His condemnation, and forever silence the One who seemed to draw the world after Him. The Saviour understood the character of these men, and He presented truth in such a way that they could find nothing by which to bring His case before the Sanhedrin. In parables He rebuked the hypocrisy and wicked works of those who occupied high positions, and in figurative language clothed truth of so cutting a character that had it been spoken in direct denunciation, they would not have listened to His words, and would speedily have put an end to His ministry. But while He evaded the spies, He made truth so clear that error was manifested, and the honest in heart were profited by His lessons.’ *Christ's Object Lessons, page 22.*

2. What did Jesus say was the source of His teachings?➤ **John 8:28** —➤ **John 7:16** —

NOTE : ‘As the substitute and surety of the human race, Christ was placed in the same position toward the Father as is the sinner. Christ had the privilege of depending on the Father for strength, and so have we. Because He laid hold of the hand of infinite power, and held it fast, He overcame; and we are taught to do the same. He met every temptation with, “It is written;” and so must we. The one who resists evil in His strength can say, in the words of Inspiration: “The Lord God will help me: therefore shall I not be confounded: therefore have I set my face like a flint, and I know that I shall not be ashamed. He is near that justifies me; who will contend with me? . . . Behold, the Lord God will help me: who is he that shall condemn me?”’ The language of Christ on many occasions shows that He was

placed in the same position that we are. He had to walk by faith, as we walk by faith; and when temptations came to Him with overwhelming power, He used the language that every child of earth must use. "The Son can do nothing of Himself," Christ declared, "but what He sees the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." "I can of Mine own self do nothing: as I hear, I judge: and My judgment is just; because I seek not Mine own will, but the will of the Father which hath sent Me." "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am He, and that I do nothing of Myself; but as My Father hath taught Me, I speak these things." *Youth's Instructor*, December 28, 1899.

Preparation Day

1. What was the purpose of all Christ's teachings?

➤ **John 10:10** —

NOTE : 'Christ presented the principles of truth in the gospel. In His teaching we may drink of the pure streams that flow from the throne of God. Christ could have imparted to men knowledge that would have surpassed any previous disclosures, and put in the background every other discovery. He could have unlocked mystery after mystery and could have concentrated around these wonderful revelations the active, earnest thought of successive generations till the close of time. But He would not spare a moment from teaching the science of salvation. His time, His faculties, and His life were appreciated and used only as a means for working out the salvation of the souls of men. He had come to seek and to save that which was lost, and He would not be turned from His purpose. He allowed nothing to divert Him. Christ imparted only that knowledge which could be utilised. His instruction of the people was confined to the needs of their own condition in practical life. The curiosity that led them to come to Him with prying questions He did not gratify. All such questionings He made the occasion for solemn, earnest, vital appeals. To those who were so eager to pluck from the tree of knowledge, He offered the fruit of the tree of life. They found every avenue closed except the way that leads to God.' *Counsels to Parents, Teachers & Students*, pages 385-386.

Mission Story

A Good Start

By **ANDREW MCCHESENEY**

Simon loved running in northern India. He especially admired Usain Bolt, the Jamaican sprinter who is known as the fastest man alive.

Simon has never forgotten a statement that Usain Bolt once made on television. He said, "I trained four years to run nine seconds."

Simon was amazed that an athlete would be willing to train for years just to run for a few seconds. He realized that training must be very important for runners.

Simon's parents also realized that training was very important. They thought about the proper training for Simon when he prepared to enter school in their hometown of Anni.

Father wanted Simon to attend a Seventh-day Adventist school, and he wanted a recommendation on which one was best for his son.

"Simon is 5 years old," he told his brother. "Where do you think that I should send him to school?"

"Put Simon in our school here," his brother said. "It's closer to your home than the other schools."

The school was only a 10-minute walk away from Simon's home.

So, Simon was sent to the local Adventist school to start kindergarten.

On the first day, Simon wasn't so sure that he wanted to go. He cried as Mother walked with him to school. He cried when she left him at the school. He felt very scared because he couldn't see Mother anywhere in the room.

But the tears quickly dried up during morning worship. The teachers taught songs about Jesus. The principal read a story from the Bible. Simon liked the songs and the stories.

In a short time, he began making friends with the other boys and girls. He was happy to talk with them, to study with them, and to just be with them.

A year passed, and Simon entered first grade. Then he finished second, third, and fourth grades. As he studied, he learned how to be honest, kind, and helpful, just like Jesus in the Bible.

He also learned to run.

One day, a teacher told the schoolchildren, "You should run because it is good for your health."

So, Simon decided to run every day. Instead of walking to school, he ran. Sometimes, he raced his friends to see who would arrive at school first. Sometimes, he left home late and had to run to arrive at school on time.

After school, he went to a park near his home and ran with friends. The boys ran for 5-10 minutes, rested, and then ran again for a total of 30 minutes.

When Simon first started running, it was hard work, and he got hot. But after a while, it became easier. After several months of running every day, he was hardly sweating at all. He felt very good after running. His mood improved, and he found it easier to do his homework.

Simon had learned an important principle about physical exercise. Ellen White says, “Your muscles were made for use, not to be inactive.” If you would exercise regularly, she says, “your mind would be better balanced, your thoughts would be of a purer and more elevated character, and your sleep would be more natural and healthful. ... Your thoughts upon sacred truth would be clearer, and your moral powers more vigorous” (Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 235).

Before Simon knew it, he had graduated from the eighth grade.

Today, Simon is a 21-year-old university student, and he said the school gave him a good start in life. He learned to run. He learned about Jesus. He received a good training.

“Through this school, God helped me to be a man of morals and dignity,” he said. ?

Study Help***Sabbath, December 30th, 2023*****The Desire of Ages, Chapter 26, pp. 253****“At Capernaum”**

Notwithstanding the action of the Sanhedrin against Jesus, the people eagerly awaited the development of His mission. All heaven was astir with interest. Angels were preparing the way for His ministry, moving upon men's hearts, and drawing them to the Saviour.

In Capernaum the nobleman's son whom Christ had healed was a witness to His power. And the court official and his household joyfully testified of their faith. When it was known that the Teacher Himself was among them, the whole city was aroused. Multitudes flocked to His presence. On the Sabbath the people crowded the synagogue until great numbers had to turn away, unable to find entrance.

All who heard the Saviour "were astonished at His doctrine: for His word was with power." "He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes." Luke 4:32; Matthew 7:29. The teaching of the scribes and elders was cold and formal, like a lesson learned by rote. To them the word of God possessed no vital power. Their own ideas and traditions were substituted for its teaching. In the accustomed round of service they professed to explain the law, but no inspiration from God stirred their own hearts or the hearts of their hearers.

Jesus had nothing to do with the various subjects of dissension among the Jews. It was His work to present the truth. His words shed a flood of light upon the teachings of patriarchs and prophets, and the Scriptures came to men as a new revelation. Never before had His hearers perceived such a depth of meaning in the word of God.

Jesus met the people on their own ground, as one who was acquainted with their perplexities. He made truth beautiful by presenting it in the most direct and simple way. His language was pure, refined, and clear as a running stream. His voice was as music to those who had listened to the monotonous tones of the rabbis. But while His teaching was simple, He spoke as one having authority. This characteristic set His teaching in contrast with that of all others. The rabbis spoke with doubt and hesitancy, as if the Scriptures might be interpreted to mean one thing or exactly the opposite. The hearers were daily involved in greater uncertainty. But Jesus taught the Scriptures as of unquestionable authority. Whatever His subject, it was presented with power, as if His words could not be controverted.

LESSON 2

“THE MYSTERIES OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN”

January 6 — January 12

MEMORY VERSE : He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.' Matthew 13:11

STUDY HELP : [God's Amazing Grace, pages 13-14, 16-19](#)

SCRIPTURES : Mark 4:30-32, Luke 13:18-21

LESSON AIM : To study the paradox that the kingdom of God already exists but is still to come, is inward yet outward, gradual yet sudden.

INTRODUCTION : ‘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, page 35.*

Sabbath Afternoon

1. What was the theme of Christ's preaching when He began His ministry?

➤ **Matthew 4:17** —

➤ **Luke 4:43** —

NOTE : ‘Christ's mission was not understood by the people of His time. The manner of His coming was not in accordance with their expectations. The Lord Jesus was the foundation of the whole Jewish economy. Its imposing services were of divine appointment. They were designed to teach the people that at the time appointed One would come to whom those ceremonies pointed. But the Jews had exalted the forms and ceremonies and had lost sight of their object. The traditions, maxims, and enactments of men hid from them the lessons which God intended to convey. These maxims and traditions became an obstacle to their understanding and practice of true religion. And when the Reality came, in the person of Christ, they did not recognise in Him the fulfilment of all their types, the substance of all their shadows. They rejected the antitype, and clung to their types and useless ceremonies. The Son of God had come, but they continued to ask for a sign. The message, “Repent ye; for the kingdom of heaven is at hand,” they answered by demands for a miracle. Matthew 3:2. The gospel of Christ was a stumbling block to them because they demanded signs instead of a Saviour. They expected the Messiah to prove His claims by mighty deeds of conquest, to establish His empire on the ruins of

earthly kingdoms. This expectation Christ answered in the parable of the sower. Not by force of arms, not by violent interpositions, was the kingdom of God to prevail, but by the implanting of a new principle in the hearts of men.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 34.

Sunday

1. What message did Jesus tell His disciples to preach?

➤ **Matthew 10:5-7** —

NOTE : 'As the message of Christ's first advent announced the kingdom of His grace, so the message of His second advent announces the kingdom of His glory. And the second message, like the first, is based on the prophecies. The words of the angel to Daniel relating to the last days were to be understood in the time of the end. At that time, "many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." "The wicked shall do wickedly: and none of the wicked shall understand; but the wise shall understand." Daniel 12:4, 10. The Saviour Himself has given signs of His coming, and He says, "When ye see these things come to pass, know ye that the kingdom of God is nigh at hand." "And take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." "Watch ye therefore, and pray always, that ye may be accounted worthy to escape all these things that shall come to pass, and to stand before the Son of man." Luke 21:31, 34, 36.' *Desire of Ages*, page 234.

2. How did Jesus explain the nature of His kingdom to Pilate?

➤ **John 18:36** —

NOTE : 'The announcement which had been made by the disciples in the name of the Lord was in every particular correct, and the events to which it pointed were even then taking place. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15), had been their message. And the "kingdom of God" which they had declared to be at hand was established by the death of Christ. This kingdom was not, as they had been taught to believe, an earthly empire. Nor was it that future, everlasting kingdom, in which "all dominions shall serve and obey Him" (Daniel 7:27). As used in the Bible, the expression "kingdom of God" is employed to designate both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. The kingdom of grace was instituted immediately after the fall of man. Yet it was not actually established until the death of Christ. Even after entering upon His earthly mission, the Saviour might have drawn back from the sacrifice of Calvary. In Gethsemane the cup of woe trembled in His hand. He might even then have wiped the blood-sweat from His brow, and have left the guilty race to perish in their iniquity. But when the Saviour yielded up His life, and with His expiring breath cried out, "It is finished," then the fulfilment of the plan of redemption was assured. The promise of salvation made to the sinful pair in Eden was ratified. The kingdom of grace, which had before existed by the promise of God, was then established.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 19.

*Monday***1. How did Jesus explain that the kingdom of God is still future?. Compare**➤ **Luke 19:11-27** —➤ **Matthew 6:10** —

NOTE : ‘The object of the parable, (Luke 19:11-27, was to correct the false notions of those who “thought the kingdom of God should immediately appear.” The parable taught them that Christ, the nobleman, would first go away and receive His kingdom, and in the meantime leave His servants in possession of His property to occupy till His return; that at His return, He would reckon with and reward His servants if faithful, and cast them off if unfaithful: and then bring forth and slay His enemies. Such a return of the Nobleman has not yet taken place, nor have the servants of Christ yet received their reward in His kingdom. Nor have His enemies yet been destroyed. Then He has not yet received His kingdom or set it up.’ *Josiah Litch: Prophetic Expositions, volume 1, page 27.*

2. What did Jesus say to His disciples when they asked Him if the kingdom of God was to appear at that time?➤ **Acts 1:6-8** —

NOTE : ‘Just before leaving His disciples, Christ once more plainly stated the nature of His kingdom. He recalled to their remembrance things He had previously told them regarding it. He declared that it was not His purpose to establish in this world a temporal kingdom. He was not appointed to reign as an earthly monarch on David's throne. When the disciples asked Him, “Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?” He answered, “It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power.” Acts 1:6, 7. It was not necessary for them to see farther into the future than the revelations He had made enabled them to see. Their work was to proclaim the gospel message.’ *Acts of the Apostles, page 30.*

*Tuesday***1. How did Jesus show that the kingdom of God is not a visible kingdom?**➤ **Luke 17:20** —

NOTE : ‘Some of the Pharisees had come to Jesus demanding “when the kingdom of God should come.” More than three years had passed since John the Baptist gave the message that like a trumpet call had sounded through the land, “The kingdom of heaven is at hand.” Matthew 3:2. And as yet these Pharisees saw no indication of the establishment of the kingdom. Many of those who rejected John, and at every step had opposed Jesus, were insinuating that His mission had failed. Jesus answered, “The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show; [margin]: neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you.” The kingdom of God begins in the heart. Look not here or there for manifestations of earthly power to mark its coming.’ *Desire of Ages, page 506.*

2. How did Jesus show that the kingdom of God begins with an inner experience?

➤ **Luke 17:21** —

NOTE : 'The works of Christ not only declared Him to be the Messiah, but showed in what manner His kingdom was to be established. It comes through the gentleness of the inspiration of His word, through the inward working of His Spirit, the fellowship of the soul with Him who is its life. The greatest manifestation of its power is seen in human nature brought to the perfection of the character of Christ.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 16.

'God's way is to give man something that he has not, to make him something that he is not. Man's way is to get an easy place, and indulge appetite and selfish ambition. God's plan is to set man at work in reformatory lines, then he will learn by experience how long he has tampered with fleshly appetites, and ministered to his own temperament, bringing weakness upon himself. God's way is to work in power. He gives grace if the sick man realises that he needs it. God proposes to purify and refine the defiled soul, then He will implant in the heart His own righteousness and peace and health, and man will become complete in Him. This is the kingdom of God within you. Day by day men are revealing whether the kingdom of God is within them. If Christ rules in their hearts, they are gaining strength of principle, with power and ability to stand as faithful sentinels, true reformers. Then, like Daniel, they make impressions upon other hearts that will never be effaced, and their influence will be carried to all parts of the world.' *Healthful Living*, page 43.

Wednesday

1. How are we shown that the kingdom of God will be visible to all?

➤ **Matthew 25:31-32** —

NOTE : 'The throne of glory represents the kingdom of glory; and this kingdom is referred to in the Saviour's words: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations." Matthew 25:31, 32. This kingdom is yet future. It is not to be set up until the second advent of Christ.' *Great Controversy*, page 347.

2. When will God's people receive the kingdom?

➤ **Matthew 25:33-34** —

NOTE : 'Not until the personal advent of Christ can His people receive the kingdom. The Saviour said: "When the Son of man shall come in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then shall He sit upon the throne of His glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations. Then shall the King say unto them on His right hand, Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:31-34). When the Son of man comes, the dead are raised incorruptible and the living are changed. By this great change they are prepared to receive the

kingdom. Man in his present state is mortal, corruptible; but the kingdom of God will be incorruptible, enduring forever. Therefore man in his present state cannot enter the kingdom of God. But when Jesus comes, He confers immortality upon His people; and then He calls them to inherit the kingdom of which they have hitherto been only heirs.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 347.

Thursday

1. How did Jesus teach the gradual nature of the kingdom of God?

➤ **Mark 4:26-29** —

NOTE : “The Divine Teacher uses another parable, saying, “So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how. For the earth brings forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest is come.” The seed here spoken of is the word of God sown in the heart and made fruitful by divine grace. If the truth takes root in the heart, it will sooner or later spring into life and bear fruit. The life and character will show the nature and quantity of the seed sown. But the work of cultivating is the work of a life-time.

The principles of truth once planted in the soul are to be carried out in the daily duties of life. The growth of Christian character is gradual, like the advancement of the natural plant through its various stages of development. But nevertheless the progress is continual. As in nature, so it is in grace, the plant must either grow or die. Day by day the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God almost imperceptibly leads those who love the ways of truth toward the perfection of righteousness, till finally the soul is ripe for the harvest, the life-work is ended, God gathers in his grain. There is no period in the Christian life when there is no more to learn, no higher attainments to reach. Sanctification is the work of a life-time. First the blade, then the ear, then the full corn in the ear, then the ripening and the harvest; for when the fruit is perfect, it is ready for the sickle.' *Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 2, pages 243-244.

2. What other parables did Jesus tell to teach this lesson?

➤ **Mark 4:30-32** —

➤ **Matthew 13:33** —

NOTE : “The people look upon the mustard, growing so vigorously about them, and their minds are vividly impressed by the illustration Jesus has used to point the truths of His doctrine. He thus declares that not by force of arms, and the pomp and heraldry of war, is the kingdom of Christ to be set up. But the work is of gradual development. Though the beginning may be small, it will grow and strengthen till, like the grain of mustard seed, it will reach, through imperceptible stages of development, the majesty of greatness.' *Spirit of Prophecy*, volume 2, page 246.

“Another parable spake He unto them: The kingdom of Heaven is like unto leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.” The leaven in the meal

represents the progressive work of divine grace in the human heart. The leaven was not naturally in the meal, but being placed in it gave rise to fermentation which resulted in a radical change of the whole mass. So the principles of God's truth, hidden in the heart of an individual, change his entire nature, and influence his life. The natural feelings are transformed, the affections are consecrated, and the mind elevated. Physically, the man appears the same; but inwardly, he has become renewed by the heavenly principles that animate his life.' *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 2, page 247.*

Preparation Day

1. How are we shown that the kingdom of God will come suddenly and unexpectedly?

➤ **1 Thessalonians 5:2-4** —

➤ **2 Peter 3:10-13** —

NOTE : ‘The Lord is coming speedily, yet, notwithstanding His professed people read the signs of the times, of famines, of thousands being swept away by earthquakes and floods, by fire, by calamities by sea and land, by plagues, by war and bloodshed, the love of self so deadens the spiritual senses, that the day of the Lord will come upon them as a thief in the night, and He declares. “They shall not escape.” *Special Testimonies, Series A, No. 10, page 20.*

2. What warning did Jesus give to ensure that the coming of His kingdom does not take us unawares?

➤ **Matthew 24:44** —

NOTE : ‘While the watchmen cry, “Peace and safety,” “sudden destruction cometh upon them,” “and they shall not escape”; “for as a snare shall it come on all them that dwell on the face of the whole earth.” It overtakes the pleasure-lover and the sinful man as a thief in the night. When all is apparently secure, and men retire to contented rest, then the prowling, stealthy, midnight thief steals upon his prey. When it is too late to prevent the evil, it is discovered that some door or window was not secured. “Be ye also ready: for in an such hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh.” People are now settling to rest, imagining themselves secure under the popular churches; but let all beware, lest there is a place left open for the enemy to gain an entrance. Great pains should be taken to keep this subject before the people. The solemn fact is to be kept not only before the people of the world, but before our own churches also, that the day of the Lord will come suddenly, unexpectedly. The fearful warning of the prophecy is addressed to every soul. Let no one feel that he is secure from the danger of being surprised. Let no one's interpretation of prophecy rob you of the conviction of the knowledge of events which show that this great event is near at hand.' *Fundamentals of Christian Education, page 335.*

Mission Story

Christmas Miracle

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

Four-year-old Anurag couldn't walk. He couldn't stand. He couldn't even sit. Mother didn't understand what was wrong with her little boy. He had been born a healthy baby boy in Kolkata, India. But then he had grown weak.

Mother went to the doctor for help. She didn't understand what the doctor said was wrong, but she understood that Anurag needed help. She took him to the hospital for treatments, but they didn't seem to help.

Mother didn't know what to do. How could she help her precious boy?

On Christmas Day, Mother and Anurag were at home beside the big Ganga River. Then Mother heard some beautiful music. She wondered where the music was coming from, and she looked out the window. She saw people sitting on the grass near the river and singing. She really liked the music. She had never heard anything like it before. The people were singing about Jesus. "They must be Christians," Mother thought.

Mother wasn't a Christian. She wondered if the Christians might be able to help her son.

Mother left the house and walked over to the group. She was carrying her small 4-year-old boy in her arms.

"Please, pray for my son," Mother said. "Pray that he will be able to sit, stand, and walk."

The leader of the group was a Global Mission pioneer named Sumanta. Global Mission pioneers are people who share the gospel. Sumanta was an Indian sharing the gospel with other Indians. He had gathered people to the river for a picnic to celebrate Christ on Christmas Day.

He was touched by the Mother's request for prayer for her boy. "I am nothing. God is everything," he said to her. "If you know Jesus Christ, then your faith will increase, and your faith will save your son."

Mother realized that she needed to have faith in the God named Jesus. She had worshiped many gods during her lifetime, but she had never worshiped Jesus.

"If Jesus can heal my son, then I will accept Him," she said.

The Global Mission pioneer prayed for little Anurag along the big river on that Christmas Day. He also invited Mother to join an online Bible study group that met every day. Mother joined the Bible study group.

One month passed. Two months passed. Three months passed.

Mother faithfully studied the Bible with the group every day at 10 o'clock at night. While little Anurag was sleeping, members of the Bible study group prayed for him and his health. The Global Mission pioneer prayed for him and his health.

When six months had passed, Mother had a big announcement to make to the Bible study group.

"Anurag is able to sit up on his own!" she said.

She was so happy. A smile as bright as the sun filled her face. God was hearing their prayers.

Mother's faith grew when she saw that Anurag could sit up. She decided that she not only wanted to worship Jesus, but she also wanted to give her heart to Jesus.

On a fine April day, Mother entered the waters of the Ganga River. This was the same river where she had heard the beautiful music about Jesus on Christmas Day. As she went under the water, she gave her heart to Jesus. She no longer wished to worship any other god. There was only one God whom she wanted to worship: Jesus, the God who was helping her son.

After Mother gave her heart to Jesus, Anurag kept on gaining strength. Today, he is 6, and he can sit, stand, and walk like any other 6-year-old boy. Mother is so happy! She is glad to worship Jesus every Sabbath with Sumanta and other people who love Jesus.

"This is one of the greatest miracles that God has done for us," Sumanta said.

2A Study Help***Sabbath, January 6th, 2024*****God's Amazing Grace, Chapter 5 pp. 13-14, 16-19****“A Spiritual Kingdom”****January 5th**

Jesus answered, My kingdom is not of this world. [John 18:36]

The kingdom of God comes not with outward show. The gospel of the grace of God, with its spirit of self-abnegation, can never be in harmony with the spirit of the world. The two principles are antagonistic. . .

But today in the religious world there are multitudes who, as they believe, are working for the establishment of the kingdom of Christ as an earthly and temporal dominion. They desire to make our Lord the ruler of the kingdoms of this world, the ruler in its courts and camps, its legislative halls, its palaces and market places. They expect Him to rule through legal enactments, enforced by human authority. Since Christ is not now here in person, they themselves will undertake to act in His stead, to execute the laws of His kingdom. The establishment of such a kingdom is what the Jews desired in the days of Christ. They would have received Jesus, had He been willing to establish a temporal dominion, to enforce what they regarded as the laws of God, and to make them the expositors of His will and the agents of His authority. But He said, "My kingdom is not of this world." He would not accept the earthly throne. . . .

Not by the decisions of courts or councils or legislative assemblies, not by the patronage of worldly great men, is the kingdom of Christ established, but by the implanting of Christ's nature in humanity through the work of the Holy Spirit. . . . Here is the only power that can work the uplifting of mankind. And the human agency for the accomplishment of this work is the teaching and practicing of the Word of God. . . .

Now, as in Christ's day, the work of God's kingdom lies not with those who are clamouring for recognition and support by earthly rulers and human laws, but with those who are declaring to the people in His name those spiritual truths that will work in the receivers the experience of Paul: "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20).

2B Study Help***Sabbath, January 6th, 2024*****God's Amazing Grace, Chapter 6 pp. 14, 16-19****“Unlike Earthly Kingdoms”****January 6th**

And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?
[Mark 4:30]

Christ found the kingdoms of the world corrupt. After Satan was expelled from heaven, he erected his standard of rebellion on this earth, and sought by every means to win men to his standard. . . . His purpose was to establish a kingdom which would be governed by his own laws, and carried on with his own resources, independent of God; and so well did he succeed, that when Christ came to the world to establish a kingdom, He looked upon the governments of men, and said, "Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God?" Nothing in civil society afforded Him a comparison. . .

In striking contrast to the wrong and oppression so universally practised were the mission and work of Christ. . . . He planned a government which would use no force; His subjects would know no oppression. . . . Not as a fierce tyrant did He come, but as the Son of man; not to conquer the nations by His iron power, but "to preach good tidings unto the meek;" "to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound;" "to comfort all that mourn" (Isaiah 61:1, 2). He came as the divine Restorer, bringing to oppressed and downtrodden humanity the rich and abundant grace of Heaven, that by the power of His righteousness, man, fallen and degraded though he was, might be a partaker of divinity. . .

Christ taught that His church is a spiritual kingdom. He Himself, "the Prince of peace," is the head of His church. In His person humanity, inhabited by divinity, was represented to the world. The great end of His mission was to be a sin-offering for the world, that by the shedding of blood an atonement might be made for the whole race of men. With a heart ever touched with the feelings of our infirmities, an ear ever open to the cry of suffering humanity, a hand ever ready to save the discouraged and despairing, Jesus, our Saviour, "went about doing good" (Acts 10:38). . . .

And all who are members of the kingdom of Christ will represent Him in character and disposition.

2C Study Help***Sabbath, January 6th, 2024*****God's Amazing Grace, Chapter 8 pp. 16****“God's Kingdom in the Heart”****January 8th**

Behold, the kingdom of God is within you. [Luke 17:21]

The government under which Jesus lived was corrupt and oppressive; on every hand were crying abuses--extortion, intolerance, and grinding cruelty. Yet the Saviour attempted no civil reforms. He attacked no national abuses, nor condemned the national enemies. He did not interfere with the authority or administration of those in power. He who was our example kept aloof from earthly governments. Not because He was indifferent to the woes of men, but because the remedy did not lie in merely human and external measures. To be efficient, the cure must reach men individually, and must regenerate the heart.

Some of the Pharisees had come to Jesus demanding "when the kingdom of God should come" (Luke 17:20). More than three years had passed since John the Baptist gave the message that like a trumpet call had sounded through the land, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matthew 3:2). And as yet these Pharisees saw no indication of the establishment of the kingdom. . . .

Jesus answered, "The kingdom of God cometh not with outward show [margin]: neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." The kingdom of God begins at the heart. Look not here or there for manifestations of earthly power to mark its coming.

The works of Christ not only declared Him to be the Messiah, but showed in what manner His kingdom was to be established. . . . It comes through the gentleness of the inspiration of His word, through the inward working of His Spirit, the fellowship of the soul with Him who is its life. The greatest manifestation of its power is seen in human nature brought to the perfection of the character of Christ. . . .

When God gave His Son to our world, He endowed human beings with imperishable riches,--riches compared with which the treasured wealth of men since the world began is nothingness. Christ came to the earth and stood before the children of men with the hoarded love of eternity, and this is the treasure that, through our connection with Him, we are to receive, to reveal, and to impart.

2D Study Help***Sabbath, January 6th, 2024*****God's Amazing Grace, Chapter 11 pp. 19****“Established by Christ’s Death”****January 11th**

Who his own self bare our sins in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sins, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed. [1 Peter 2:24]

At the very time when they [Christ's disciples] expected to see their Lord ascend the throne of David, they beheld Him seized as a malefactor, scourged, derided, and condemned, and lifted up on the cross of Calvary. . . .

The announcement which had been made by the disciples in the name of the Lord was in every particular correct, and the events to which it pointed were even then taking place. "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand" (Mark 1:15), had been their message. . . . And the "kingdom of God" which they had declared to be at hand was established by the death of Christ. This kingdom was not, as they had been taught to believe, an earthly empire. Nor was it that future, . . . everlasting kingdom, in which "all dominions shall serve and obey him" (Daniel 7:27). As used in the Bible, the expression "kingdom of God" is employed to designate both the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory. . . .

The kingdom of grace was instituted immediately after the fall of man. . . . Yet it was not actually established until the death of Christ. Even after entering upon His earthly mission, the Saviour . . . might have drawn back from the sacrifice of Calvary. In Gethsemane the cup of woe trembled in His hand. He might even then have wiped the blood-sweat from His brow, and have left the guilty race to perish in their iniquity. . . . But when the Saviour yielded up His life, and with His expiring breath cried out, "It is finished," then the fulfillment of the plan of redemption was assured. The promise of salvation made to the sinful pair in Eden was ratified. The kingdom of grace, which had before existed by the promise of God, was then established.

Thus the death of Christ--the very event which the disciples had looked upon as the final destruction of their hope-- was that which made it forever sure. . . . The event that had filled them with mourning and despair was that . . . in which centered the future life and eternal happiness of all God's faithful ones in all the ages.

LESSON 3

“WHAT SHALL IT PROFIT A MAN”

January 13 — January 19

MEMORY VERSE : For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.' Matthew 16:25

STUDY HELP : *Christ's Object Lessons, pages 374-375*

SCRIPTURES : Mark 8:34-38

LESSON AIM : To understand the paradox that he who seeks to save his life will lose it, but he who is willing to lose his life for Christ will find it.

INTRODUCTION : ‘Only those who practise holiness in this life will see the King in His beauty. Put away all vain, trifling talk, and everything of a frivolous and sensational nature. Do not engross your mind with thoughts of worldly entertainments and pleasures. Engage in the work of saving your soul. If you should lose your soul, it would have been better for you never to have been born. But you need not lose your soul. You may use every moment of this God-given life to His name's glory. Strengthen yourself to resist the powers of darkness, that they shall not obtain a victory over you.' *Christ Triumphant, page 199.*

Sabbath Afternoon

1. What did Jesus mean when He spoke of those who save their lives?

➤ **Luke 17:28-33** —

➤ **1 John 2:15** —

NOTE : ‘Heavenly messengers visited Sodom, and told Lot of the impending destruction, and he was permitted to warn his relatives and friends, and to invite them to seek the protection of God. Lot earnestly besought them to believe his words. He knew that their destiny for life or death depended upon their decision to obey or reject the warning. But they had corrupted their ways before God, and Lot's message seemed to them but folly and madness. They mocked at his agonised entreaties. He tarried long with them, so loth to give them up to their own unwise decision, that the angels had to take him by force and hurry him out of the city with his wife and daughters. The angel gave the command, “Escape for thy life; look not behind thee.” But notwithstanding the warning, Lot's wife, whose heart was in the city devoted to destruction, did not obey, but turned to look behind her, and was changed to

a pillar of salt in the way. She did not appreciate the mercy that God had shown her, and was left as an example of warning for future generations.' *Review & Herald*, November 5, 1889.

Sunday

1. How did Jesus illustrate that the things of this world can damage our spiritual life?

- **Mark 4:19** —
- **1 Timothy 6:7-10** —

NOTE : ‘The love of riches has an infatuating, deceptive power. Too often those who possess worldly treasure forget that it is God who gives them power to get wealth. They say, “My power and the might of mine hand hath gotten me this wealth.” Deuteronomy 8:17. Their riches, instead of awakening gratitude to God, lead to the exaltation of self. They lose the sense of their dependence upon God and their obligation to their fellow men. Instead of regarding wealth as a talent to be employed for the glory of God and the uplifting of humanity, they look upon it as a means of serving themselves. Instead of developing in man the attributes of God, riches thus used are developing in him the attributes of Satan. The seed of the word is choked with thorns. “And pleasures of this life.” There is danger in amusement that is sought merely for self-gratification. All habits of indulgence that weaken the physical powers, that becloud the mind, or that benumb the spiritual perceptions, are “fleshly lusts, which war against the soul.” 1 Peter 2:11. “And the lusts of other things.” These are not necessarily things sinful in themselves, but something that is made first instead of the kingdom of God. Whatever attracts the mind from God, whatever draws the affections away from Christ, is an enemy to the soul.’ *A Call to Stand Apart*, page 22.

‘Then shall many be offended’

2. How may persecution lead us to put saving our lives before Christ?

- **Mark 4:16-17** —
- **Matthew 24:9-10** —

NOTE : ‘Many receive the gospel as a way of escape from suffering, rather than as a deliverance from sin. They rejoice for a season, for they think that religion will free them from difficulty and trial. While life moves smoothly with them, they may appear to be consistent Christians. But they faint beneath the fiery test of temptation. They cannot bear reproach for Christ's sake. When the word of God points out some cherished sin, or requires self-denial or sacrifice, they are offended. It would cost them too much effort to make a radical change in their life. They look at the present inconvenience and trial, and forget the eternal realities. Like the disciples who left Jesus, they are ready to say, “This is an hard saying; who can hear it?” John 6:60.’ *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 47.

*Monday***1. How may temptations lead us to put saving our lives before Christ?**➤ **Luke 8:13** —➤ **James 1:13-14** —

NOTE : ‘Some are stony-ground hearers. They readily receive anything new and exciting. The word of truth they receive with joy. And with ardour and zeal they talk earnestly in reference to their faith and hope, and may even administer reproof to those of long experience for some apparent deficiency or for their lack of enthusiasm. But when they are tested and proved by the heat of trial and temptation, when the pruning-knife of God is applied, that they may bring forth fruit unto perfection, their zeal dies, their voice is silent. No longer do they boast in the strength and power of truth. This class are controlled by feelings. They have not depth and stability of character. Principle does not reach down deep, underlying the springs of action. They have in word exalted the truth, but are not doers of that word. The seed of truth has not rooted down below the surface. The heart has not been renewed by the transforming influence of the Spirit of God. And when the truth calls for working men and women, when sacrifices have to be made for the truth's sake, they are somewhere else; and when trials and persecution come; they fall away because they have no deepness of earth. The truth, plain, pointed, and close, is brought to bear upon the heart, and reveals the deformity of character. Some will not bear this test, but frequently close their eyes to their imperfections, although their consciences tell them that the words spoken by the messengers of God, which bears so closely upon their Christian characters, are truth; yet they will not listen to the voice. They are offended because of the word, and yield the truth rather than to submit to be sanctified through the truth.’ *Pamphlet: Testimony to the Church, page 140.*

2. How may being ashamed of Jesus lead us to put saving our lives before Jesus?➤ **Mark 14:66-72** —➤ **Luke 9:26** —➤ **Matthew 10:33** —

NOTE : ‘The fearful and unbelieving, who are punished with the second death, are of that class who are ashamed of Christ in this world. They are afraid to do right and follow Christ, lest they should meet with pecuniary loss. They neglect their duty, to avoid reproach and trials, and to escape dangers. Those who dare not do right because they will thus expose themselves to trials, persecution, loss, and suffering are cowards, and, with idolaters, liars, and all sinners, they are ripening for the second death.’ *Testimonies, volume 2, page 630.*

‘Christ gave His life to reproach; He suffered, being tempted; He was falsely accused, and His motives were misjudged. But if men consider not the dear sacrifice made for them, if they are not willing to die to self and to the world, they become spiritually blind. They do not discern the value of eternal riches. They do not love or honour the Christ-life. They know not at what they stumble. They are enslaved by their own carnal inclinations, which they are not willing to relinquish. And when trials and difficulties arise, they give up building a temple for God, a pure, holy character after the divine similitude. Instead

of driving them to the solid rock, the least rebuff makes cowards of them. Scorn and ridicule make them ashamed of Jesus, and they turn from Him to associate with and do honour to His persecutors. Thus, like Peter in the judgment-hall, they put Christ to open shame. Such cannot endure all things for Christ's sake. They cannot endure to the end. They have not counted the cost. They have not been converted to Christ.' *Signs of the Times*, July 28, 1898.

Tuesday

1. How may worry about the things of this life lead us to put our lives before Jesus?

➤ **Matthew 6:31-33** —

NOTE : 'Satan has worked continually to eclipse the glories of the future world and to attract the whole attention to the things of this life. He has striven so to arrange matters that our thought, our anxiety, our labour might be so fully employed in temporal things that we should not see or realise the value of eternal realities. The world and its cares have too large a place, while Jesus and heavenly things have altogether too small a share in our thoughts and affections. We should conscientiously discharge all the duties of everyday life, but it is also essential that we should cultivate, above everything else, holy affection for our Lord Jesus Christ.' *The Adventist Home*, page 404.

2. In contrast with Lot's wife, what example did Paul give us about being willing to put Christ first?

➤ **Philippians 3:8** —

NOTE : 'I have seen a device representing a bullock standing between a plough and an altar, with the inscription, "Ready for either", willing to swelter in the weary furrow or to bleed on the altar of sacrifice. This is the position the child of God should ever be in, willing to go where duty calls, to deny self, and to sacrifice for the cause of truth. The Christian church was founded upon the principle of sacrifice. "If any man will come after Me," says Christ, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." He requires the whole heart, the entire affections. The exhibitions of zeal, earnestness, and unselfish labour which His devoted followers have given to the world should kindle our ardour and lead us to emulate their example. Genuine religion gives an earnestness and fixedness of purpose which moulds the character to the divine image and enables us to count all things but loss for the excellency of Christ.' *Testimonies*, volume 5, page 307.

Wednesday

1. What warning are we given about placing undue importance on the things of this life?

➤ **Luke 21:34** —

➤ **Luke 8:14** —

➤ **2 Timothy 2:4** —

NOTE : ‘Cares, riches, pleasures, all are used by Satan in playing the game of life for the human soul. The warning is given, “Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world, the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.” 1 John 2:15, 16. He who reads the hearts of men as an open book says, “Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting and drunkenness and cares of this life.” Luke 21:34. And the apostle Paul by the Holy Spirit writes, “They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is the root of all evil; which, while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” 1 Timothy 6:9, 10.’ *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 55.

2. What persecutions did Paul suffer for Christ's sake?➤ **2 Corinthians 11:24-27** —

NOTE : ‘In looking over the incidents of his eventful life, he remembers all. He recalls the scenes of his trials and sufferings, and now if he has any words of murmuring we shall surely hear them. Mark his words: “I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.” “I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us.” Again, “I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.” When we contrast our circumstances with those of the apostle Paul, we should feel rebuked for ever harbouring the least feeling of murmuring or complaint. We know but little by experience of self-denial, and persecution, and pain for Christ's sake. We are here as probationers, and we must be tested and proved. Says Paul, “Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, works for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory; while we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are not seen are eternal.” *Review & Herald*, November 7, 1878.

*Thursday***1. What assurance sustained Paul in all his trials?**➤ **Romans 8:35-39** —

NOTE : ‘What was the strength of those who in the past have suffered persecution for Christ's sake? It was union with God, union with the Holy Spirit, union with Christ. Reproach and persecution have separated many from earthly friends, but never from the love of Christ. Never is the tempest-tried soul more dearly loved by His Saviour than when he is suffering reproach for the truth's sake. “I will love him,” Christ said, “and will manifest Myself to him.” John 14:21. When for the truth's sake the

believer stands at the bar of earthly tribunals, Christ stands by his side. When he is confined within prison walls, Christ manifests Himself to him and cheers his heart with His love. When he suffers death for Christ's sake, the Saviour says to him, They may kill the body, but they cannot hurt the soul. "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world." *Acts of the Apostles, page 85.*

2. What warning does Jesus give to those who put their family ties ahead of Him?

➤ **Matthew 10:37** —

NOTE : 'The words that Christ addressed to His disciples were addressed to us as well as to them. He presents before us the unwearied conflict that we must have on this earth as long as time shall last. We are to place no person before Christ in our affections. If a person who has been convicted by the Spirit of God smothers his convictions, and continues to trample underfoot the commandments of the Lord, and reject the truth of God simply because he sees it will bring disunion into his family relations, he shows that he loves the peace that is not of Christ, but of the world. He prefers to be in harmony with the world rather than to be in unity with Christ. But in order to have the peace of Christ, it is necessary to place Christ and His service first. Those who yield their convictions of truth to please father or mother, sister or brother, husband or wife or children, prove themselves unworthy of Christ.' *Bible Echo, March 19, 1894.*

Preparation Day

1. What must come first in the Christian's life?

➤ **Matthew 6:33** —

➤ **Exodus 20:3** —

NOTE : 'Our growth in grace, our joy, our usefulness, all depend upon our union with Christ. It is by communion with Him, daily, hourly, by abiding in Him, that we are to grow in grace. He is not only the author, but the finisher of our faith. It is Christ first and last and always. He is to be with us, not only at the beginning and the end of our course, but at every step of the way.' *The Faith I Live By, page 125.*

Mission Story

Unexpected Education

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

Abhishek was 3 years old when his parents began looking for a school for him in central India.

Father asked friends for a recommendation for a good school that didn't cost too much. Mother asked neighbours for ideas about a school for Abhishek. The parents were poor, but they were determined that their son would get a good education.

Someone suggested a Seventh-day Adventist school that was located near their home.

Father and Mother didn't wait.

The next day, they came searching for the school.

It was a Saturday, and they expected to find the school open.

"Please take us to the school principal," Father asked a guard standing at the school's gate.

The guard guided Father and Mother to a church located on the same compound as the school.

Father and Mother were surprised to see people worshipping inside the church. They realized that the school was closed. But they didn't want to leave.

Father and Mother went inside the church and sat down and waited.

The Sabbath worship service was in progress. There are many languages in India. But the church service was in their native tongue, and they understood everything that was said.

Soon came the time for the sermon, and the pastor stood up to speak. He preached about the Sabbath.

Father and Mother were surprised a second time. They were Christians, but they had never heard that the Bible teaches that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath. Suddenly, they understood why the school was closed on Saturday. The school kept the biblical teaching not to work on the seventh day of the week. Father and Mother wanted to know more. After the worship service, they asked the pastor to teach them what the Bible says about the Sabbath. The pastor invited the couple to Bible studies.

As Father and Mother studied the Bible with the pastor, Abhishek entered kindergarten at the school. He also studied the Bible in kindergarten. Every day, teachers told stories from the Bible. Abhishek especially liked the story of David and Goliath. He liked how a small boy defeated a giant with a single stone because the boy came in God's name. David said, "You come to me with a sword, with a spear, and with a javelin. But I come to you in the name of the Lord of hosts, the God of the armies of Israel" (1 Samuel 17:45, NKJV).

Even though he was a small boy, Abhishek decided that he always wanted to go in the name of the Lord of hosts. Even though he was small, he knew that God would make him strong and give him victory over every giant in life.

As Abhishek and his parents learned from the Bible, life began to change in their home. The family started to keep the Sabbath. Then Father and Mother gave their hearts to Jesus.

As Abhishek grew older, he became involved in church activities. He was like the prophet Samuel as a child, happy to do whatever he was told for the church. He helped the deacons with their work, placing songbooks on the benches and overseeing the microphones.

Today, the family is established in their faith and growing in the Lord. Abhishek is 19 and a university student.

“I want to spread the gospel of Jesus and tell people that Jesus is coming soon,” he said.

Study Help***Sabbath, January 13th, 2024*****Christ's Object Lessons, Chapter 26, pp 374-375****“Friends by the Mammon of Unrighteousness”**

Christ calls upon everyone to consider. Make an honest reckoning. Put into one scale Jesus, which means eternal treasure, life, truth, heaven, and the joy of Christ in souls redeemed; put into the other every attraction the world can offer. Into one scale put the loss of your own soul, and the souls of those whom you might have been instrumental in saving; into the other, for yourself and for them, a life that measures with the life of God. Weigh for time and for eternity. While you are thus engaged, Christ speaks: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mark 8:36.

God desires us to choose the heavenly in place of the earthly. He opens before us the possibilities of a heavenly investment. He would give encouragement to our loftiest aims, security to our choicest treasure. He declares, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." Isaiah 13:12. When the riches that moth devours and rust corrupts shall be swept away, Christ's followers can rejoice in their heavenly treasure, the riches that are imperishable.

Better than all the friendship of the world is the friendship of Christ's redeemed. Better than a title to the noblest palace on earth is a title to the mansions our Lord has gone to prepare. And better than all the words of earthly praise will be the Saviour's words to His faithful servants, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34

To those who have squandered His goods, Christ still gives opportunity to secure lasting riches. He says, "Give, and it shall be given unto you." "Provide yourselves bags which wax not old, a treasure in the heavens that not, where no thief approaches, neither moth corrupts." Luke 6:38; 12:33. "Charge them that are rich in this world, . . . that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate; laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come, that they may lay hold on eternal life." 1 Timothy 6:17-19

Then let your property go beforehand to heaven. Lay up your treasures beside the throne of God. Make sure your title to the unsearchable riches of Christ. "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when it shall fail, they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." R. V.

LESSON 4

“THAT YOUR JOY MIGHT BE FULL”

January 20 — January 26

MEMORY VERSE : But none of these things move me, neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry, which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.' Acts 20:24

STUDY HELP : [Christ's Object Lessons, pages ???](#)

SCRIPTURES : Matthew 16:24-26; John 15:11; John 16:20-24

LESSON AIM : To see how those who deny themselves may be full of joy.

INTRODUCTION : ‘Those who give their lives to Christlike ministry know the meaning of true happiness. Their interests and their prayers reach far beyond self. They themselves are growing as they try to help others. They become familiar with the largest plans, the most stirring enterprises, and how can they but grow when they place themselves in the divine channel of light and blessing? Such ones receive wisdom from heaven. They become more and more identified with Christ in all His plans. There is no opportunity for spiritual stagnation. The church that engages successfully in this work is a happy church. That man or that woman whose soul is drawn out in compassion and love for the erring, and who labours to bring them to the fold of the great Shepherd, is engaged in a blessed work. And, oh, what a soul-enrapturing thought, that when one sinner is thus reclaimed, there is more joy in heaven than over ninety and nine just persons! Nothing is drudgery to the one who submits to the will of God. “Doing it unto the Lord” is a thought that throws a charm over whatever work God gives him to do. The Christian labourer knows no drudgery in his heaven-appointed work. He enters into the joy of His Lord in seeing souls emancipated from the slavery of sin; and this joy repays him for every self-denial.’ *Christian Service, page 269.*

Sabbath Afternoon

1. What words of Jesus show the importance of self-denial?

➤ **Matthew 16:24** —

NOTE : ‘Those who would gain the blessing of sanctification must first learn the meaning of self-sacrifice. The cross of Christ is the central pillar on which hangs the “far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.” “If any man will come after Me,” Christ says, “let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and

follow Me.” 2 Corinthians 4:17; Matthew 16:24. It is the fragrance of our love for our fellow men that reveals our love for God. It is patience in service that brings rest to the soul. It is through humble, diligent, faithful toil that the welfare of Israel is promoted. God upholds and strengthens the one who is willing to follow in Christ's way.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 560.

Sunday

1. How did Jesus illustrate this in His own experience?

➤ **Philippians 2:5-8** —

➤ **2 Corinthians 8:9** —

NOTE : ‘When [Christ] came to earth to seek and to save that which was lost, He did not consult His own ease or pleasure. He left His high command, He laid aside His heavenly honour and glory, He laid off His glorious diadem and royal robe, and left the royal courts, in order that He might come to earth to save fallen man. Though He possessed eternal riches, yet for our sakes He became poor, that He might enrich the human race. By accepting the Son of God as their Redeemer, by exercising faith in Him, the sons and the daughters of Adam may become heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ. The apostle says: “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.”’ *Review & Herald*, November 26, 1895.

2. How did Christ explain what self-denial means?

➤ **Luke 14:26** —

➤ **Luke 9:57-62** —

NOTE : ““If any man come to Me,” Christ declared, “and hate not [love less than God] his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whosoever doth not bear his cross, and come after Me, cannot be My disciple.” Again Christ declares, “Whosoever he be of you that forsakes not all that he hath, he cannot be My disciple.” This is God's claim. He will accept nothing less than this. He is God. He is our Creator. We are bought with a price, and what a price, even the precious blood of the only begotten Son of God! God owns us. By creation and by redemption we are His. He holds out the only terms upon which we can be saved. We are to love God with all our heart and mind and strength, and our neighbour as ourselves. Only whole-hearted service will be accepted by God, and for this life-service He gives us all heaven. . . . Self-surrender is the substance of the teachings of Christ. Often is it presented and enjoined in language that seems authoritative, because there is no other way to save man than to cut away those things which, if entertained, will demoralise the whole being.’ *Youth's Instructor*, May 27, 1897.

*Monday***1. What illustration did Jesus use to explain the importance of self-denial?**➤ **John 12:24-25** —

NOTE : ‘By the casting of grain into the earth, the Saviour represents His sacrifice for us. “Except a corn of wheat fall into the ground and die,” He says, “it abides alone; but if it die, it brings forth much fruit.” Only through the sacrifice of Christ, the Seed, could fruit be brought forth for the service of God. So with all who bring forth fruit as workers together with Christ, self-love, self-interest, must perish; the life must be cast into the furrow of the world's need. But the law of self-sacrifice is the law of self-preservation. The husbandman preserves his grain by casting it away. So the life that will be preserved is the life that is freely given in service to God and man. The fulfilment of the promise that we shall be joint-heirs with Christ rests upon our willingness to deny self. When Christ takes possession of His kingdom, it will be those who on this earth have followed Him in self-denial and self-sacrifice that will receive the reward of everlasting life.’ *Signs of the Times, June 10, 1908.*

2. What example of self-denial are we shown?➤ **Luke 5:27-28** —➤ **Luke 18:28-30** —

NOTE : ‘Matthew “left all, rose up, and followed Him.” There was no hesitation, no questioning, no thought of the lucrative business to be exchanged for poverty and hardship. It was enough for him that he was to be with Jesus, that he might listen to His words, and unite with Him in His work. So it was with the disciples previously called. When Jesus bade Peter and his companions follow Him, immediately they left their boats and nets. Some of these disciples had friends dependent on them for support; but when they received the Saviour's invitation, they did not hesitate, and inquire, How shall I live, and sustain my family? They were obedient to the call; and when afterward Jesus asked them, “When I sent you without purse, and scrip, and shoes, lacked ye anything?” they could answer, “Nothing.” Luke 22:35.’ *A Call to Stand Apart, page 16.*

*Tuesday***1. How did Moses exhibit this spirit of self-denial?**➤ **Hebrews 11:24-26** —➤ **Numbers 12:3** —

NOTE : ‘True happiness will be the result of every self-denial, every crucifixion of self. One victory won, the next is more easily gained. Had Moses neglected the opportunities and privileges granted him of God, he would have neglected the light from heaven and would have been a disappointed, miserable man.’ *Testimonies, volume 4, page 345.*

2. Does self-denial mean a joyless existence?

➤ **John 15:11** —

➤ **John 16:24** —

NOTE : ‘When we make our Christian experience appear to unbelievers, or to one another, as one that is joyless, filled with trial, doubt, and perplexity, we dishonour God; we do not correctly represent Jesus or the Christian faith. We have a friend in Jesus, who has given us the most marked evidence of His love, and who is able and willing to give life and salvation to all who come unto Him. Why, then, do we not bring cheerfulness, hope, and thankfulness into our religious life? Why do we not praise God for His goodness, and speak with confidence of what He is doing for us? . . . It is our privilege to believe the promises of the word of God, and accept the blessings that Jesus loves to bestow, that our joy may be full.’ *Review and Herald, July 20, 1886.*

Wednesday

1. How did Jesus describe the sort of life He came to bring?

➤ **John 10:10** —

NOTE : ‘There can be no such thing as a narrow life for any soul connected with Christ. Those who love Jesus with heart and mind and soul and their neighbour as themselves have a broad field in which to use their ability and influence. There is no talent to be used for selfish gratification. Self must die, and our lives be hid with Christ in God.’ *In Heavenly Places, page 60.*

“I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly.” John 10:10. This life is what we must have, and we must have it more abundantly. God will breathe this life into every soul that dies to self and lives to Christ. But entire self-renunciation is required. Unless this takes place, we carry with us the evil that destroys our happiness. But when self is crucified, Christ lives in us, and the power of the Spirit attends our efforts.’ *Our High Calling, page 21.*

2. What is the basis for the Christian's joy?

➤ **1 Peter 1:3-8** —

NOTE : ‘Sweet is the joy and peace experienced by those who close the door to Satan, and open it to Christ. The one who has struggled day by day for the victory, and conquered, knows how to help others. He has patience to try to strengthen the faint-hearted who have been overcome again and again. By precept and example the one who has had to watch and pray and fight the battles against self, can reveal to others the preciousness of faith and hope, which give light amid the darkness, joy in the midst of sorrow.’ *Signs of the Times, October 12, 1891.*

Thursday

1. What is the source of the Christian's joy?

➤ Galatians 5:22 —

NOTE : 'There is joy and satisfaction in the service of God; the Christian is not left to walk in uncertain paths; he is not left to vain regrets and disappointments. If we do not have the pleasures of this life, we may still be joyful in looking to the life beyond. But even here Christians may have the joy of communion with Christ; they may have the light of His love, the perpetual comfort of His presence. Every step in life may bring us closer to Jesus, may give us a deeper experience of His love, and may bring us one step nearer to the blessed home of peace. There is peace in believing, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Believing brings peace, and trusting in God brings joy. Believe, believe! my soul says, believe. Rest in God. He is able to keep that which you have committed to His trust. He will bring you off more than conqueror through Him who hath loved you.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 121.

2. What precious promises did Jesus make to those who practise self-denial?

➤ Luke 18:29-30 —

NOTE : 'These are precious promises. Can you not rely upon them? Can you not have implicit trust, knowing that He is faithful who has promised? Let your trembling faith grasp the promises of God. Bear your whole weight upon them with unwavering faith; for they will not, they cannot fail.' *Review & Herald*, May 26, 1885.

'Those who really feel an interest in the cause of God, and are willing to venture something for its advancement, will find it a sure and safe investment. Some will have a hundredfold in this life, and in the world to come life everlasting. But all will not receive their hundredfold in this life, because they cannot bear it. If entrusted with much, they would become unwise stewards. The Lord withholds it for their good; but their treasure in heaven will be secure. How much better is such an investment as this!' *Counsels on Stewardship*, page 232.

Preparation Day

1. What sense of proportion did Paul advise us to have?

➤ 2 Corinthians 4:17 —

NOTE : 'Sacrifice all to God. Lay all upon His altar, self, property, and all, a living sacrifice. It will take all to enter glory. Lay up for yourselves treasure in heaven, where no thief can approach or rust corrupt. Ye must be partakers of Christ's sufferings here if ye would be partakers with Him of His glory hereafter. Heaven will be cheap enough, if we obtain it through suffering. We must deny self all along the way, die to self daily, let Jesus alone appear, and keep His glory continually in view. The work of salvation is not child's play, to be taken hold of at will and let alone at pleasure. It is the steady purpose, the untiring effort, that will gain the victory at last. It is he who endureth to the end that shall be saved. It

is they who patiently continue in well-doing that shall have eternal life and the immortal reward.' *The Faith I Live By*, page 359.

Mission Story

Happiest Boy in India

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

A 10-year-old boy wanted to go to school so badly that he actually got sick.

Joshua lived in India, and he had never gone to school. He had a good mind. Whatever he heard, he remembered. His parents tried their best to give him a good childhood, but they couldn't afford to send him to school.

Joshua lived in a city where he was surrounded by boys and girls just like him. The boys and girls had poor parents who couldn't send them to school. So, while their parents worked in factories or on farms, the children played the whole day.

Joshua liked to play. But more than playing, he wanted to learn. After a while, Joshua stopped coming out of his house to play. He became sick as he sadly sat at home, wishing to go to school.

Father grew worried. Mother grew worried. Even the neighbours grew worried.

One day, Father and Mother took Joshua to the market to buy food. As they were walking to the market, they passed the gate of a Seventh-day Adventist school. Joshua saw children gathered for morning worship. The boys wore the school uniform of navy-blue pants and white shirts, and the girls wore navy-blue skirts and white blouses. They held schoolbooks in their hands and were singing about Jesus.

Joshua stood by the gate to listen. His face filled with longing to be with them, to wear the uniform that they were wearing, to carry the books that they were carrying, and most of all to sing the songs they were singing. Father and Mother saw his longing gaze. They went inside to ask about the school.

A teacher told them that the school was Christian and that there also was a church on the campus. He introduced them to the church's pastor.

Father and Mother were not Christian. They did not know Jesus. But they knew about prayer because they prayed to their own gods. Father asked the pastor to pray to his God for Joshua.

"Ask your God to help our son go to school," Father said.

The pastor prayed, "Dear Jesus, please help Joshua to obtain a good education. Amen."

After the prayer, the pastor told Father, Mother, and Joshua about the God to whom he had just prayed.

"Jesus is the God who created the heavens and the earth," he said. "Jesus created you and me. Jesus created Joshua."

Father asked if Joshua could study at the school even though the family didn't have any money. He said the boy was sick because he wanted so much to go to school.

The pastor said that he would speak with the school principal.

Joshua's eyes lit up with hope. He had listened carefully to the pastor's prayer, and now he resolved to pray to the pastor's God for help. "I will pray to Jesus to let me go to school," he said.

The pastor was impressed. “God answers prayers of faith,” he said. And God did.

Today, Joshua is 13 and perhaps the happiest boy in India! He wears his navy-blue and white uniform proudly and joins the other children in singing loudly and happily. The principal found someone to pay for his schooling, and Joshua is studying hard. He dreams about becoming a pastor when he grows up.

“The pastor and the principal were so kind to us,” he said. “They introduced us to Jesus. I’m so thankful that Jesus answered my prayers.”

Study Help

Sabbath, January 20th, 2024

Christ's Object Lessons, Chapter ??, pp ??

“Coming Soon”

LESSON 5

“I HAVE NO PLEASURE IN THE DEATH OF THE WICKED”

January 27 — February 2

MEMORY VERSE : But Thou art a God ready to pardon, gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and of great kindness, and forsook them not.' Nehemiah 9:17, last part.

STUDY HELP : [Selected Messages, book 1, page 313](#)

SCRIPTURES : Psalm 78

LESSON AIM : To understand the love of God and the wrath of God.

INTRODUCTION : ‘John saw the mercy, the tenderness, and the love of God blending with His holiness, justice, and power. He saw sinners finding a Father in Him of whom their sins had made them afraid. And looking beyond the culmination of the great conflict, he beheld upon Zion “them that had gotten the victory . . . stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God,” and singing “the song of Moses” and the Lamb. Revelation 15:2, 3. The Saviour is presented before John under the symbols of “the Lion of the tribe of Judah” and of “a Lamb as it had been slain.” Revelation 5:5, 6. These symbols represent the union of omnipotent power and self-sacrificing love. The Lion of Judah, so terrible to the rejecters of His grace, will be the Lamb of God to the obedient and faithful. The pillar of fire that speaks terror and wrath to the transgressor of God's law is a token of light and mercy and deliverance to those who have kept His commandments. The arm strong to smite the rebellious will be strong to deliver the loyal. Everyone who is faithful will be saved.' *Acts of the Apostles, page 589.*

*Sabbath Afternoon***1. What is it that provokes the wrath of God?**

➤ **Deuteronomy 29:24-28** —

NOTE : ‘The Jews were gathering about themselves the dark clouds of retribution, and many today, in like manner, are drawing upon themselves the wrath of God, because of opportunities unimproved, the counsels and love of Jesus scorned, and His servants despised and hated for speaking the truth.' *Testimonies, volume 4, page 192.*

*Sunday***1. What sorts of behaviour result from forsaking the Lord?**

- **Ephesians 2:2-3** —
- **Colossians 3:5-6** —

NOTE : ‘The Lord is fitting a people for heaven. The defects of character, the stubborn will, the selfish idolatry, the indulgence of fault-finding, hatred, and contention, provoke the wrath of God and must be put away from His commandment-keeping people. Those living in these sins are deceived and blinded by the wiles of Satan. They think that they are in the light when they are groping in darkness. There are murmurers among us now, even as there were murmurers among ancient Israel. Those who by unwise sympathy encourage men in rebellion when their self-love is smarting beneath merited reproof are not the friends of God, the great Reprover. God will send reproof and warning to His people as long as they continue upon earth. Those who valiantly take their position on the right side, who encourage submission to God's revealed will and strengthen others in their efforts to put away their wrong-doings, are the true friends of the Lord, who in love is trying to correct the errors of His people, that He may wash them and, cleansing them from every defilement and fit them for His holy kingdom.’ *Testimonies, volume 4, pages 180-181.*

2. Is God's wrath directed against those who do not have an opportunity to know Him?

- **Romans 1:18-19** —
- **Compare Acts 17:30** —

NOTE : ‘As God is immutable and changes not, so the truth of God is everlasting and changes not. Any real or apparent differences in God's dealings with men or nations are readily accounted for from the fact that guilt is measured by the degree of light enjoyed, and that Jehovah has not usually brought forth any great moral truth until men have been prepared to receive that truth. In the New Testament there is a fuller and clearer exhibition of the truth than the Old; yet there is no contravening of any great principle or law previously given. The fact that God did not rebuke evils which prevailed at one period, as He did those evils at another period, does not argue that God at the former time connived at the sins of men, but rather that men had not a clear perception of the evil. “The times of this ignorance God winked at, but now He commands all men everywhere to repent.”’ *James White: Advent Review & Sabbath Herald, December 13, 1853.*

*Monday***1. How are we all shown about God?**

- **Romans 1:20** —

➤ **Psalm 19:1-3** —

NOTE : ‘While the Scriptures contain the ‘special revelation’ of God and His will, God gives to all mankind what has been called a ‘general revelation’ of His power and divine attributes. From the things God has created in heaven and in earth, even the most ignorant may discern something of the power and providence of the Creator. Those who choose to ignore this divine revelation are, according to the apostle, ‘without excuse’.

‘Now there are those who when we read the words of our text will say, “Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to worship and serve Him? I know not the Lord neither will I worship nor serve Him.” And not content with making the assertion that they do not know Him, which might be taken as an admission that there are some things of which they are ignorant, they will go so far as to say, “There is no God.” Now we wish to show that there is no excuse for any man making such an assertion, for God has taken away every excuse. We read Romans 1:19, 20: “Because that which may be known of God, is manifest in them, (margin to them) for God hath showed it unto them, for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.” Here we see that they are without excuse because God has shown them the things which reveal Him and which make His power known. Certainly, if any one shows me a thing, I am without excuse for not seeing it. Paul also says that these things are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament shows His handiwork.” Psalms 19:1. Step out of your house in a clear night, and as Isaiah says, “Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who hath created these things, that brings out their host by number, He calls them all by names by the greatness of His might, for that He is strong in power; not one fails.” Yes, go night after night and you will find them all there “not one fails.” Whose all this work? We can only reply in the words already quoted it shows the “handiwork of God.” A. T. Jones: *Signs of the Times*, April 18, 1878.

2. What are we shown of the results of rejecting this revelation of God?

➤ **Romans 1:24-32** —➤ **2 Thessalonians 2:10-12** —

NOTE : ‘Read this description of men in the last days: “This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.” 2 Timothy 3:1-5. Thus it is seen that in the last days men having a form of godliness will reach the same condition in which stood the heathen of old; and that they reach that condition by the same means as did the heathen of old; they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, so God gave them up to their own vile affections; they would not receive the love of the truth, so God gave them up to their own delusion, that they should believe a lie; they “had pleasure in unrighteousness,” and as “all unrighteousness is sin” this is only to say that they had pleasure in sin, therefore God gave them up to their own wishes and their own ways. As they love sin more than they love God, and then persist in their love of sin by rejecting the very means by which God endeavours to save them, the Lord can do

nothing more; it is impossible to reach them; they will have their own way; that way is in the love of sin; and in choosing that way rather than the love of the truth that they might be saved, they give themselves over to Satan, who works in them “with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.” *A. T. Jones: Signs of the Times, November 10, 1887.*

Tuesday

1. What are we told about the final outpouring of God's wrath in the last days?

➤ **Revelation 14:10** —

➤ **Revelation 16** —

NOTE : ‘Fearful is the issue to which the world is to be brought. The powers of earth, uniting to war against the commandments of God, will decree that “all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond” (Revelation 13:16), shall conform to the customs of the church by the observance of the false sabbath. All who refuse compliance will be visited with civil penalties, and it will finally be declared that they are deserving of death. On the other hand, the law of God enjoining the Creator's rest day demands obedience and threatens wrath against all who transgress its precepts. With the issue thus clearly brought before him, whoever shall trample upon God's law to obey a human enactment receives the mark of the beast; he accepts the sign of allegiance to the power which he chooses to obey instead of God. The warning from heaven is: “If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive his mark in his forehead, or in his hand, the same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture into the cup of His indignation.” Revelation 14:9, 10. But not one is made to suffer the wrath of God until the truth has been brought home to his mind and conscience, and has been rejected. There are many who have never had an opportunity to hear the special truths for this time. The obligation of the fourth commandment has never been set before them in its true light. He who reads every heart and tries every motive will leave none who desire a knowledge of the truth, to be deceived as to the issues of the controversy. The decree is not to be urged upon the people blindly. Everyone is to have sufficient light to make his decision intelligently.’ *Great Controversy, pages 604-605.*

2. At what other times was the wrath of God poured out without mixture?

➤ **Genesis 7:19-22** —

➤ **Genesis 19:24-25** —

➤ **Matthew 24:37-39** —

➤ **Luke 17:29-30** —

NOTE : ‘The probation for the inhabitants of the Noachic world was ended. Noah went into the ark and there was seen a bright light; an angel of heaven came and shut the massive door. Noah and his family were

shut into the ark and the unrighteous were shut out. The mercy of God was withdrawn from that polluted and corrupt generation.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 57

'The judgments of God are soon to be poured out upon the earth. "Escape for thy life" is the warning from the angels of God. Other voices are heard saying: "Do not become excited; there is no cause for special alarm." Those who are at ease in Zion cry "Peace and safety," while heaven declares that swift destruction is about to come upon the transgressor. The young, the frivolous, the pleasure-loving, consider these warnings as idle tales and turn from them with a jest. Parents are inclined to think their children about right in the matter, and all sleep on at ease. Thus it was at the destruction of the old world and when Sodom and Gomorrah were consumed by fire. On the night prior to their destruction the cities of the plain rioted in pleasure. Lot was derided for his fears and warnings. But it was these scoffers that perished in the flames. That very night the door of mercy was forever closed to the wicked, careless inhabitants of Sodom.' *Conflict & Courage*, page 53.

Wednesday

1. What precious insight of God's character did John emphasise?

➤ 1 John 4:16 —

NOTE : 'The inhabitants of all worlds will be convinced of the justice of the law in the overthrow of rebellion and the eradication of sin. When man, beguiled by Satan's power, disobeyed the divine law, God could not, even to save the lost race, change that law. God is love, and to change the law would be to deny Himself, to overthrow those principles with which are bound up the good of the universe. The working out of the plan of salvation reveals not only to men, but to angels, the character of God, and through the ages of eternity the malignant character of sin will be understood by the cost to the Father and the Son of the redemption of a rebel race. In Christ, the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world, all worlds will behold the marks of the curse, and angels as well as men will ascribe honour and glory to the Redeemer, through whom they are all made secure from apostasy. The efficiency of the cross guards the redeemed race from the danger of a second fall. The life and death of Christ effectually unveils the deceptions of Satan, and refutes his claims. The sacrifice of Christ for a fallen world draws not only men, but angels, unto Him in bonds of indissoluble union.' *Bible Echo*, July 15, 1893.

2. To whom does God show His love?

➤ John 3:16-17 —

➤ 1 John 4:9-10 —

➤ Romans 5:8 —

NOTE : 'God gave men and women unmistakable evidence that He loved them, and that justice is the foundation of His throne and the evidence of His love. He carried out the penalty of transgression, but let it fall upon a Substitute, even His only begotten Son. God could not abolish His law to save the

human race, for this would immortalise transgression and place the whole world under Satan's control. But He "so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." In this wonderful gift is shown the depth of God's goodness. He so loved sinful people that He gave Himself in His Son, that they might have another opportunity, another trial, another chance to show their obedience. He so loved men and women that in order to save them He gave His Son to the world, and in that gift He gave all heaven! This was the only provision God could make. By this gift a way was provided for sinners to return to their loyalty.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 279.

Thursday

1. How does God express His reluctance to punish sinners?

➤ Ezekiel 18:32 —

➤ Ezekiel 33:11 —

NOTE : 'God does not desire the destruction of any. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will ye die?" Ezekiel 33:11. Throughout the period of probationary time His Spirit is entreating men to accept the gift of life. It is only those who reject His pleading that will be left to perish. God has declared that sin must be destroyed as evil and ruinous to the universe. Those who cling to sin will perish in its destruction.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 123.

2. How does the Bible describe God's punishment of sinners?

➤ Isaiah 28:21 —

NOTE : 'To our merciful God the act of punishment is a strange act. "As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked." Ezekiel 33:11. The Lord is "merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, . . . forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." Yet He will "by no means clear the guilty." "The Lord is slow to anger, and great in power, and will not at all acquit the wicked." Exodus 34:6, 7; Nahum 1:3. By terrible things in righteousness He will vindicate the authority of His downtrodden law. The severity of the retribution awaiting the transgressor may be judged by the Lord's reluctance to execute justice. The nation with which He bears long, and which He will not smite until it has filled up the measure of its iniquity in God's account, will finally drink the cup of wrath unmixed with mercy. When Christ ceases His intercession in the sanctuary, the unmingled wrath threatened against those who worship the beast and his image and receive his mark (Revelation 14:9, 10), will be poured out. The plagues upon Egypt when God was about to deliver Israel were similar in character to those more terrible and extensive judgments which are to fall upon the world just before the final deliverance of God's people. . . . Terrible as these inflictions are, God's justice stands fully vindicated. The angel of God declares: "Thou art righteous, O Lord, . . . because Thou hast judged thus. For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and Thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy." Revelation 16:2-6. By condemning the people of God to death, they have as truly incurred the guilt of their blood as if it had been shed by their hands.' *Great Controversy*, page 627.

*Preparation Day***1. In considering the paradox of a God of Love and a God of wrath, what should we keep in mind?**

➤ **Psalm 103:8-14** —

NOTE : ‘The Lord is represented in the Old Testament as well as in the New Testament not only as a God of justice but as a Father of infinite love. The psalmist says: “The Lord executes righteousness and judgment for all that are oppressed. . . . The Lord is merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. . . . He hath not dealt with us after our sins; nor rewarded us according to our iniquities. For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is His mercy toward them that fear Him.”’ *Lift Him Up*, page 36.

2. Why must God destroy the wicked?

➤ **Revelation 21:4** —

➤ **Isaiah 35:10** —

➤ **Isaiah 35:4-6** —

NOTE : ‘The love of a holy God is an amazing principle, which can stir the universe on our behalf during the hours of our probation and trial. But after the season of our probation, if we are found transgressors of God's law, the God of love will be found a minister of vengeance. God makes no compromise with sin. The disobedient will be punished. The wrath of God fell upon His beloved Son as Christ hung upon the cross of Calvary in the transgressor's place. The love of God now reaches out to embrace the lowest, vilest sinner that will come to Christ with contrition. It reaches out to transform the sinner into an obedient, faithful child of God; but not a soul can be saved if he continues in sin.’ *Selected Messages*, book 1, page 313.

Mission Story

Soccer on Sabbath

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

Cleaning lived for soccer. He played soccer whenever he had free time after school in his hometown in north-eastern India. When he moved to another town to prepare for state exams, he found other teens who played soccer and joined them on Saturdays.

But Cleaning was astonished to hear people singing hymns and praying to God on the other side of the soccer field as he played on Saturdays. The field was located beside the campus of a Seventh-day Adventist school and church.

Cleaning had been raised in a Christian family. He had studied at Christian schools all his life. But he had never heard of Christians worshipping on Saturday.

As he chased the ball around the field, he wondered, “Why are these people worshipping on Saturday instead of Sunday? Who are these people?”

Cleaning passed the state exams and completed 10th grade. He applied for 11th grade at a school in the town where he had prepared for the state exams, but he was rejected. Disappointed, he asked two friends for advice. Both boys planned to study at the Adventist school beside the soccer field, and they encouraged him to join them.

Cleaning applied to the school and was accepted. He was happy.

As the months passed, he learned why people had sung hymns and prayed to God while he was playing soccer on Saturdays. At the school, he read in Genesis 2 that God had set aside the seventh day of the week, Saturday, as a holy day at the end of the Creation week. He saw in Exodus 20 that God had reminded His people about the importance of keeping the Sabbath in the Ten Commandments. He realized that Jesus Himself had faithfully kept the Sabbath while living on earth and had never changed the day of worship to Sunday.

Cleaning told his parents that he wanted to join the Adventist Church. His parents, however, balked at the idea. Not wanting to disappoint them, Cleaning reluctantly decided against baptism.

Cleaning’s hometown didn’t have an Adventist church, and he missed Sabbath worship services when he returned home for vacation. He spoke to his parents and 10 brothers and sisters about what he had learned about the Sabbath at school. But they didn’t want to listen.

“It’s good that you are a student at the Adventist school,” his mother said. “But you don’t need to become an Adventist.”

Father sounded a more ominous note.

“If you choose to become an Adventist, you will have no part in this family,” he said. “You will be thrown out of the family.”

After graduating from 12th grade at the Adventist school, Cleaning enrolled in a non-Christian college in the same town. But he felt uncomfortable. He sensed that he didn’t belong. He longed to study in a Christian college.

While playing soccer one day, Cleaning heard from an Adventist teammate about an organization of Adventist student missionaries called the 1000 Missionary Movement. Cleaning liked the idea of being a student missionary, and he sought out the local leaders of the organization.

Before long, he joined the Adventist Church and spent eight months as a student missionary, teaching fourth-grade children.

His parents were not pleased that he had become an Adventist. But he no longer lived at home, and there was little that they could do to punish him.

Meanwhile, a desire grew in Cleaning's heart to become a pastor, and he enrolled at Spicer Adventist University.

Today, he is a second-year theology major who is hoping to reach the hearts of young people through soccer.

"My aim is to become a pastor and also reach young people in the community through soccer," he said. "I would like to open a soccer academy and minister to young people. As you know, many young people love soccer. Through this sport, I want to reach young people and bring them to Jesus Christ."

He said he has found freedom in knowing and following the Bible.

He longs for his family to enjoy the same freedom.

"I strongly believe in the words of John the apostle in John 8:32, 'And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free,'" he said. "Please, pray for me as I prepare to become a minister of the gospel."

Study Help**Sabbath, January 27th, 2024****Selected Messages, book 1, Chapter 47, page 313****“The Truth as it is in Jesus”****“Mature In Christian Experience”**

It is natural for us to think more highly of ourselves than we ought to think; but although it is painful for us to know ourselves as we really are, yet we should pray that God will reveal us to ourselves, even as He sees us. But we should not cease to pray when we have simply asked for a revelation of ourselves; we should pray that Jesus may be revealed to us as a sin-pardoning Saviour. When we see Jesus as He is, earnest desires should awaken in our hearts to be rid of self, that we may be filled with all the fullness of Christ. When this is our experience, we shall do good to one another, and use all the means within our reach to attain unto godliness. We must cleanse our souls from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfect holiness in the fear of God.

The love of a holy God is an amazing principle, which can stir the universe in our behalf during the hours of our probation and trial. But after the season of our probation, if we are found transgressors of God's law, the God of love will be found a minister of vengeance. God makes no compromise with sin. The disobedient will be punished. The wrath of God fell upon His beloved Son as Christ hung upon the cross of Calvary in the transgressor's place. The love of God now reaches out to embrace the lowest, vilest sinner that will come to Christ with contrition. It reaches out to transform the sinner into an obedient, faithful child of God; but not a soul can be saved if he continues in sin.

Sin is the transgression of the law, and the arm that is now mighty to save will be strong to punish when the transgressor passes the bounds that limit divine forbearance. He who refuses to seek for life, who will not search the Scriptures to see what is truth, lest he should be condemned in his practices, will be left to blindness of mind and to the deceptions of Satan. To the same degree that the penitent and obedient are shielded by God's love, the impenitent and disobedient will be left to the result of their own ignorance and hardness of heart, because they receive not the love of the truth that they may be saved.

There are many who profess Christ, but who never become mature Christians. They admit that man is fallen, that his faculties are weakened, that he is unfitted for moral achievement, but they say that Christ has borne all the burden, all the suffering, all the self-denial, and they are willing to let Him bear it. They say that there is nothing for them to do but to believe; but Christ said, "If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matthew 16:24). Jesus kept the commandments of God. The Pharisees declared that He broke the fourth commandment because He made a man every whit whole on the Sabbath day; but Jesus turned to the accusing Pharisees, and asked, "Is it lawful on the sabbath days to do good, or to do evil? to save life, or to destroy it? And looking round about upon them all, he said unto the man, Stretch forth thy hand. And he did so: and his hand was restored whole as the other. And they were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus" (Luke 6:9-11).

This miracle, instead of convincing the Pharisees that Jesus was the Son of God, filled them with rage, because many who witnessed the miracle glorified God. Jesus declared that His work of mercy was lawful on the Sabbath day. The Pharisees declared that it was not lawful. Which shall we believe? Christ said, "I have kept my Father's commandments, and abide in his love" (John 15:10). Then it is certainly safe for us to follow the way of Christ, and keep the commandments. God has given us faculties which

should be constantly exercised in cooperating with Jesus, in working out our own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God that works in us to will and to do of His good pleasure.

LESSON 6

“UNTO EVERYONE THAT HATH SHALL BE GIVEN”

February 3 — February 9

MEMORY VERSE : For unto everyone that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.' Matthew 25:29

STUDY HELP : [That I May Know Him, page 326](#)

SCRIPTURE : Matthew 25:14-30

LESSON AIM : To study the paradox that to those who have, more will be given, but from those who have not, even what they have will be taken away.

INTRODUCTION : ‘You have often thought: “If I had been in another position in life, and had had the advantages that many others have had, I might have had a larger capital to invest for my Lord.” The Lord knew all about this matter when He selected you for the work He has given you to do. In God's beautiful arrangement, the one talent may be increased by use, even becoming ten. . . . God will accept according to what a man hath, and not according to what he hath not. God has given you your talents. . . . All He asks of you is just to use the talents entrusted. If you think that God has given you five talents, then be consoled that He does not require of you the improvement of ten.' *The Upward Look, page 343.*

*Sabbath Afternoon***1. What paradoxical parable did Jesus tell?**

➤ **Luke 19:12-25 —**

NOTE : ‘In the parable of the talents the man to whom was entrusted one talent manifested a grudging spirit and hid his money so that his lord could not be benefited by it. When his master required him to give an account of his stewardship, he excused his neglect by laying blame upon his lord. “I knew thee [he professes to be acquainted with his lord] that thou art an hard man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strewed: and I was afraid [that all my improvements would not be mine, but that you would claim them], and went and hid thy talent in the earth: lo, there thou hast that is thine. His lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strewed: thou ought therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and then at my coming I should have received mine own with usury. Take therefore the talent from him, and give it unto him which hath ten talents. For unto everyone that hath [made a right use of my goods] shall be given, and he shall have abundance [for I can trust him, knowing that he will make right improvement of what is lent him]: but from him that hath not [who has been fearful to trust me] shall be taken away even that which he hath. [I shall deprive him of what he claims as his;

he shall forfeit all right of trust; I will take away his talents and give them to one who will improve them.] And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness.” *Testimonies, volume 5, page 282.*

Sunday

1. What lesson did Christ draw from this parable?

➤ **Luke 19:26** —

NOTE : ‘If talents are well improved, increased talents are the result. “Unto every one that hath shall be given.”

If Heaven's bestowed gifts are not appreciated and improved as God's entrusted capital, if they are buried in worldliness, in selfishness, these powers capable of blessing humanity decrease, and because the God of heaven is not sought after and glorified as the source of all these precious endowments, He is dishonoured, and He cuts off the supply. In order to increase, to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we must put to use by human effort our physical and intellectual powers. Those who hoard up their talents to rust, unemployed, unimproved, must not think that such action in any way relieves them from responsibility, for God holds us responsible for the good we might do if we took up the yoke with Christ, lifting His burdens, learning more of His meekness and lowliness of heart day by day. The interest continues to accumulate on buried talents, and instead of decreasing our responsibility the burying of our talent only increases and intensifies it.’ *That I May Know Him, page 326.*

2. What example are we given of one who had much?

➤ **Mark 10:17-21** —

NOTE : ‘The ruler's possessions were entrusted to him that he might prove himself a faithful steward; he was to dispense these goods for the blessing of those in need. So God now entrusts men with means, with talents and opportunities, that they may be His agents in helping the poor and the suffering. He who uses his entrusted gifts as God designs becomes a co-worker with the Saviour. He wins souls to Christ, because he is a representative of His character. To those who, like the young ruler, are in high positions of trust and have great possessions, it may seem too great a sacrifice to give up all in order to follow Christ. But this is the rule of conduct for all who would become His disciples. Nothing short of obedience can be accepted. Self-surrender is the substance of the teachings of Christ. Often it is presented and enjoined in language that seems authoritative, because there is no other way to save man than to cut away those things which, if entertained, will demoralise the whole being.’ *A Call To Stand Apart, page 15.*

Monday

1. How did this man respond to Christ's challenge to employ his riches for the blessing of others?

➤ **Mark 10:22** —

NOTE : ‘For our sake Christ lived a life of sorrow and privation. He was pure and holy, yet on Him was laid the iniquity of us all. He gave relief to the afflicted; yet He Himself was “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief.” With a touch of His hand He healed the sick; yet He suffered grievous bodily pain. He cast out demons with a word, and delivered those bound by Satan's temptations; yet temptations such as have never beset any man assailed Him. He raised the dead by His power; yet He suffered the agony of a most terrible death. All this Christ suffered for us. What are we giving Him in return? He, the Majesty of heaven, submitted patiently to scorn and insult. Can we complain if the service of God requires patience and self-denial? He who laid the foundations of the world consented to become a servant for our sake; and with His own footsteps smoothed the rough path for our feet. Should we look upon any sacrifice as too great? Should we hesitate to render to God our reasonable service? There is no religion in the enthronement of self. God asks us to be true to Him, to trade upon the talents He has given us, that we may gain others. His will must be made our will in all things. Any departure from this standard degrades our moral nature. It may result in lifting us up, in enriching us, and in seating us beside princes; but in the eyes of God we are unclean and unholy. We have sold our birthright for selfish interest and gain, and in the books of heaven it is written of us, Weighed in the balances of the sanctuary, and found wanting.’ *Signs of the Times, January 21, 1897.*

2. What example are we given of one who was willing to use all she had for the Lord?

➤ **Mark 12:41-42** —

NOTE : ‘Even the very poor should bring their offerings to God. They are to be sharers of the grace of Christ by denying self to help those whose need is more pressing than their own. The poor man's gift, the fruit of self-denial, comes up before God as fragrant incense. And every act of self-sacrifice strengthens the spirit of beneficence in the giver's heart, allying him more closely to the One who was rich, yet for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be rich.’ *Acts of the Apostles, page 341.*

Tuesday

1. How did Jesus compare her with others who were contributing to the Lord's treasury?

➤ **Mark 12:43-44** —

NOTE : ‘Jesus said of the poor widow, She “hath cast in more than they all.” The rich had bestowed from their abundance, many of them to be seen and honoured by men. Their large donations had deprived them of no comfort, or even luxury; they had required no sacrifice, and could not be compared in value with the widow's mite. It is the motive that gives character to our acts, stamping them with ignominy or with high moral worth. Not the great things which every eye sees and every tongue praises does God account most precious. The little duties cheerfully done, the little gifts which make no show, and which to human eyes may appear worthless, often stand highest in His sight. A heart of faith and love is dearer to God than the most costly gift. The poor widow gave her living to do the little that she did. She deprived herself of food in order to give those two mites to the cause she loved. And she did it in faith, believing that her heavenly Father would not overlook her great need. It was this unselfish spirit and childlike faith that won the Saviour's commendation. Among the poor there are many who long to

show their gratitude to God for His grace and truth. They greatly desire to share with their more prosperous brethren in sustaining His service. These souls should not be repulsed. Let them lay up their mites in the bank of heaven. If given from a heart filled with love for God, these seeming trifles become consecrated gifts, priceless offerings, which God smiles upon and blesses.' *Desire of Ages*, page 615.

2. Who was one person who employed her talent for the Lord and His people?

➤ Romans 16:1-2 —

NOTE : “A lover of hospitality” is among the specifications given by the Holy Spirit as marking one who is to bear responsibility in the church. And to the whole church is given the injunction: “Use hospitality one to another without grudging. As every man hath received the gift, even so minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.” 1 Peter 4:9, 10. These admonitions have been strangely neglected. Even among those who profess to be Christians, true hospitality is little exercised. Among our own people the opportunity of showing hospitality is not regarded as it should be, as a privilege and blessing. There is altogether too little sociability, too little of a disposition to make room for two or three more at the family board, without embarrassment or parade. Some plead that “it is too much trouble.” It would not be if you would say: “We have made no special preparation, but you are welcome to what we have.” By the unexpected guest a welcome is appreciated far more than is the most elaborate preparation. . . . The apostle Paul has given an illustration of this. To the church at Rome he says: “I commend unto you Phoebe our sister, which is a servant of the church which is at Cenchrea: that ye receive her in the Lord, as becomes saints, and that ye assist her in whatsoever business she hath need of you: for she hath been a succourer of many, and of myself also.” Romans 16:1, 2. Phoebe entertained the apostle, and she was in a marked manner an entertainer of strangers who needed care. Her example should be followed by the churches of today.' *Testimonies*, volume 6, pages 342-343.

Wednesday

1. What does faithfulness in little things reveal about our characters?

➤ Luke 16:10 —

NOTE : ‘The importance of the little things is often underrated because they are small; but they supply much of the actual discipline of life. There are really no nonessentials in the Christian's life. Our character building will be full of peril while we underrate the importance of the little things.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 356.

2. What is God looking for in His people, rather than great talents?

➤ 2 Corinthians 8:12 —

NOTE : ‘In times past, God has used humble men, and because of their faith and devotion, they have often accomplished more than many more pretentious labourers. They realised their weakness and

dependence upon God; and by letters, by tracts, by personal effort in appeals and warnings, by a well-ordered life and godly conversation, they turned many from error to truth, from the path of transgression to obedience to God's law. The mighty power of grace worked with them, and success attended their efforts. "God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, hath God chosen, yea, and things which are not, to bring to naught things that are: that no flesh should glory in His presence." *Review & Herald, June 24, 1884.*

Thursday

1. What example of faithful service does the Bible reveal?

➤ **1 Kings 19:19-21** —

NOTE : 'When Elisha followed Elijah, and travelled with him, he was first given the position of a servant; he had to perform the humble duty of pouring water on the hands of Elijah. Yet he kept at the humble work until the last journey. There it was to be revealed to him that Elijah was to be translated. Called as Elisha was from the twelve yoke of oxen and the plough, he followed Elijah without complaint, leaving a wealthy home where he was beloved, to attend the prophet in his uncertain life. He willingly fulfilled the very humblest duties. His connection with Elijah revealed that he had traits of character that would endure test and trial, that he was a valuable young man with precious traits of character. Trials and temptations he had in abundance, but he relied upon God in trying circumstances. His surroundings of wealth and comfort were a temptation. In his home he was fully capable of ruling, but in the service of Elijah he must obtain an experience, he must learn how to serve under a ruler, that he might learn to serve God.' *Christ Triumphant, page 169.*

2. How was Elisha spoken of when the king of Judah was seeking a prophet?

➤ **2 Kings 3:11** —

NOTE : 'What was the first work of Elisha? It was to take up the little things, and do them with heartiness. He is spoken of as pouring water on the hands of Elijah his master. He was the prophet's personal attendant. Any work, however small it may appear, that is done for the Master with a thorough surrender of self, is as acceptable to Him as the highest service. Humble, willing service is before everyone who claims to be a child of God. After Elisha had been some time in the service of Elijah, he was called to take his place in the first rank. No one in that time was to be greater than he. He had worked under Elijah as a learner, and the time came when the head manager was removed, and the one under him came to the front; and as in Elijah there was a preparedness to be translated, so Elisha was prepared to take his place as the successor of the prophet.' *Christ Triumphant, page 168.*

*Preparation Day***1. With what words will the Lord greet those who have been faithful in using and developing the talents entrusted to them?**

➤ **Matthew 25:23** —

NOTE : ‘The Master will require each of His stewards to give an account of his stewardship, to show what he has gained with the talents entrusted to him. Those to whom rewards are given will impute no merit to themselves for their diligent trading; they will give all the glory to God. They speak of that which was delivered to them, as “Thy pound,” not their own. When they speak of their gain, they are careful to state whence it came. The capital was advanced by the Master. They have traded upon it successfully, and return the principal and interest to the Giver. He rewards their efforts as if the merit belonged to them, when they owe all to the grace and mercy of the bountiful Giver. His words of unqualified approval fall upon their ears: “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.”’
Testimonies, volume 2, page 284.

2. What does the joy of the Lord entail?

➤ **Psalms 16:11** —

➤ **1 Corinthians 2:9** —

NOTE : ‘I want to tell you that Heaven is worth winning. It should be the aim of your life to fit yourself for association with the redeemed, with holy angels, and with Jesus, the world's Redeemer. If we could have but one view of the celestial city, we would never wish to dwell on earth again. There are beautiful landscapes on earth, and I enjoy all these prospects of loveliness in nature. I associate them with the Creator. But I know that if I love God, and keep His commandments, there is a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory reserved in Heaven for me. . . . Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it.’ *Maranatha, page 355.*

Mission Story

Much Awaited Child

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

More than anything, a man and his wife wanted to have a child in India.

They went to many doctors for help. But no child was born.

“We can’t go to the doctor anymore,” the man told his wife. “He said he can’t help.”

But he had an idea. “Let’s just pray for God to give us a child,” he said.

The man and his wife prayed and prayed. But no child was born.

A year passed. Two years passed. Twelve long years passed, and no child was born.

Friends grew worried. Some tried to give advice to the man and his wife. Others teased them for not having a child.

But the man and his wife kept praying. They knelt on their knees at 3 o’clock every morning and told God about their desire for a child. They spoke to God as if they were sharing a heavy burden with a friend.

“Dear God, we are being ridiculed,” the man said. “People are laughing at us. We need a child.”

“Please help us,” the woman said.

Then the man’s brother and his wife had an idea.

“We already have two children,” the brother said.

“We would be happy to have a third child and give the child to you,” his wife said.

The idea was a big surprise to the man and his wife. They were so happy that they cried. They thanked God for giving them such a wonderful brother and his wife.

Nine months later, little Moses was born. The man and his wife grinned from ear to ear when they saw the baby for the first time in the hospital. The wife had never been happier in her life.

But then her happiness doubled. That same day, she learned that she was pregnant with a baby of her own. “Finally, God has heard our prayers!” she said. “God has given us not one child but two!”

The man also was very happy. He was so happy that he couldn’t sleep all that night.

Nine months later, little Daniel was born.

Today, the man and his wife are father and mother to not one but two little boys. Moses and Daniel have brought much joy into the home. The boys are growing up together. The boys have gone through sicknesses and good health together. Most importantly, the boys are learning about the God who hears prayers together.

Study Help***Sabbath, February 3rd, 2024*****That I May Know Him, Chapter 11 pp. 326****“A Day of Reckoning”****November 26th**

For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath. [Matthew 25:29]

If talents are well improved, increased talents are the result. "Unto every one that hath shall be given." . . . If Heaven's bestowed gifts are not appreciated and improved as God's intrusted capital--if they are buried in worldliness, in selfishness--these powers capable of blessing humanity decrease, and because the God of heaven is not sought after and glorified as the source of all these precious endowments, He is dishonoured, and He cuts off the supply. In order to increase, to grow in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, we must put to use by human effort our physical and intellectual powers.

Those who hoard up their talents to rust, unemployed, unimproved, must not think that such action in any way relieves them from responsibility, for God holds us responsible for the good we might do if we took up the yoke with Christ, lifting His burdens, learning more of His meekness and lowliness of heart day by day. The interest continues to accumulate on buried talents, and instead of decreasing our responsibility the burying of our talent only increases and intensifies it.

Let the human agent consider the solemn fact that the day of reckoning is just before us, and that we are daily deciding what our eternal destiny shall be. The Master examines every individual case, dealing personally with the talents entrusted by Him. O solemn day of reckoning; that day which will bring paleness to many faces; that day in which the words shall be spoken to many, "Thou art weighed in the balances, and found wanting"! It will be an awful thing to be found "wanting" when the book of accounts is opened in that great day. . . . Upon the decisions reached in that day depends the future, eternal interest of every soul. We shall have unspeakable joy, or unutterable woe and misery. . . . O how Jesus will love to recompense every true worker! Every faithfully performed duty will receive His blessing. It is then that He pronounces the benediction, "Well done."

LESSON 7

“MY YOKE IS EASY AND MY BURDEN IS LIGHT”

February 10 — February 6

MEMORY VERSE : Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.' Matthew 11:28-30.

STUDY HELP : [Our High Calling, page 100](#)

SCRIPTURES : Matthew 11:28-30

LESSON AIM : To study the paradox over the yoke of Christ, that a yoke can be easy and light.

INTRODUCTION : ‘All who would perfect a Christian character must wear the yoke of Christ. If they would sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus, they must learn of Him while on this earth. Our natures are in need of discipline. They must be conformed to the nature of Jesus Christ, that He may accomplish the good He designs to do for all who will submit to be moulded by yielding their natures to His authority. The great Teacher will yoke up with every soul who will bear His yoke.’ *Our Father Cares*, page 268.

Sabbath Afternoon

1. What does the Bible normally mean when it speaks of the yoke?

- Galatians 5:1—
- Acts 15:10 —
- Jeremiah 27:12 —

NOTE : ‘The yoke has long been a traditional symbol of bondage, or servitude. When the Romans conquered a nations, they made their defeated foes pass under a symbolic yoke to demonstrate their new status as slaves. Two spears were fixed upright in the ground and a third fastened across the tops to make a kind of arch. The conquered army had to pass, disarmed and wearing only their undergarments like slaves, under this yoke as a sign of their degradation. From this custom, the English word 'subjugate' (Latin 'sub iugum missi', sent under the yoke) comes.

*Sunday***1. How was the tyranny of Solomon described and how did his son propose to follow his father's example?**➤ **2 Chronicles 10:10-11** —

NOTE : 'Flattered by the prospect of exercising supreme authority, Rehoboam determined to disregard the counsel of the older men of his realm, and to make the younger men his advisers. Thus it came to pass that on the day appointed, when "Jeroboam and all the people came to Rehoboam" for a statement concerning the policy he intended to pursue, Rehoboam "answered the people roughly, . . . saying, My father made your yoke heavy, and I will add to your yoke: my father also chastised you with whips, but I will chastise you with scorpions." Verses 12-14.' *Prophets & Kings*, page 89.

2. What kind of yoke should the followers of Christ avoid?➤ **2 Corinthians 6:14** —

NOTE : 'What can there be in common between these parties? There can be no fellowship, no communion. The word fellowship means participation, partnership. God employs the strongest figures to show that there should be no union between worldly parties and those who are seeking the righteousness of Christ. What communion can there be between light and darkness, truth and unrighteousness? None whatever. Light represents righteousness; darkness, error, sin, unrighteousness. Christians have come out of darkness into the light. They have put on Christ, and they wear the badge of truth and obedience. They are governed by the elevated and holy principles which Christ expressed in His life. But the world is governed by principles of dishonesty and injustice.' *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 476.

*Monday***1. What strong warning are God's people given about entering into agreements and becoming yoked with those who are not God's people?**➤ **Isaiah 8:11-12** —

NOTE : 'The Lord's injunction, "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14), refers not only to the marriage of Christians with the ungodly, but to all alliances in which the parties are brought into intimate association, and in which there is need of harmony in spirit and action. The Lord gave special direction to Israel to keep themselves distinct from idolaters. They were not to intermarry with the heathen nor form any confederacy with them: "Take heed to thyself, lest thou make a covenant with the inhabitants of the land whither thou go, lest it be for a snare in the midst of thee: but ye shall destroy their altars, break their images, and cut down their groves: for thou shalt worship no other god: for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God" (Exodus 34:12-14).' *Selected Messages*, book 2, page 121.

2. What Bible example are we given of God's people being under the yoke?

➤ **Jeremiah 27:12** —

NOTE : ‘God had said that His people should be saved, that the yoke He would lay upon them should be light, if they submitted uncomplainingly to His plan. Their servitude was represented by a yoke of wood, which was easily borne; but resistance would be met with corresponding severity, represented by the yoke of iron. God designed to hold the king of Babylon in check, that there should be no loss of life nor galling oppression; but by scorning His warning and commands they brought upon themselves the full rigour of bondage.’ *Testimonies, volume 4, page 172.*

Tuesday

1. How was Jeremiah instructed to convey the meaning of the yoke of Babylon?

➤ **Jeremiah 27:1-6** —

NOTE : ‘Jeremiah was commanded to instruct the ambassadors to inform their rulers that God had given them all into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon, and that they were to “serve him, and his son, and his son's son, until the very time of his land come.” Verse 7. . . . The amazement of the assembled council of nations knew no bounds when Jeremiah, carrying the yoke of subjection about his neck, made known to them the will of God.’ *Prophets & Kings, pages 443-444.*

2. In contrast the yoke of Babylon, what yoke does Christ offer?

➤ **Matthew 11:28-29** —

NOTE : ‘Those whose sins are forgiven, who love Jesus, will be united with Him. They will bear the yoke of Christ. This yoke is not to hamper them, not to make their religious life one of unsatisfying toil. No; the yoke of Christ is to be the very means by which the Christian life is to become one of pleasure and joy. The Christian is to be joyful in contemplation of that which the Lord has done in giving His only-begotten Son to die for the world, “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”’ *Messages to Young People, page 138.*

Wednesday

1. What does Christ promise concerning His yoke?

➤ **Matthew 11:30** —

NOTE : ‘The yoke is placed upon the oxen to aid them in drawing the load, to lighten the burden. So with the yoke of Christ. When our will is swallowed up in the will of God, and we use His gifts to bless others, we shall find life's burden light. He who walks in the way of God's commandments is walking in company with Christ, and in His love the heart is at rest. . . . Those who take Christ at His word, and surrender their souls to His keeping, their lives to His ordering, will find peace and quietude. Nothing

of the world can make them sad when Jesus makes them glad by His presence. In perfect acquiescence there is perfect rest. The Lord says, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusts in Thee." Isaiah 26:3. Our lives may seem a tangle; but as we commit ourselves to the wise Master Worker, He will bring out the pattern of life and character that will be to His own glory. And that character which expresses the glory, character, of Christ will be received into the Paradise of God. A renovated race shall walk with Him in white, for they are worthy. As through Jesus we enter into rest, heaven begins here. We respond to His invitation, Come, learn of Me, and in thus coming we begin the life eternal' *Desire of Ages*, page 331.

2. With what words did David express his attitude while wearing the yoke?

➤ Psalm 40:8 —

NOTE : 'The yoke that binds to service is the law of God. The great law of love revealed in Eden, proclaimed upon Sinai, and in the new covenant written in the heart, is that which binds the human worker to the will of God. If we were left to follow our own inclinations, to go just where our will would lead us, we should fall into Satan's ranks and become possessors of his attributes. Therefore God confines us to His will, which is high, and noble, and elevating. He desires that we shall patiently and wisely take up the duties of service. The yoke of service Christ Himself has borne in humanity. He said, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God: yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. "I came down from heaven, not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." John 6:38. Love for God, zeal for His glory, and love for fallen humanity, brought Jesus to earth to suffer and to die. This was the controlling power of His life. This principle He bids us adopt.' *Desire of Ages*, page 329.

Thursday

1. What term did Paul use for one who had worked together with him in the Lord's service?

➤ Philippians 4:3 —

NOTE : 'The yoke is an instrument of service. Cattle are yoked for labour, and the yoke is essential that they may labour effectually.' *Desire of Ages*, page 329.

2. What work is given to those who wish to be accepted and used by God?

➤ Isaiah 58:6 —

NOTE : 'Among the Lord's servants there is to be no commanding. No yokes are to be placed on the necks of God's blood-bought heritage. Every yoke is to be broken. Men and women are more precious in the sight of God than the human mind can estimate. Christ understands their value; for He sacrificed Himself for their redemption. We are His property, the purchase of His life-blood. Sign not away your allegiance to any human jurisdiction or power. "Ye are not your own; for ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's." 1 Corinthians 6:19, 20.' *Christian Leadership*, page 28.

*Preparation Day***1. What should we not seek to do to others?**

- Acts 15:10 —
- Galatians 5:1—

NOTE : 'Men frame for their own necks yokes that seem light and pleasant to wear, but they prove galling in the extreme. Christ sees this, and He says, "Take My yoke upon you. The yoke you would place upon your own neck, thinking it a precise fit, will not fit at all. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me the lessons essential for you to learn." . . . When we bear His yoke and carry His burdens, we can testify that the yoke of Christ is easy and His burdens are light, because He has made provision for these.' *Our High Calling*, page 100. 'We are in danger, by worrying, of manufacturing yokes for our necks. Let us not worry, for thus we make the yoke more severe and the burden heavy. Let us do all we can without worrying, trusting in Christ.' *In Heavenly Places*, page 120.

'The Lord has not given man the work of putting yokes on the necks of His people, binding them in such a way that they are not free to look to Him and to be led and guided by Him. It is not the Lord's design that His people shall be made amenable to their fellow-men, who are themselves wholly dependent on God.' *SDA Bible Commentary*, volume 4, page 1151.

Mission Story

Gospel Goosebumps

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

The advertising executive felt goosebumps on her arms as strains of beautiful choir music wafted into her office.

It was not the first time that she had heard the music while at work behind her desk at the advertising agency that she ran in Bengaluru, India.

It also was not the first time that she had felt goosebumps on her arms because of the music.

But this time, she could not sit still.

Shakuntala went to the window of her second-story office to see what was going on. She could see people coming in and out of a building across the street. She wondered what was going on in the building.

She looked down at her arms and wondered why she was getting goosebumps. A strong desire filled her to walk over to the building and see with her own eyes what was happening.

Slowly, very slowly, she made her way out of her office building and across the street. She felt a little uneasy entering the building because she didn't know anyone there.

Slowly, very slowly, she walked in the front entrance.

"Can I come in and listen to what you are doing?" she asked someone standing near the entrance.

"Come in, and sit down," the man said, kindly.

Shakuntala sat down and began listening.

The choir was no longer singing to the music of an organ. Instead, a man was singing acapella.

When he finished, Shakuntala boldly walked over to him.

"Where is the organ?" she asked. "Where are the songs that give me goosebumps?"

The man was surprised.

Shakuntala explained that she had been listening to the music from her office every Saturday for the past few weeks. She only heard the music on Saturdays.

Shakuntala returned to the church to listen to the music the next two Saturdays. As the choir sang, she looked in a songbook that she found on one of the seats. She learned the names of the two songs that had been giving her the biggest goosebumps. They were the hymns "The Old Rugged Cross" and "Be Still My Soul."

On the third Saturday, she not only listened to the music but also stayed for the sermon about Jesus.

Back at home, she thought, "I like what I heard about Jesus in that church. Since I liked it, why do I have pictures of other gods in my house?"

She took down all the pictures and gave them away.

She kept going to church on Sabbath, and she kept feeling goosebumps while listening to the music.

After a while, the pastor invited her to bring her family.

“Don’t worry,” she said. “They will come.”

And they came. Her son, Joy, came first, and then her grandchildren also became interested. Even her housekeeper started attending.

After Bible studies, the family gave their lives to Jesus.

Shakuntala became an active church member, and one of her grandsons now serves as the church’s youth pastor.

Today, Shakuntala is 84 years old and has retired from working in advertising.

But she remains grateful for the music that she first heard in 2005.

It led her to Jesus.

“I still get goosebumps when I hear the choir sing,” she said.

Study Help

Sabbath, February 9th, 2024

Our High Calling, Chapter 4, pp. 100

“Wearing Christ’s Yoke”

April 4th

For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. [Matthew 11:30]

Wearing the yoke with Christ, means to work in His lines, to be a co-partner with Him in His sufferings and toils for lost humanity.

In accepting Christ's yoke of restraint and obedience, you will find that it is of the greatest help to you. Wearing this yoke keeps you near the side of Christ, and He bears the heaviest part of the load.

The yoke and the cross are symbols representing the same thing-- the giving up of the will to God. Wearing the yoke unites finite man in companionship with the dearly beloved Son of God. Lifting the cross cuts away self from the soul, and places man where he learns how to bear Christ's burdens. We cannot follow Christ without wearing His yoke, without lifting the cross and bearing it after Him. If our will is not in accord with the divine requirements, we are to deny our inclinations, give up our darling desires, and step in Christ's footsteps. . .

Men frame for their own necks yokes that seem light and pleasant to wear, but they prove galling in the extreme. Christ sees this, and He says, "Take My yoke upon you. The yoke you would place upon your own neck, thinking it a precise fit, will not fit at all. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me the lessons essential for you to learn."

Your work is not to gather up burdens of your own. . . . We often think we are having a hard time in bearing burdens, and it is too often the case, because God has not made any provision for us to carry these burdens; but when we bear His yoke and carry His burdens, we can testify that the yoke of Christ is easy and His burdens are light, because He has made provision for these.

Yet that yoke will not give us a life of ease and freedom and selfish indulgence. The life of Christ was one of self-sacrifice and self-denial at every step; and with consistent, Christlike tenderness and love, His true follower will walk in the footsteps of the Master; and as he advances in this life, he will become more and more inspired with the spirit and life of Christ.

LESSON 8

“HE THAT HUMBLER HIMSELF SHALL BE EXALTED”

February 17 — February 23

MEMORY VERSE : For whosoever exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted.' Luke 14:11

STUDY HELP : [God's Amazing Grace page 270](#)

SCRIPTURES : James 1:27-2:26

LESSON AIM : To study the paradox that in Christ's kingdom it is the humble that shall be exalted.

INTRODUCTION : ‘When placed in positions of responsibility, how many persons of great natural ability have fallen, while in the same position men of less ability and less education have succeeded. The reason is that the former trusted in themselves, while the latter trusted in Him who is wonderful in counsel and mighty in power. Before honour is humility. To fill a high place before men, Heaven chooses the worker, who, like John the Baptist, takes a lowly place before God. Simplicity, self-forgetfulness, self-distrust, are attributes that Heaven values. These are the characteristics of real greatness.’ *Youth's Instructor*, June 5, 1902.

Sabbath Afternoon

1. What did Jesus teach about those who regard themselves as better than others?

➤ **Luke 18:9-13** —

NOTE : ‘This was given to show how we may not, and how we may, attain to righteousness. The Pharisees are not extinct; there are many in these days who expect to gain righteousness by their own good deeds. They trust in themselves that they are righteous. They do not always so openly boast of their goodness, but they show in other ways that they are trusting to their own righteousness. Perhaps the spirit of the Pharisee, the spirit which would recount to God one's own good deeds as a reason for favour, is found as frequently as anywhere else among those professed Christians who feel the most bowed down on account of their sins. They know that they have sinned, and they feel condemned. They mourn over their sinful state and deplore their weakness. Their testimonies never rise above this level. Often they refrain for very shame from speaking in the social meeting, and often they do not dare approach God in prayer. After having sinned to a greater degree than usual, they refrain from prayer for some time, until the vivid sense of their failure has passed away or until they imagine that they have made up for it by special good behaviour. Of what is this a manifestation? Of that Pharisaic spirit that would flaunt its own righteousness in the face of God; that will not come before Him unless

it can lean on the false prop of its own fancied goodness. They want to be able to say to the Lord, "See how good I have been for the past few days; You surely will accept me now." *E. J. Waggoner: Christ and His Righteousness, page 57.*

Sunday

1. What principle did Jesus draw from this parable?

- **Luke 18:14** —

NOTE : 'Christ gave His disciples a most important lesson in regard to who should be His disciples. "In the kingdom that I am about to set up," He said, "strife for the supremacy shall have no place. All ye are brethren. All My servants there shall be equal. The only greatness recognised there will be the greatness of humility and devotion to the service of others. He that humbles himself shall be exalted, and he that exalts himself shall be abased. He who seeks to serve others by self-denial and self-sacrifice will be given the attributes of character that commend themselves to God, and develop wisdom, true patience, forbearance, kindness, compassion. This gives him the chiefest place in the kingdom of God.'" *This Day With God, page 356.*

2. What example did Christ Himself set us?

- **Philippians 2:5-8** —
- **2 Corinthians 8:9** —

NOTE : 'What a sight was this for Heaven to look upon! Christ, who knew not the least taint of sin or defilement, took our nature in its deteriorated condition. This was humiliation greater than finite man can comprehend. God was manifest in the flesh. He humbled Himself. What a subject for thought, for deep, earnest contemplation! So infinitely great that He was the Majesty of heaven, and yet He stooped so low, without losing one atom of His dignity and glory! He stooped to poverty and to the deepest abasement among men. For our sake He became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich.' *God's Amazing Grace, page 165.*

Monday

1. What was the result of Christ's willingness to humble Himself?

- **Philippians 2:9-11** —

NOTE : 'In consenting to become man, Christ manifested a humility that is the marvel of the heavenly intelligences. The act of consenting to be a man would be no humiliation were it not for the fact of Christ's exalted pre-existence. We must open our understanding to realise that Christ laid aside His royal robe, His kingly crown, His high command, and clothed His divinity with humanity, that He

might meet man where he was, and bring to the human family moral power to become the sons and daughters of God. To redeem man, Christ became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. The humanity of the Son of God is everything to us. It is the golden chain that binds our souls to Christ, and through Christ to God. This is to be our study. Christ was a real man; He gave proof of His humility in becoming a man. Yet He was God in the flesh.' *Selected Messages, book 1, page 243.*

2. How did Christ show the disciples His willingness to humble Himself?

➤ **John 13:3-5** —

NOTE : 'He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and went to God. He had a full consciousness of His divinity; but He had laid aside His royal crown and kingly robes, and had taken the form of a servant. One of the last acts of His life on earth was to gird Himself as a servant, and perform a servant's part. Christ would have His disciples understand that although He had washed their feet, this did not in the least detract from His dignity. "Ye call Me Master and Lord: and ye say well; for so I am." And being so infinitely superior, He imparted grace and significance to the service. No one was so exalted as Christ, and yet He stooped to the humblest duty. That His people might not be misled by the selfishness which dwells in the natural heart, and which strengthens by self-serving, Christ Himself set the example of humility. He would not leave this great subject in man's charge. Of so much consequence did He regard it, that He Himself, One equal with God, acted as servant to His disciples. While they were contending for the highest place, He to whom every knee shall bow, He whom the angels of glory count it honour to serve, bowed down to wash the feet of those who called Him Lord. He washed the feet of His betrayer.' *Counsels for the Church, page 299.*

Tuesday

1. What instruction did Christ then give to His disciples?

➤ **John 13:14-17** —

NOTE : 'Now, having washed the disciples' feet, He said, "I have given you an example, that ye should do as I have done to you." In these words Christ was not merely enjoining the practice of hospitality. More was meant than the washing of the feet of guests to remove the dust of travel. Christ was here instituting a religious service. By the act of our Lord this humiliating ceremony was made a consecrated ordinance. It was to be observed by the disciples, that they might ever keep in mind His lessons of humility and service.' *Counsels for the Church, page 300.*

2. In what graphic way did Christ respond to the disciples' question about greatness in God's kingdom?

➤ **Matthew 18:1-4** —

NOTE : 'It was not enough for the disciples of Jesus to be instructed as to the nature of His kingdom. What they needed was a change of heart that would bring them into harmony with its principles. Calling a little child to Him, Jesus set him in the midst of them; then tenderly folding the little one in His arms He

said, "Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." The simplicity, the self-forgetfulness, and the confiding love of a little child are the attributes that Heaven values. These are the characteristics of real greatness.' *Desire of Ages*, page 437.

Wednesday

1. What did Christ explain to His disciples about greatness in God's kingdom?

➤ **Mark 9:33-35** —

NOTE : 'The Saviour gathered His disciples about Him, and said to them, "If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all." There was in these words a solemnity and impressiveness which the disciples were far from comprehending. That which Christ discerned they could not see. They did not understand the nature of Christ's kingdom, and this ignorance was the apparent cause of their contention. But the real cause lay deeper. By explaining the nature of the kingdom, Christ might for the time have quelled their strife; but this would not have touched the underlying cause. Even after they had received the fullest knowledge, any question of precedence might have renewed the trouble. Thus disaster would have been brought to the church after Christ's departure. The strife for the highest place was the outworking of that same spirit which was the beginning of the great controversy in the worlds above, and which had brought Christ from heaven to die. There rose up before Him a vision of Lucifer, the "son of the morning," in glory surpassing all the angels that surrounded the throne, and united in closest ties to the Son of God. Lucifer had said, "I will be like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:12, 14); and the desire for self-exaltation had brought strife into the heavenly courts, and had banished a multitude of the hosts of God. Had Lucifer really desired to be like the Most High, he would never have deserted his appointed place in heaven; for the spirit of the Most High is manifested in unselfish ministry. Lucifer desired God's power, but not His character. He sought for himself the highest place, and every being who is actuated by his spirit will do the same.' *Desire of Ages*, page 435.

2. What practical counsel did Jesus give to encourage humility?

➤ **Matthew 23:5-10** —

NOTE : 'In such plain words the Saviour revealed the selfish ambition that was ever reaching for place and power, displaying a mock humility, while the heart was filled with avarice and envy. When persons were invited to a feast, the guests were seated according to their rank, and those who were given the most honourable place received the first attention and special favours. The Pharisees were ever scheming to secure these honours. This practice Jesus rebuked. He also reproved the vanity shown in coveting the title of rabbi, or master. Such a title, He declared, belonged not to men, but to Christ. Priests, scribes, and rulers, expounders and administrators of the law, were all brethren, children of one Father. Jesus impressed upon the people that they were to give no man a title of honour indicating his control of their conscience or their faith. If Christ were on earth today, surrounded by those who bear the title of "Reverend" or "Right Reverend," would He not repeat His saying, "Neither be ye called masters: for One is your Master, even Christ"? The Scripture declares of God, "Holy and reverend is His name." Psalm 111:9. To what human being is such a title befitting? How little does man reveal of the wisdom and righteousness it indicates! How many of those who assume this title are

misrepresenting the name and character of God! Alas, how often have worldly ambition, despotism, and the basest sins been hidden under the brodered garments of a high and holy office!' *Desire of Ages*, page 613

Thursday

1. What counsel has been given to all, even the young people?

➤ James 4:10 —

➤ 1 Peter 5:5-6 —

NOTE : 'To be clothed with humility does not mean that we are to be dwarfs in intellect, deficient in aspiration, and cowardly in our lives, shunning burdens lest we fail to carry them successfully. Real humility fulfils God's purposes by depending upon His strength. God works by whom He will. He sometimes selects the humblest instrument to do the greatest work, for His power is revealed through the weakness of men. We have our standard, and by it we pronounce one thing great and another small; but God does not estimate according to our rule. We are not to suppose that what is great to us must be great to God, or that what is small to us must be small to Him.' *God's Amazing Grace*, page 270.

2. How will God's humble people be exalted?

➤ Revelation 7:13-17 —

NOTE : 'As the people of God afflict their souls before Him, pleading for purity of heart, the command is given, "Take away the filthy garments" from them, and the encouraging words are spoken, "Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment." The spotless robe of Christ's righteousness is placed upon the tried, tempted, yet faithful children of God. The despised remnant are clothed in glorious apparel, nevermore to be defiled by the corruptions of the world. Their names are retained in the Lamb's book of life, enrolled among the faithful of all ages. They have resisted the wiles of the deceiver; they have not been turned from their loyalty by the dragon's roar. Now they are eternally secure from the tempter's devices. Their sins are transferred to the originator of sin. And the remnant are not only pardoned and accepted, but honoured. "A fair mitre" is set upon their heads. They are to be as kings and priests unto God. While Satan was urging his accusations and seeking to destroy this company, holy angels, unseen, were passing to and fro, placing upon them the seal of the living God. These are they that stand upon Mount Zion with the Lamb, having the Father's name written in their foreheads. They sing the new song before the throne, that song which no man can learn save the hundred and forty and four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth. "These are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever He goes. These were redeemed from among men, being the first fruits unto God and to the Lamb. And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God." Revelation 14:4, 5.' *Counsels for the Church*, page 353.

*Preparation Day***1. What picture of this did John the Revelator see?**

➤ **Revelation 14:1-5** —

NOTE : 'Christ assured His disciples that He went to prepare mansions for them in the Father's house. Those who accept the teachings of God's word will not be wholly ignorant concerning the heavenly abode. And yet, "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." 1 Corinthians 2:9. Human language is inadequate to describe the reward of the righteous. It will be known only to those who behold it. No finite mind can comprehend the glory of the Paradise of God.' *Great Controversy*, page 674

Mission Story

Loving Heavenly Father

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

Karna was born in remote mountain village in eastern Nepal.

He doesn't remember his mother very well. He remembers that Mother was sick all the time. Whenever she felt really bad, she fainted. She would suddenly fall down to the ground and lie very still. It was like she was asleep.

At first, Karna felt scared when he saw Mother lying on the ground. But then Mother would wake up. The doctor couldn't figure out what was wrong with Mother. The doctor gave many medicines to her, but nothing helped. Then one day, Mother fell down and didn't wake up again.

Karna no longer had a mother. He felt very sad.

Father also felt very sad. He no longer had a wife.

Father felt so sad that he began to drink alcohol. He drank a lot. He drank so much that sometimes he fell to the ground and lay very still. It was like he was asleep.

At first, Karna felt scared when he saw Father lying on the ground. But then Father would wake up.

During the day, Father worked in the field, growing crops. But he began to drink instead of growing crops. He stopped coming home in the evening.

Karna sat at home, waiting for Father to come and give him supper. But Father didn't come. Karna waited for Father until it was late, and then he fell asleep with an empty stomach.

Many times, Karna cried himself to sleep. He wished that he had a father who loved him. He wished that he had a mother who loved him. But he had goats. In the morning, when he woke up, he took Father's goats to the pasture. Then he rushed back to the house to eat whatever he could find for breakfast and ran off to school. After school, he returned home and took care of the goats again. The goats were his friends. He had no other friends. Karna wished that he had friends.

An auntie saw how Karna was living and felt sorry for him. She lived in a nearby town and couldn't take care of him. She had two children of her own. But she mentioned the boy to the pastor of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

The pastor also felt sorry for Karna. He told the auntie about an Adventist orphanage that cares for children just like Karna. He offered to take Karna to the orphanage to live.

Auntie liked the idea very much. When Karna heard that he could live at the orphanage, he also liked the idea very much. Now he would be able to eat every day. Maybe he would even be able to have friends.

Karna's life began to change as soon as he arrived at the orphanage. He made friends. He began to get to know God. He learned that God is a wonderful Heavenly Father who loves. Not so long ago, he gave his life to Jesus.

"I never thought that my life would change like this," he said. "My life is good."

Karna is a happy boy today. He has friends and he has a Heavenly Father who loves him very much.

Study Help***Sabbath, February 17th, 2024*****God's Amazing Grace, Chapter 9, pp. 270****“For The Humble”****September 19th**

Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time. [1 Peter 5:6]

To be clothed with humility does not mean that we are to be dwarfs in intellect, deficient in aspiration, and cowardly in our lives, shunning burdens lest we fail to carry them successfully. Real humility fulfils God's purposes by depending upon His strength.

God works by whom He will. He sometimes selects the humblest instrument to do the greatest work, for His power is revealed through the weakness of men. We have our standard, and by it we pronounce one thing great and another small; but God does not estimate according to our rule. We are not to suppose that what is great to us must be great to God, or that what is small to us must be small to Him.

All boasting of merit in ourselves is out of place. . . . The reward is not of works, lest any man should boast; but it is all of grace. . . .

There is no religion in the enthronement of self. He who makes self-glorification his aim will find himself destitute of that grace which alone can make him efficient in Christ's service. Whenever pride and self-complacency are indulged the work is marred. . . .

The Christian who is such in his private life, in the daily surrender of self, in sincerity of purpose and purity of thought, in meekness under provocation, in faith and piety, in fidelity in that which is least, the one who in the home life represents the character of Christ--such a one may in the sight of God be more precious than even the world-renowned missionary or martyr. . . .

Not in our learning, not in our position, not in our numbers or entrusted talents, not in the will of man, is to be found the secret of success. Feeling our inefficiency we are to contemplate Christ, and through Him who is the strength of all strength, the thought of all thought, the willing and obedient will gain victory after victory. . . . Blessed will be the recompense of grace to those who have wrought for God in the simplicity of faith and love.

LESSON 9

“RESIST NOT EVIL . . . RESIST THE DEVIL”

February 24 — March 1

MEMORY VERSE : Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good.' Romans 12:21

? STUDY HELP : [Ministry of Healing, page 486](#)

SCRIPTURES : Matthew 5:38-48; Matthew 4:1-11

LESSON AIM : To study the paradox that we are to resist the devil but not to resist evil.

INTRODUCTION : ‘Living faith in the power of Jesus Christ, not in your own efficiency and wisdom, will bring you through every difficulty and temptation. Patiently wait, watch, and pray, and hold fast to the promises. However much your enemies have bruised and wounded your soul, forgive them, and by maintaining faith in Christ, you will find Him to be to you as the shadow of a great Rock in a weary land. Endure the pressure. Submit to wrong, bear the suffering part of religion for Christ's sake, rather than sin against God by seeking to deliver yourself. Cannot you be a partaker with Christ in His sufferings? Cannot you endure to have your name cast out as evil, and suffer the loss of temporal interest? You may be falsely accused, but bear in mind that Jesus bore all this for you, and faint not at tribulation. Overcome evil with good. Do not become bitter and estranged from Jesus. He loves you. Put your trust in Him.' *The Upward Look, page 42.*

Sabbath Afternoon

1. What examples did Jesus give when He said that we are not to resist evil?

➤ **Matthew 5:39-42 —**

NOTE : ‘The Christian must not, yea he cannot, do wrong, but he can suffer and will suffer wrong, and that patiently. Said the Saviour: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.” And again the apostle says: “What glory is it, if, when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if, ye do well and suffer for it, this is acceptable with God. For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow His steps.” 1 Peter 2:20, 21. Even should the civil law strip the Christian of his earthly possessions, it would still be his duty to quietly submit, trusting his cause to God who judges righteously, and remembering that “all things

work together for good to them that love God.” Non-resistance is the rule of the Christian's life.’ A. T. Jones: *The American Sentinel*, July 23, 1896.

Sunday

1. What principle did this saying of Christ seem to contradict?

- Matthew 5:38 —
- Exodus 21:22-25 —
- Leviticus 24:19-20 —
- Deuteronomy 19:16-21 —

NOTE : ‘Jesus said, “Ye have heard that it hath been said, an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth; but I say unto you that ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also.” Matthew 5:38, 39. Whoever looks up this quotation will find that it is not addressed to individuals, but was a rule for the direction of the judges in the cases that came before them. The whole law of which it was a part was given to the Israelites only because of their unbelief, and because they rejected God from being their sole King and Judge. In this, as in many other things, we must believe that “from the beginning it was not so,” and Christ's work is always to bring men back to the beginning, to Himself... the next verse shows: “If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy cloak, let him have thy cloak also.” How much less, then, should one take the initiative, and sue another at the law. ’ E. J. Waggoner: *Present Truth*, May 30, 1901.

2. What example did Jesus show when faced by evil?

- Luke 22:49-51 —

NOTE : ‘Jesus, when reviled, abused, and insulted, did not retaliate. “Who, when He was reviled, reviled not again.” When the cruelty of man caused Him to suffer painful stripes and wounds, He threatened not, but committed Himself to Him who judges righteously. The apostle Paul exhorted his Philippian brethren: “Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men.” Is the servant greater than his master? Christ has given us His life as a pattern, and we dishonour Him when we become jealous of every slight, and are ready to resent every injury, supposed or real. It is not an evidence of a noble mind to be prepared to defend self, to preserve our own dignity. We would better suffer wrongfully a hundred times than wound the soul by a spirit of retaliation, or by giving vent to wrath.’ *Testimonies*, volume 2, page 426.

*Monday***1. How does the Bible show that we are to follow Christ's example in this?**➤ **1 Peter 2:21-23 —**

NOTE : ‘Says Christ, the beloved Teacher: “Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.” Yes, follow Him through evil as well as through good report. Follow Him in befriending the most needy and friendless. Follow Him in being forgetful of self, abundant in acts of self-denial and self-sacrifice to do others good; when reviled, reviling not again; manifesting love and compassion for the fallen race. He counted not His life dear, but gave it up for us all. Follow Him from the lowly manger to the cross. He was our example.’ *Testimonies, volume 2, page 177.*

2. How did Paul reveal the spirit of Christ in his ministry?➤ **1 Corinthians 4:11, 12 —**

NOTE : ‘At the gate of Damascus the vision of the Crucified One changed the whole current of [Paul's] life. The persecutor became a disciple, the teacher a learner. The days of darkness spent in solitude at Damascus were as years in his experience. The Old Testament Scriptures stored in his memory were his study, and Christ his teacher. To him also nature's solitudes became a school. To the desert of Arabia he went, there to study the Scriptures and to learn of God. He emptied his soul of the prejudices and traditions that had shaped his life, and received instruction from the Source of truth. His after-life was inspired by the one principle of self-sacrifice, the ministry of love. “I am debtor,” he said, “both to the Greeks, and to the barbarians; both to the wise, and to the unwise.” While he possessed high intellectual endowments, the life of Paul revealed the power of a rarer wisdom. Principles of deepest import, principles concerning which the greatest minds of his time were ignorant, are unfolded in his teachings and exemplified in his life. He had that greatest of all wisdom, which gives quickness of insight and sympathy of heart, which brings man in touch with men, and enables him to arouse their better nature and inspire them to a higher life. “Being reviled,” he said, “we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it; being defamed, we entreat”; “as sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things.” *Sons & Daughters of God, page 96.*

*Tuesday***1. How did Peter show that this spirit must especially be manifested among believers?**➤ **1 Peter 3:9 —**

NOTE : ‘This religion teaches us to exercise patience and long-suffering when brought into places where we receive treatment that is harsh and unjust. “Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that we should inherit a blessing” (1 Peter 3:9). When Christ was reviled, He reviled not again. His religion brings with it a meek and quiet spirit.’ *God's Amazing Grace, page 248.*

2. What counsel did James give to those beset by temptations?

➤ James 4:7 —

NOTE : “Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Draw nigh to God, and He will draw nigh to you.” How precious to the tempted soul is this positive promise. If those in trouble and temptation keep their eyes fixed on Jesus and draw nigh to God, talking of His goodness and mercy, Jesus draws nigh to them, and the annoyances that they thought almost unbearable vanish.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 164.

Wednesday

1. What is required of us if our resistance of the devil is to be effective?

➤ James 4:7, first part. —

NOTE : ‘Angels, who will do for you what you cannot do for yourselves, are waiting for your co-operation. They are waiting for you to respond to the drawing of Christ. Draw nigh to God and to one another. By desire, by silent prayer, by resistance of satanic agencies, put your will on the side of God's will. While you have one desire to resist the devil, and sincerely pray, Deliver me from temptation, you will have strength for your day. It is the work of the heavenly angels to come close to the tried, the tempted, the suffering ones. They labour long and untiringly to save the souls for whom Christ has died. And when souls appreciate their advantages, appreciate the heavenly assistance sent them, respond to the Holy Spirit's working on their behalf; when they put their will on the side of Christ's will, angels bear the tidings heavenward. And there is rejoicing among the heavenly host.' *Our Father Cares*, page 20.

2. How did Jesus resist the devil's temptations?

➤ Matthew 4:4, 7, & 10 —

NOTE : ‘True Christians will have an experience like that of Christ in the wilderness of temptation, especially those who engage in rescuing souls from the snares of Satan. They will meet the assaults of the enemy of all righteousness; and as Christ overcame, so may they overcome through His grace. Christians should not feel that they are abandoned of God because they are subjected to sore temptations. If they remain unshaken by the temptations, Satan will leave them, and angels will minister to them as they did to Jesus. There is no comfort equal to that which Christians enjoy when the tempted soul has patiently suffered and Satan has been vanquished. They have borne witness for Jesus, relying wholly upon the Word of God, “It is written,” and thus have resisted every advance of Satan, till they have beaten him back and gained the victory.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 210.

Thursday

1. How did the Psalmist express the principle of Christ's victory over Satan's temptations?

➤ Psalm 119:11 —

NOTE : “The prince of this world cometh,” said Jesus, “and hath nothing in Me.” John 14:30.

There was in Him nothing that responded to Satan's sophistry. He did not consent to sin. Not even by a thought did He yield to temptation. So it may be with us. Christ's humanity was united with divinity; He was fitted for the conflict by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. And He came to make us partakers of the divine nature. So long as we are united to Him by faith, sin has no more dominion over us. God reaches for the hand of faith in us to direct it to lay fast hold upon the divinity of Christ, that we may attain to perfection of character. And how this is accomplished, Christ has shown us. By what means did He overcome in the conflict with Satan? By the word of God. Only by the word could He resist temptation. “It is written,” He said.” *Desire of Ages, page 123.*

2. What parts of God's Word in particular will enable us to resist the devil and find victory?

➤ 2 Peter 1:3-4 —

NOTE : ‘And unto us are given “exceeding great and precious promises: that by these ye might be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.” 2 Peter 1:4. Every promise in God's word is ours. “By every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God” are we to live. When assailed by temptation, look not to circumstances or to the weakness of self, but to the power of the word. All its strength is yours. “Thy word,” says the psalmist, “have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against Thee.”’ *Desire of Ages, page 123.*

“Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word of God.” Often the follower of Christ is brought where he cannot serve God and carry forward his worldly enterprises. Perhaps it appears that obedience to some plain requirement of God will cut off his means of support. Satan would make him believe that he must sacrifice his conscientious convictions. But the only thing in our world upon which we can rely is the word of God. “Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.” Matthew 6:33. Even in this life it is not for our good to depart from the will of our Father in heaven. When we learn the power of His word, we shall not follow the suggestions of Satan in order to obtain food or to save our lives. Our only questions will be, What is God's command? and what is His promise? Knowing these, we shall obey the one, and trust the other.’ *Desire of Ages, page 121.*

Preparation Day

1. What awaits those who have learned how to resist the devil and have become overcomers?

➤ Revelation 3:5, 21 —

NOTE : ‘There is a heaven before us, a crown of life to win. But to the overcomer only is the reward given. He who gains heaven must be clothed with the robe of righteousness. “Every man that hath this hope in

him purifies himself, even as He is pure.” In the character of Christ there was no discord of any kind. And this must be our experience. Our lives must be controlled by the principles that controlled His life.’ *Heaven, page 91.*

Mission Story

Home Transformers

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

Can an interior designer be a witness for heaven?

A married couple felt so strongly that they were being called to share Jesus through interior design that they left cushy corporate careers to start a business of their own in India.

The couple, Twinkle and Milind, eagerly got to work when they signed their first contract in one of India's biggest cities, Bengaluru. Wealthy parents asked for the redesign of the bedroom of their 13-year-old son, Arnav.

As Twinkle and Milind listened to the mother's wishes for the bedroom, it seemed that she wanted more than a redesign. She was looking for a miracle. Arnav was a hyperactive boy, and she hoped that a new bedroom would calm him down. Moreover, she hadn't been able to sleep in the bedroom for six years, and she wanted to sleep there with her son sometimes.

"It's impossible for me to sleep there," she said. "I don't know why."

Twinkle and Milind didn't know what to do with the room. But they knew where to start. They knelt down and prayed to God.

"Dear God, please give us ideas about what colours to use to paint the bedroom and how we can decorate it for Your glory," Twinkle prayed.

Then the couple hauled everything out of the bedroom. They carried out the boy's bed and nightstand. They removed the bookshelves. On the shelves, they found images, and they also removed them.

Twinkle and Milind wondered what to do with the images. Arnav and his mother worshipped the images, but the father was an atheist who didn't believe in any god.

When the father saw the images being carried from the room, he said, "Why don't you just wrap those images in old newspaper and throw them away?"

Twinkle and Milind thought that was a good idea. They wrapped the images in old newspaper and threw them away.

Then they repainted the room. When they finished, they placed framed pictures of Bible verses and other inspiration quotations on the walls and nightstand. One framed picture read, "You are fearfully and wonderfully made." The picture did not say that the quotation came from Psalm 139:14 in the Bible. Another framed picture read, "You are God's masterpiece," a paraphrase of Ephesians 2:10. A third picture said simply, "You are loved."

Arnav and his parents were delighted with the new bedroom. Sometime later, the mother sent a grateful text message to Twinkle.

"We are seeing positive changes in Arnav's behaviour, and I'm able to go into his bedroom," she wrote. "I feel peace in his room."

She added that she was able to sleep in the room for the first time in six years.

Twinkle and her husband were thrilled with the news.

“The Bible promises, ‘My word ... shall not return to Me void,’” Twinkle said in an interview, citing Isaiah 55:11. “So every day when Arnav read a verse, it had a positive change on his character.”

Since that first bedroom, the couple have redesigned many rooms. They always pray before starting a new project, and they never leave an image in a room, even as part of the home decor. Instead, every room is filled with Bible verses. If a client asks about God, they put him or her in touch with a friend who gives Bible studies.

Twinkle said it’s good to be in business with God. “Right now, our business is a mission,” she said. “We enter into homes as home transformers. We transform homes, not just as a space, but also the people who live there. We just put up picture frames, and God does the rest.”

Study Help**Sabbath, February 24th, 2024****The Ministry of Healing, Chapter 41, page 486****“In Contact with Others”****“Forbearance Under Wrong”**

If impatient words are spoken to you, never reply in the same spirit. Remember that "a soft answer turneth away wrath." Proverbs 15:1. And there is wonderful power in silence. Words spoken in reply to one who is angry sometimes serve only to exasperate. But anger met with silence, in a tender, forbearing spirit, quickly dies away.

Under a storm of stinging, fault-finding words, keep the mind stayed upon the word of God. Let mind and heart be stored with God's promises. If you are ill-treated or wrongfully accused, instead of returning an angry answer, repeat to yourself the precious promises:

"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good." Romans 12:21.

"Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy righteousness as the light, and thy judgment as the noonday." Psalm 37:5, 6.

"There is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; neither hid, that shall not be known." Luke 12:2.

"Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water: but Thou brought us out into a wealthy place." Psalm 66:12.

We are prone to look to our fellow men for sympathy and uplifting, instead of looking to Jesus. In His mercy and faithfulness God often permits those in whom we place confidence to fail us, in order that we may learn the folly of trusting in man and making flesh our arm. Let us trust fully, humbly, unselfishly in God. He knows the sorrows that we feel to the depths of our being, but which we cannot express. When all things seem dark and unexplainable, remember the words of Christ, "What I do thou knowest not now; but thou shalt know hereafter." John 13:7.

LESSON 10

“YOU SHALL BE FREE INDEED”

March 2 — March 8

MEMORY VERSE : Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?' Romans 6:16.

STUDY HELP : [Christ's Object Lessons, pages 282-283](#)

SCRIPTURES : John 8:31-36

LESSON AIM : To study the paradox that the freedom Christ offers involves submission and surrender.

INTRODUCTION : ‘True liberty and independence are found in the service of God. His service will place upon you no restriction that will not increase your happiness. In complying with His requirements, you will find a peace, contentment, and enjoyment that you can never have in the path of wild license and sin. Then study well the nature of the liberty you desire. Is it the liberty of the sons of God, to be free in Christ Jesus? Or do you call the selfish indulgence of base passions freedom? Such liberty carries with it the heaviest remorse; it is the cruellest bondage.’ *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, page 88.

*Sabbath Afternoon***1. What choice is placed before each member of the human race?**

➤ Romans 6:16 —

NOTE : ‘In the great controversy between good and evil, each one of us has to choose on which side he will stand, and our life and character will make manifest who is our master. If we refuse to be obedient to the law of God, we shall make terms with Satan, and Christ will be unloved, and unhonoured in our heart and life; but the heart insensible to so great salvation, closed to the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness, must indeed be hard as adamant.’ *Signs of the Times*, January 5, 1891.

*Sunday***1. What is the evidence of the choice each of us has made?**

➤ John 8:39-44 —

NOTE : 'When Christ abides in the soul by faith, He makes the one who loves Him all light in the Lord. It is true that many who say they believe the truth have only a nominal faith. They are not doers of the Word. They profess to believe, but their profession will not convert them. When Christ dwells in the heart, His presence is apparent. Good and pleasant words and actions reveal the Spirit of Christ. Sweetness of temper is manifested. There is no angry passion, no obstinacy, no evil-surmising. There is no hatred in the heart, because ideas and methods are not accepted and appreciated by others. When the truth controls the life, there is purity and freedom from sin. The glory, the fullness, the completeness of the gospel plan is fulfilled in the life. The light of truth irradiates the soul temple. The understanding takes hold of Christ.' *This Day With God*, page 357.

2. What does true obedience to God's commandments reveal about us?

➤ John 14:15, 21 —

➤ 1 John 5:2-3 —

NOTE : 'John did not teach that salvation was to be earned by obedience; but that obedience was the fruit of faith and love. "Ye know that He was manifested to take away our sins," he said, "and in Him is no sin. Whosoever abides in Him sins not: whosoever sins hath not seen Him, neither known Him." 1 John 3:5, 6. If we abide in Christ, if the love of God dwells in the heart, our feelings, our thoughts, our actions, will be in harmony with the will of God. The sanctified heart is in harmony with the precepts of God's law.' *Acts of the Apostles*, page 563.

'The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all intelligent beings depends upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love, service that springs from an appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced obedience, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service.' *Christ Triumphant*, page 7.

Monday

1. How was ancient Israel taught that genuine obedience to God cannot be separated from love for Him?

➤ Exodus 20:6 —

➤ Joshua 22:5 —

NOTE : 'Moses endeavours to impress upon Israel the importance of obeying the law of God. He urges them to show their love for God by making those sacred principles the rule of their daily life. They must be willing to suffer any inconvenience, rather than break one of God's commandments. Such a course would be more pleasing to God than mere professions of loyalty, or words of praise. And obedience to God was their only safety as individuals, or as a nation; for this alone would secure the divine favour,

and insure to them happiness and prosperity in the land to which they were going.' *Signs of the Times*, March 3, 1881.

'But Israel had not perceived the spiritual nature of the law, and too often their professed obedience was but an observance of forms and ceremonies, rather than a surrender of the heart to the sovereignty of love.' *Thoughts from the Mount of Blessing*, page 46.

2. How did God explain the purpose of His commandments?

➤ Deuteronomy 6:24-25 —

NOTE : 'Upon obedience depends life and happiness, health and joy, of men, women, and children. Obedience is for their well-being in this life and in the life to come. Where can we find a surer guide than the only true God? Where is a safer path than that in which the Eternal leads the way? When we follow Him, we are in no cheap, tangled bush path. The path of obedience to God is the path of virtue, of health, and happiness.' *My Life Today*, page 162.

Tuesday

1. What does God warn about seeking our own way, instead of His?

➤ Galatians 6:7-8 —

NOTE : 'The greatest Teacher the world has ever known, says, "Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls." The pain, the sorrow, the unrest, the disappointment, that come into every life, are evidence that there is no rest outside of Christ. Jesus has redeemed us to Himself, we are His property, and He desires us to learn the path of peace and joy by learning to obey the law of God, the rule of His kingdom. All the suffering and distress of this woe-stricken life is the result of disobedience to the law of God, of refusing to come to Christ, that meekness and lowliness of heart may be learned of the great Teacher. If men would come to Christ and learn His meekness and lowliness, they would not refuse to render obedience to the law of God. But they forsake the fountain of living water, and hew out for themselves cisterns, broken cisterns, that can hold no water.' *Signs of the Times*, January 19, 1891.

2. What gracious provision did God make for man when he was first created?

➤ Genesis 1:29 —

➤ Genesis 2:16-17 —

➤ Genesis 2:8-25 —

NOTE : 'The holy pair were not only children under the fatherly care of God but students receiving instruction from the all-wise Creator. They were visited by angels, and were granted communion with their Maker, with no obscuring veil between. They were full of the vigour imparted by the tree of life, and

their intellectual power was but little less than that of the angels. The mysteries of the visible universe, “the wondrous works of Him which is perfect in knowledge” (Job 37:16), afforded them an exhaustless source of instruction and delight. The laws and operations of nature, which have engaged men's study for six thousand years, were opened to their minds by the infinite Framer and Upholder of all. They held converse with leaf and flower and tree, gathering from each the secrets of its life. With every living creature, from the mighty leviathan that plays among the waters to the insect mote that floats in the sunbeam, Adam was familiar. He had given to each its name, and he was acquainted with the nature and habits of all. God's glory in the heavens, the innumerable worlds in their orderly revolutions, “the balancings of the clouds,” the mysteries of light and sound, of day and night, all were open to the study of our first parents. On every leaf of the forest or stone of the mountains, in every shining star, in earth and air and sky, God's name was written. The order and harmony of creation spoke to them of infinite wisdom and power. They were ever discovering some attraction that filled their hearts with deeper love and called forth fresh expressions of gratitude. So long as they remained loyal to the divine law, their capacity to know, to enjoy, and to love would continually increase. They would be constantly gaining new treasures of knowledge, discovering fresh springs of happiness, and obtaining clearer and yet clearer conceptions of the immeasurable, unfailing love of God.' *Patriarchs & Prophets*, pages 50-51.

Wednesday

1. What was the result of Adam's rebellion against God?

- Genesis 3:7-8 —
- Genesis 3:17-19 —

NOTE : ‘It was not the will of God that the sinless pair should know aught of evil. He had freely given them the good, and had withheld the evil. But, contrary to His command, they had eaten of the forbidden tree, and now they would continue to eat of it, they would have the knowledge of evil, all the days of their life. From that time the race would be afflicted by Satan's temptations. Instead of the happy labour heretofore appointed them, anxiety and toil were to be their lot. They would be subject to disappointment, grief, and pain, and finally to death. Under the curse of sin all nature was to witness to man of the character and results of rebellion against God. When God made man He made him ruler over the earth and all living creatures. So long as Adam remained loyal to Heaven, all nature was in subjection to him. But when he rebelled against the divine law, the inferior creatures were in rebellion against his rule. Thus the Lord, in His great mercy, would show men the sacredness of His law, and lead them, by their own experience, to see the danger of setting it aside, even in the slightest degree.’ *Patriarchs & Prophets*, page 59.

2. What will be the attitude of those who love God and are willing to be His servants?

- Psalm 40:8 —

NOTE : ‘The true Christian does not allow any earthly consideration to come in between his soul and God. The commandment of God wields an authoritative influence over his affections and actions. If everyone

seeking the kingdom of God and His righteousness would be always ready to work the works of Christ, how much easier would become the path to heaven. If the eye is single to the glory of God, the treasure will be laid up above, safe from all corruption or loss; and “where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” Jesus will be the pattern that you will seek to imitate. The law of the Lord will be your delight, and at the day of final reckoning you will hear the glad words, “Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.” *Review & Herald, January 24, 1888.*

Thursday

1. What especially will bring delight to those who love God and are willing to do His will?

➤ Isaiah 58:13-14 —

NOTE : ‘To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ's creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour. And every object in nature repeats His invitation, “Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28.’ *Desire of Ages, page 289.*

2. What does obedience to God's commandments reveal?

➤ 1 John 2:3-5 —

NOTE : ‘It was a great sacrifice Christ made for us in dying for us upon the cross. What are we willing to sacrifice for His love? Jesus says, “If ye love Me, keep My commandments,” not to select out one or two or nine, but the whole ten. All His commandments must be kept. John tells us of those who pretend to love but do not obey God's requirements. “He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.” “For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments: and His commandments are not grievous.”’ *Christ Triumphant, page 78.*

‘It is not enough for us to believe that Jesus is not an impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. We may believe that the name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby man may be saved, and yet we may not through faith make Him our personal Saviour. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth. It is not enough to make a profession of faith in Christ and have our names registered on the church roll. “He that keepeth His commandments dwells in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us.” “Hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments.” 1 John 3:24; 2:3. This is the genuine evidence of conversion. Whatever our profession, it amounts to nothing unless Christ is revealed in works of righteousness.’ *Christ's Object Lessons, page 312.*

Preparation Day

1. What will obedience to God's commandments restore that was lost by Adam's rebellion?

➤ **Revelation 22:14** —

NOTE : ‘All those who render obedience to God's commands will be given free access to Eden restored and to the tree of life. He who is the fountain of all knowledge has stated the condition of our fitness to enter the heaven of bliss, in the words, “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.”’ *General Conference Daily Bulletin, March 6, 1899.*

Mission Story

Once Poor, Now Rich

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

Five-year-old Asmita lived in a very poor family in Nepal.

Her parents were so poor that sometimes they couldn't give her breakfast, lunch, or supper. They didn't have enough rice or potatoes or cabbage to feed her. Sometimes Asmita spent the whole day hungry. Sometimes she went to bed hungry.

Asmita's parents were so poor that they couldn't give her warm clothes in winter. Winter gets very cold in Nepal, and snow and ice cover the hills and mountains. Asmita's parents didn't have enough money to buy Asmita a nice thick coat, woolly socks, or warm boots. Asmita shivered in the cold in the winter.

One day, Asmita's mother left home. She left Father and Asmita and married another man. Asmita was very sad. She never saw Mother again.

Father didn't like living without a wife. So, a few months later, he got married again. Asmita was very happy that she had a new mother. But her happiness didn't last long. Her new mother already had two children, and she loved them more than she loved Asmita. Making matters worse, Father also loved his two new children more than he loved Asmita. So, when the family had food, the two other children got to eat first. When the weather turned cold, the two other children got warm clothes first. And the two other children didn't have to do household chores. But Asmita did. Mother made Asmita work hard around the house. Asmita washed dishes. She helped cook food. She cleaned the house. She tried to do her best to please Mother, but Mother always seemed to be annoyed.

When Asmita was 8 years old, a neighbour told her parents about a Seventh-day Adventist orphanage that cared for children who had no parents or had parents who couldn't take care of them.

Father and Mother looked at each other. They liked the sound of the place. Without even discussing the matter with Asmita, they sent her off to the orphanage.

Moving into a new home was a little scary for the little girl. But she quickly adjusted to life at the orphanage. She liked it. She liked being fed breakfast, lunch, and supper, and being given warm clothes in winter. She also liked going to school and learning new things every day. She hadn't been able to go to school every day before. She especially liked going to church and learning about God. She had never gone to church or heard about God before.

Six years have passed since Asmita moved to the orphanage, and today she is a very happy girl. Once she was poor, but now she is rich in Christ.

"I am very thankful to my Heavenly Father who brought me here," she said. "If I were not here today, I would not have known God. Now I know who my Saviour is."

She is studying hard and hopes to help other little girls with difficult childhoods one day.

"I would like to help people like me in the future," she said. "So, I ask you to pray for me. I want God to use my life for His purpose. May His will be done in my life. Thank you for your prayers."

Study Help***Sabbath, March 2nd, 2024*****Christ's Object Lessons, Chapter 22, page 282-283****"Saying and Doing"**

"And beside this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue; and to virtue knowledge; and to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity." 2 Peter 1:2-7.

If you cultivate faithfully the vineyard of your soul, God is making you a labourer together with Himself. And you will have a work to do not only for yourself, but for others. In representing the church as the vineyard, Christ does not teach that we are to restrict our sympathies and labours to our own numbers. The Lord's vineyard is to be enlarged. In all parts of the earth He desires it to be extended. As we receive the instruction and grace of God, we should impart to others a knowledge of how to care for the precious plants. Thus we may extend the vineyard of the Lord. God is watching for evidence of our faith, love, and patience. He looks to see if we are using every spiritual advantage to become skillful workers in His vineyard on earth, that we may enter the Paradise of God, that Eden home from which Adam and Eve were excluded by transgression.

God stands toward His people in the relation of a father, and He has a father's claim to our faithful service. Consider the life of Christ. Standing at the head of humanity, serving His Father, He is an example of what every son should and may be. The obedience that Christ rendered God requires from human beings today. He served His Father with love, in willingness and freedom. "I delight to do Thy will, O My God," He declared; "yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. Christ counted no sacrifice too great, no toil too hard, in order to accomplish the work which He came to do. At the age of twelve He said, "Wist ye not that I must be about My Father's business?" Luke 2:49. He had heard the call, and had taken up the work. "My meat," He said, "is to do the will of Him that sent Me, and to finish His work." John 4:34

Thus we are to serve God. He only serves who acts up to the highest standard of obedience. All who would be sons and daughters of God must prove themselves co-workers with God and Christ and the heavenly angels. This is the test for every soul. Of those who faithfully serve Him the Lord says, "They shall be Mine, . . . in that day when I make up My jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spares his own son that serves him." Malachi 3:17

God's great object in the working out of His providences is to try men, to give them opportunity to develop character. Thus He proves whether they are obedient or disobedient to His commands. Good works do not purchase the love of God, but they reveal that we possess that love. If we surrender the will to God, we shall not work in order to earn God's love. His love as a free gift will be received into the soul, and from love to Him we shall delight to obey His commandments.

There are only two classes in the world today, and only two classes will be recognized in the judgment--those who violate God's law and those who obey it. Christ gives the test by which to prove our loyalty or disloyalty. "If ye love Me," He says, "keep My commandments. . . . He that hath My commandments, and keepeth them, he it is that loves Me. And he that loves Me shall be loved of My Father, and I will love him, and will manifest Myself to him. . . . He that loves Me not keepeth not My sayings; and the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's which sent Me." "If ye keep My commandments, ye shall abide in My love; even as I have kept My Father's commandments, and abide in His love." John 14:15-24; 15:10.

LESSON 11

“THE JUDGMENT SEAT OF CHRIST”

March 9 — March 15

MEMORY VERSE : But why dost thou judge thy brother? Or why dost thou set at nought thy brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ.' Romans 14:10

STUDY HELP : [Christ's Object Lessons, pages 307-319](#)

SCRIPTURES : Matthew 20:1-16; Matthew 22:1-14; Matthew 25

LESSON AIM : To study the paradoxes that arise from Christ's descriptions of the judgement.

INTRODUCTION : ‘The truth is to be planted in the heart. It is to control the mind and regulate the affections. The whole character must be stamped with the divine utterances. Every jot and tittle of the word of God is to be brought into the daily practice. He who becomes a partaker of the divine nature will be in harmony with God's great standard of righteousness, His holy law. This is the rule by which God measures the actions of men. This will be the test of character in the judgment.' Christ's Object Lessons, page 314.

Sabbath Afternoon

1. What reversal of the normal human situation did Christ say might happen in the judgement?

➤ Matthew 19:30 —

NOTE : ‘Repeatedly the Saviour says, “Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first.” Jesus would have those who are engaged in His service, not eager for rewards, nor feel that they must receive compensation for all that they do. The Lord would have our minds run a different channel; for He sees not as man sees. He does not judge by appearances, but estimates a man by the sincerity of his heart. Those who have brought into their service the spirit of true sacrifice, of self-abasement, are the ones who will stand first at last.' *Review & Herald, July 3, 1894.*

Sunday

1. What example of this does the Bible reveal?

➤ 1 Samuel 16:6-13 —

NOTE : 'As the sons of Jesse passed before Samuel, he would have selected Eliab, who was of high stature, and dignified appearance, but the angel of God stood by him to guide him in the important decision, and instructed him that he should not judge from appearance. Eliab did not fear the Lord. His heart was not right with God. He would make a proud, exacting ruler. None were found among the sons of Jesse but David, the youngest, whose humble occupation was that of tending sheep. He had filled the humble office of shepherd with such faithfulness and courage that God selected him to be captain of his people.' *Lift Him Up*, page 199.

2. What paradoxical picture of the judgement did Jesus describe?

➤ **Matthew 7:21-22** —

NOTE : 'Among those to whom bitter disappointment will come at the day of final reckoning will be some who have been outwardly religious, and who apparently have lived Christian lives. But self is woven into all they do. They pride themselves on their morality, their influence, their ability to stand in a higher position than others, and their knowledge of the truth, for they think that these will win for them the commendation of Christ. "Lord," they plead, "we have eaten and drunk in Thy presence, and Thou hast taught in our streets" (Luke 13:26). "Have we not prophesied in Thy name? and in Thy name have cast out devils? and in Thy name done many wonderful works?"' *Selected Messages, book 1*, page 81.

Monday

1. How will the Lord respond to such people?

➤ **Matthew 7:23** —

NOTE : 'The Greek word translated 'iniquity' is, in 1 John 3:4, translated 'transgression of the law.' 'The people here described, who make these pretentious claims, apparently weaving Jesus into all their doings, fitly represent those who claim modern sanctification but who are at war with the law of God. Christ calls them workers of iniquity because they are deceivers, having on the garments of righteousness to hide the deformity of their characters, the inward wickedness of their unholy hearts.' *Faith & Works*, page 44.

'Yes, those who claim to be sanctified have a great deal to say about being saved by the blood of Jesus, but their sanctification is not through the truth as it is in Jesus. While claiming to believe in Him, and apparently doing wonderful works in His name, they ignore His Father's law and serve as agents of the great adversary of souls to carry forward the work which he began in Eden, that of making plausible excuses for not obeying God implicitly. Their work of leading men to dishonour God by ignoring His law will one day be unfolded before them with its true results. The conditions of eternal life are made so plain in God's Word that none need err, unless they choose error rather than truth because their unsanctified souls love the darkness rather than the light. The lawyer who came to Christ with the question, "Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" thought to catch Christ, but Jesus laid the burden back upon the lawyer. "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.” Then said Christ, “Thou hast answered right: this do, and thou shalt live” (Luke 10:25-28). These words meet the individual cases of all. Are we willing to comply with the conditions? Will we obey God and keep His commandments? Will we be doers of the Word and not hearers only? God's law is as immutable and unchangeable as His character. Whatever men may say or do to make it void does not change its claims or release them from their obligation to obey.' *Faith & Works*, page 42.

2. What apparently unfair parable did Jesus tell about the judgement?

➤ **Matthew 20:1-12** —

NOTE : ‘The householder's dealing with the workers in his vineyard represents God's dealing with the human family. It is contrary to the customs that prevail among men. In worldly business, compensation is given according to the work accomplished. The labourer expects to be paid only that which he earns. But in the parable, Christ was illustrating the principles of His kingdom, a kingdom not of this world. He is not controlled by any human standard. The Lord says, “My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways. . . . For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” Isaiah 55:8, 9.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 396.

Tuesday

1. What reply did the householder give to his disgruntled workers?

➤ **Matthew 20:13-16** —

NOTE : ‘In the parable the first labourers agreed to work for a stipulated sum, and they received the amount specified, nothing more. Those later hired believed the master's promise, “Whatsoever is right, that shall ye receive.” They showed their confidence in him by asking no question in regard to wages. They trusted to his justice and equity. They were rewarded, not according to the amount of their labour, but according to the generosity of his purpose. So God desires us to trust in Him who justifies the ungodly. His reward is given not according to our merit but according to His own purpose, “which He purposed in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Ephesians 3:11. “Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us.” Titus 3:5. And for those who trust in Him He will do “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think.” Ephesians 3:20. Not the amount of labour performed or its visible results but the spirit in which the work is done makes it of value with God. Those who came into the vineyard at the eleventh hour were thankful for an opportunity to work. Their hearts were full of gratitude to the one who had accepted them; and when at the close of the day the householder paid them for a full day's work, they were greatly surprised. They knew they had not earned such wages. And the kindness expressed in the countenance of their employer filled them with joy. They never forgot the goodness of the householder or the generous compensation they had received. Thus it is with the sinner who, knowing his unworthiness, has entered the Master's vineyard at the eleventh hour. His time of service seems so short, he feels that he is undeserving of reward; but he is filled with joy that God has accepted him at all. He works with a humble, trusting spirit, thankful

for the privilege of being a co-worker with Christ. This spirit God delights to honour.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 397.

2. What surprising words of appreciation will some hear in the judgement?

➤ **Matthew 25:35-36** —

NOTE : 'In the account of the judgment scene, when the reward is given to the righteous, and sentence is passed on the wicked, the righteous are represented as wondering what they have done that they should receive such reward. But they cherished an abiding faith in Christ. They were imbued with His Spirit, and without conscious effort, they performed for Christ, in the person of His saints, those services that bring a sure reward. But their motive in working was not to receive compensation. They regarded it as the highest honour to be allowed to work as Christ worked. What they did was done from love to Christ and to their fellow-men.' *Bible Echo*, July 10, 1899.

Wednesday

1. In answer to their question, how does Christ explain His commendation to them and His condemnation of others?

➤ **Matthew 25:40, 45** —

NOTE : 'Jesus here identifies Himself with His suffering people. It was I who was hungry and thirsty. It was I who was a stranger. It was I who was naked. It was I who was sick. It was I who was in prison. When you were enjoying the food from your bountifully spread tables, I was famishing in the hovel or street not far from you. When you closed your doors against Me, while your well-furnished rooms were unoccupied, I had not where to lay My head. Your wardrobes were filled with an abundant supply of changeable suits of apparel, upon which means had been needlessly squandered, which you might have given to the needy. I was destitute of comfortable apparel. When you were enjoying health, I was sick. Misfortune cast Me into prison and bound me with fetters, bowing down My spirit, depriving Me of freedom and hope, while you roamed free. What a oneness Jesus here expresses as existing between Himself and His suffering disciples! He makes their case His own. He identifies Himself as being in person the very sufferer. Mark, selfish Christian: every neglect of the needy poor, the orphan, the fatherless, is a neglect of Jesus in their person.' *Welfare Ministry*, page 40.

2. What other parable concerning the judgement did Christ tell?

➤ **Matthew 22:2-10** —

NOTE : 'The king's servants who went out into the highways "gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good." It was a mixed company. Some of them had no more real regard for the giver of the feast than had the ones who rejected the call. The class first bidden could not afford, they thought, to sacrifice any worldly advantage for the sake of attending the king's banquet. And of those who accepted the invitation, there were some who thought only of benefiting themselves. They came to

share the provisions of the feast, but had no desire to honour the king.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 309.

Thursday

1. Why was one who had been invited to the feast refused entrance?

➤ **Matthew 22:11-12** —

NOTE : 'When the king came in to view the guests, the real character of all was revealed. For every guest at the feast there had been provided a wedding garment. This garment was a gift from the king. By wearing it the guests showed their respect for the giver of the feast. But one man was clothed in his common citizen dress. He had refused to make the preparation required by the king. The garment provided for him at great cost he disdained to wear. Thus he insulted his lord. To the king's demand, "How came thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" he could answer nothing. He was self-condemned. Then the king said, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness.'" *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 309.

'By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. To the church it is given "that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white," "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Revelation 19:8; Ephesians 5:27. The fine linen, says the Scripture, "is the righteousness of saints." Revelation 19:8. It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour.' *Christ's Object Lessons*, page 310.

2. With what words will our Lord greet those who are accepted in the judgement?

➤ **Matthew 25:34** —

NOTE : 'Heaven is worth everything to us. We must not run any risk in this matter. We must take no venture here. We must know that our steps are ordered by the Lord. May God help us in the great work of overcoming. He has crowns for those that overcome. He has white robes for the righteous. He has an eternal world of glory for those who seek for glory, honour, and immortality. Everyone who enters the City of God will enter it as a conqueror. He will not enter it as a condemned criminal, but as a son of God. And the welcome given to everyone who enters there will be, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34.' *Child Guidance*, page 567.

Preparation Day

1. What did Jesus say about the place He is preparing for His people?

➤ **John 14:1-3** —

NOTE : 'Christ calls upon everyone to consider. Make an honest reckoning. Put into one scale Jesus, which means eternal treasure, life, truth, heaven, and the joy of Christ in souls redeemed; put into the other every attraction the world can offer. Into one scale put the loss of your own soul, and the souls of those whom you might have been instrumental in saving; into the other, for yourself and for them, a life that measures with the life of God. Weigh for time and for eternity. While you are thus engaged, Christ speaks: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" Mark 8:36. God desires us to choose the heavenly in place of the earthly. He opens before us the possibilities of a heavenly investment. He would give encouragement to our loftiest aims, security to our choicest treasure. He declares, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." Isaiah 13:12. When the riches that moth devours and rust corrupts shall be swept away, Christ's followers can rejoice in their heavenly treasure, the riches that are imperishable. Better than all the friendship of the world is the friendship of Christ's redeemed. Better than a title to the noblest palace on earth is a title to the mansions our Lord has gone to prepare. And better than all the words of earthly praise will be the Saviour's words to His faithful servants, "Come, ye blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Matthew 25:34.' *Christ's Object Lessons, page 374.*

Mission Story

Costly Cup of Tea

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

Terrance stayed up all night to finish a major assignment for a nursing class at Lowry Adventist University in India.

He was off campus, studying at a friend's house. He was addicted to tea, and he sipped the hot drink all night to stay awake.

Around 4:30 a.m., Terrance went to the kitchen for another cup of tea. But there was no tea left. He wondered what to do. He was struggling to stay awake, and he just had to finish the assignment.

Then he remembered that a vendor sold hot tea from a stand just down the road. He could zip over to the tea vendor on his friend's motorcycle and then zip right back to finish his assignment.

Moments later, Terrance was roaring down a major street at 55 miles per hour (85 kmph). He was traveling at nearly double the speed limit of 30 miles per hour (50 kmph) for motorcycles in the city of Bengaluru. He also was not wearing a helmet.

Suddenly, a car pulled up beside him. It was traveling at the same speed, and it was filled with young people who were drinking. The young people tried to bring their car closer to Terrance and his motorcycle. Terrance tried to get away. They young people laughed and tried to steer closer.

Terrance was worried, and he honked his horn. The young people threw beer cans.

Terrance started getting upset, and he shouted at them. The young people hurled back insults.

Now Terrance completely forgot about the road. He was angry! His speed inched up to 65 miles per hour (100 kmph). He didn't see what was coming up in front of him. It was a speed bump.

He hit the speed bump, and everything went black. One moment, Terrance was arguing, and the next it was like someone had turned off the light.

The next thing Terrance knew, he woke up in bed. He looked at the clock. It said 8:45 a.m. It was time to go to class to turn in his nursing assignment.

Terrance tried to get up, but his body did not respond. He tried to call friends for help, but then he realized that he wasn't in his dormitory room. He looked around, trying to get his bearings. He didn't recognize the place. He saw a calendar. He remembered that he had been working on the nursing assignment in July, but the calendar said it was August. On the wall was a picture of his parents and brother, but he only recognized his brother. He was at home, but he didn't know it.

Suddenly, his mother entered the room. Seeing Terrance was awake, she cried and hugged him. "I'm so glad that you are awake," she said.

Terrance could only reply, "Who are you?"

His words broke his mother's heart.

A week passed before Terrance recognized his parents. They and other people helped him piece together what had happened.

The night of the accident, the pastor at Lowry Adventist University received a call from the police, saying, "Take the body."

The pastor's number had been under the seat of the borrowed motorcycle as an emergency contact number. Terrance had been so badly injured that it took time for people to realize that the body was his and not that of his friend whose motorcycle he had borrowed. No one knows what happened to the drunk people in the car.

Terrance drifted in and out of delirious consciousness for days, and he was transferred in and out of three hospitals.

His parents were shocked when they first saw him. They also didn't have money for his hospital bills. Friends from Lowry Adventist University helped with money and prayers. The pastor visited often. Three months passed from the time of the accident until Terrance returned to the university.

Today, he is a nurse. He is grateful to God, his family, and many friends at the university for his second chance at life. He had put off giving his heart to Jesus, and he realized after the accident that he didn't want to wait any longer. "I was supposed to be baptized a long time back, but I was kind of scared," he said. "I felt I would have to be careful about whatever I did, so I waited for a long time. After the accident, I sensed I shouldn't wait anymore. You never know what will happen next in life."

He was baptized at the university.

Terrance said another lesson that he learned from the accident was to stop drinking caffeinated tea.

"If I had to give a title to my story, I would call it, 'The Most Costly Tea of My Life,'" he said. "It was costly. It cost me a lot of things. But now, when I look back, I would say it was worth it. I needed a lesson from God. I needed to be brought back on the right path."

His advice to other people, especially young people, is simple. "God has a plan for every soul here on earth," he said. "He is not done with you until He says so. Even if you feel that you do not have a future, remember that He says in Jeremiah 1:5, 'Before I formed you in the womb I knew you' [NKJV]. I kept repeating the verse to myself when I was recovering. God has plans for you to receive grace and mercy in ways that you never expected or thought of."

*Study Help**Sabbath, March 9th, 2024***Christ's Object Lessons, Chapter 24, page 307-319****"Without a Wedding Garment"**

The parable of the wedding garment opens before us a lesson of the highest consequence. By the marriage is represented the union of humanity with divinity; the wedding garment represents the character which all must possess who shall be accounted fit guests for the wedding.

In this parable, as in that of the great supper, are illustrated the gospel invitation, its rejection by the Jewish people, and the call of mercy to the Gentiles. But on the part of those who reject the invitation, this parable brings to view a deeper insult and a more dreadful punishment. The call to the feast is a king's invitation. It proceeds from one who is vested with power to command. It confers high honour. Yet the honour is unappreciated. The king's authority is despised. While the householder's invitation was regarded with indifference, the king's is met with insult and murder. They treated his servants with scorn, despitefully using them and slaying them.

The householder, on seeing his invitation slighted, declared that none of the men who are bidden should taste of his supper. But for those who had done despite to the king, more than exclusion from his presence and his table is decreed. "He sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city."

In both parables the feast is provided with guests, but the second shows that there is a preparation to be made by all who attend the feast. Those who neglect this preparation are cast out. "The king came in to see the guests," and "saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment; and he saith unto him, Friend, how came thou in hither not having a wedding garment? And he was speechless. Then said the king to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The call to the feast had been given by Christ's disciples. Our Lord had sent out the twelve and afterward the seventy, proclaiming that the kingdom of God was at hand, and calling upon men to repent and believe the gospel. But the call was not heeded. Those who are bidden to the feast did not come. The servants were sent out later to say, "Behold, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and my fatlings are killed, and all things are ready: come unto the marriage." This was the message borne to the Jewish nation after the crucifixion of Christ; but the nation that claimed to be God's peculiar people rejected the gospel brought to them in the power of the Holy Spirit. Many did this in the most scornful manner. Others were so exasperated by the offer of salvation, the offer of pardon for rejecting the Lord of glory, that they turned upon the bearers of the message. There was "a great persecution." Acts 8:1. Many both of men and women were thrust into prison, and some of the Lord's messengers, as Stephen and James, were put to death.

Thus the Jewish people sealed their rejection of God's mercy. The result was foretold by Christ in the parable. The king "sent forth his armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city." The judgment pronounced came upon the Jews in the destruction of Jerusalem and the scattering of the nation.

The third call to the feast represents the giving of the gospel to the Gentiles. The king said, "The wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy. Go ye therefore into the highways, and as

many as ye shall find, bid to the marriage."

The king's servants who went out into the highways "gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good." It was a mixed company. Some of them had no more real regard for the giver of the feast than had the ones who rejected the call. The class first bidden could not afford, they thought, to sacrifice any worldly advantage for the sake of attending the king's banquet. And of those who accepted the invitation, there were some who thought only of benefiting themselves. They came to share the provisions of the feast, but had no desire to honour the king.

When the king came in to view the guests, the real character of all was revealed. For every guest at the feast there had been provided a wedding garment. This garment was a gift from the king. By wearing it the guests showed their respect for the giver of the feast. But one man was clothed in his common citizen dress. He had refused to make the preparation required by the king. The garment provided for him at great cost he disdained to wear. Thus he insulted his lord. To the king's demand, "How came thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" he could answer nothing. He was self-condemned. Then the king said, "Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast him into outer darkness."

By the king's examination of the guests at the feast is represented a work of judgment. The guests at the gospel feast are those who profess to serve God, those whose names are written in the book of life. But not all who profess to be Christians are true disciples. Before the final reward is given, it must be decided who are fitted to share the inheritance of the righteous. This decision must be made prior to the second coming of Christ in the clouds of heaven; for when He comes, His reward is with Him, "to give every man according as his work shall be." Revelation 22:12. Before His coming, then, the character of every man's work will have been determined, and to every one of Christ's followers the reward will have been apportioned according to his deeds.

It is while men are still dwelling upon the earth that the work of investigative judgment takes place in the courts of heaven. The lives of all His professed followers pass in review before God. All are examined according to the record of the books of heaven, and according to his deeds the destiny of each is forever fixed.

By the wedding garment in the parable is represented the pure, spotless character which Christ's true followers will possess. To the church it is given "that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white," "not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." Revelation 19:8; Ephesians 5:27. The fine linen, says the Scripture, "is the righteousness of saints." Revelation 19:8. It is the righteousness of Christ, His own unblemished character, that through faith is imparted to all who receive Him as their personal Saviour.

The white robe of innocence was worn by our first parents when they were placed by God in holy Eden. They lived in perfect conformity to the will of God. All the strength of their affections was given to their heavenly Father. A beautiful soft light, the light of God, enshrouded the holy pair. This robe of light was a symbol of their spiritual garments of heavenly innocence. Had they remained true to God it would ever have continued to enshroud them. But when sin entered, they severed their connection with God, and the light that had encircled them departed. Naked and ashamed, they tried to supply the place of the heavenly garments by sewing together fig leaves for a covering.

This is what the transgressors of God's law have done ever since the day of Adam and Eve's disobedience. They have sewed together fig leaves to cover the nakedness caused by transgression. They have worn the garments of their own devising, by works of their own they have tried to cover their sins, and make themselves acceptable with God.

But this they can never do. Nothing can man devise to supply the place of his lost robe of innocence. No fig-leaf garment, no worldly citizen dress, can be worn by those who sit down with Christ and angels at the marriage supper of the Lamb.

Only the covering which Christ Himself has provided can make us meet to appear in God's presence. This covering, the robe of His own righteousness, Christ will put upon every repenting, believing soul. "I counsel thee," He says, "to buy of Me . . . white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear." Revelation 3:18.

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isaiah 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. He said of Himself, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God; yea, Thy law is within My heart." Psalm 40:8. When on earth, He said to His disciples, "I have kept My Father's commandments." John 15:10. By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments. When we submit ourselves to Christ, the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness. Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah.

The guests at the marriage feast were inspected by the king. Only those were accepted who had obeyed his requirements and put on the wedding garment. So it is with the guests at the gospel feast. All must pass the scrutiny of the great King, and only those are received who have put on the robe of Christ's righteousness.

Righteousness is right doing, and it is by their deeds that all will be judged. Our characters are revealed by what we do. The works show whether the faith is genuine.

It is not enough for us to believe that Jesus is not an impostor, and that the religion of the Bible is no cunningly devised fable. We may believe that the name of Jesus is the only name under heaven whereby man may be saved, and yet we may not through faith make Him our personal Saviour. It is not enough to believe the theory of truth. It is not enough to make a profession of faith in Christ and have our names registered on the church roll. "He that keepeth His commandments dwell in Him, and He in him. And hereby we know that He abides in us, by the Spirit which He hath given us." "Hereby we do know that we know Him if we keep His commandments." 1 John 3:24; 2:3. This is the genuine evidence of conversion. Whatever our profession, it amounts to nothing unless Christ is revealed in works of righteousness.

The truth is to be planted in the heart. It is to control the mind and regulate the affections. The whole character must be stamped with the divine utterances. Every jot and tittle of the word of God is to be brought into the daily practice.

He who becomes a partaker of the divine nature will be in harmony with God's great standard of righteousness, His holy law. This is the rule by which God measures the actions of men. This will be the test of character in the judgment.

There are many who claim that by the death of Christ the law was abrogated; but in this they contradict Christ's own words, "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets. . . . Till

heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law." Matthew 5:17, 18. It was to atone for man's transgression of the law that Christ laid down His life. Could the law have been changed or set aside, then Christ need not have died. By His life on earth He honoured the law of God. By His death He established it. He gave His life as a sacrifice, not to destroy God's law, not to create a lower standard, but that justice might be maintained, that the law might be shown to be immutable, that it might stand fast forever.

Satan had claimed that it was impossible for man to obey God's commandments; and in our own strength it is true that we cannot obey them. But Christ came in the form of humanity, and by His perfect obedience He proved that humanity and divinity combined can obey every one of God's precepts.

"As many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name." John 1:12. This power is not in the human agent. It is the power of God. When a soul receives Christ, he receives power to live the life of Christ.

God requires perfection of His children. His law is a transcript of His own character, and it is the standard of all character. This infinite standard is presented to all that there may be no mistake in regard to the kind of people whom God will have to compose His kingdom. The life of Christ on earth was a perfect expression of God's law, and when those who claim to be children of God become Christlike in character, they will be obedient to God's commandments. Then the Lord can trust them to be of the number who shall compose the family of heaven. Clothed in the glorious apparel of Christ's righteousness, they have a place at the King's feast. They have a right to join the blood-washed throng.

The man who came to the feast without a wedding garment represents the condition of many in our world today. They profess to be Christians, and lay claim to the blessings and privileges of the gospel; yet they feel no need of a transformation of character. They have never felt true repentance for sin. They do not realize their need of Christ or exercise faith in Him. They have not overcome their hereditary or cultivated tendencies to wrongdoing. Yet they think that they are good enough in themselves, and they rest upon their own merits instead of trusting in Christ. Hearers of the word, they come to the banquet, but they have not put on the robe of Christ's righteousness.

Many who call themselves Christians are mere human moralists. They have refused the gift which alone could enable them to honour Christ by representing Him to the world. The work of the Holy Spirit is to them a strange work. They are not doers of the word. The heavenly principles that distinguish those who are one with Christ from those who are one with the world have become almost indistinguishable. The professed followers of Christ are no longer a separate and peculiar people. The line of demarcation is indistinct. The people are subordinating themselves to the world, to its practices, its customs, its selfishness. The church has gone over to the world in transgression of the law, when the world should have come over to the church in obedience to the law. Daily the church is being converted to the world.

All these expect to be saved by Christ's death, while they refuse to live His self-sacrificing life. They extol the riches of free grace, and attempt to cover themselves with an appearance of righteousness, hoping to screen their defects of character; but their efforts will be of no avail in the day of God.

The righteousness of Christ will not cover one cherished sin. A man may be a law-breaker in heart; yet if he commits no outward act of transgression, he may be regarded by the world as possessing great integrity. But God's law looks into the secrets of the heart. Every act is judged by the motives that prompt it. Only that which is in accord with the principles of God's law will stand in the judgment.

God is love. He has shown that love in the gift of Christ. When "He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life," He withheld nothing from His

purchased possession. (John 3:16.) He gave all heaven, from which we may draw strength and efficiency, that we be not repulsed or overcome by our great adversary. But the love of God does not lead Him to excuse sin. He did not excuse it in Satan; He did not excuse it in Adam or in Cain; nor will He excuse it in any other of the children of men. He will not connive at our sins or overlook our defects of character. He expects us to overcome in His name.

Those who reject the gift of Christ's righteousness are rejecting the attributes of character which would constitute them the sons and daughters of God. They are rejecting that which alone could give them a fitness for a place at the marriage feast.

In the parable, when the king inquired, "How came thou in hither not having a wedding garment?" the man was speechless. So it will be in the great judgment day. Men may now excuse their defects of character, but in that day they will offer no excuse.

The professed churches of Christ in this generation are exalted to the highest privileges. The Lord has been revealed to us in ever-increasing light. Our privileges are far greater than were the privileges of God's ancient people. We have not only the great light committed to Israel, but we have the increased evidence of the great salvation brought to us through Christ. That which was type and symbol to the Jews is reality to us. They had the Old Testament history; we have that and the New Testament also. We have the assurance of a Saviour who has come, a Saviour who has been crucified, who has risen, and over the rent sepulchre of Joseph has proclaimed, "I am the resurrection and the life." In our knowledge of Christ and His love the kingdom of God is placed in the midst of us. Christ is revealed to us in sermons and chanted to us in songs. The spiritual banquet is set before us in rich abundance. The wedding garment, provided at infinite cost, is freely offered to every soul. By the messengers of God are presented to us the righteousness of Christ, justification by faith, the exceeding great and precious promises of God's word, free access to the Father by Christ, the comfort of the Spirit, the well-grounded assurance of eternal life in the kingdom of God. What could God do for us that He has not done in providing the great supper, the heavenly banquet?

In heaven it is said by the ministering angels: The ministry which we have been commissioned to perform we have done. We pressed back the army of evil angels. We sent brightness and light into the souls of men, quickening their memory of the love of God expressed in Jesus. We attracted their eyes to the cross of Christ. Their hearts were deeply moved by a sense of the sin that crucified the Son of God. They were convicted. They saw the steps to be taken in conversion; they felt the power of the gospel; their hearts were made tender as they saw the sweetness of the love of God. They beheld the beauty of the character of Christ. But with the many it was all in vain. They would not surrender their own habits and character. They would not put off the garments of earth in order to be clothed with the robe of heaven. Their hearts were given to covetousness. They loved the associations of the world more than they loved their God.

Solemn will be the day of final decision. In prophetic vision the apostle John describes it: "I saw a great white throne, and Him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened; and another book was opened, which is the book of life; and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." Revelation 20:11, 12.

Sad will be the retrospect in that day when men stand face to face with eternity. The whole life will present itself just as it has been. The world's pleasures, riches, and honors will not then seem so important. Men will then see that the righteousness they despised is alone of value. They will see that they have fashioned their characters under the deceptive allurements of Satan. The garments they have chosen are the badge of their allegiance to the first great apostate. Then they will see the results of their

choice. They will have a knowledge of what it means to transgress the commandments of God.

There will be no future probation in which to prepare for eternity. It is in this life that we are to put on the robe of Christ's righteousness. This is our only opportunity to form characters for the home which Christ has made ready for those who obey His commandments.

The days of our probation are fast closing. The end is near. To us the warning is given, "Take heed to yourselves, lest at any time your hearts be overcharged with surfeiting, and drunkenness, and cares of this life, and so that day come upon you unawares." Luke 21:34. Beware lest it find you unready. Take heed lest you be found at the King's feast without a wedding garment.

"In such an hour as ye think not the Son of man cometh." "Blessed is he that watches, and keepeth his garments, lest he walk naked, and they see his shame." Matthew 24:44; Revelation 16:15.

LESSON 12

“MY STRENGTH IS MADE PERFECT IN WEAKNESS”

March 16 — March 22

MEMORY VERSE : The foolishness of God is wiser than men; and the weakness of God is stronger than men.' 1 Corinthians 1:25

STUDY HELP : [Desire of Ages, page 758](#)

SCRIPTURES : Philippians 2:5-11

LESSON AIM : To study the paradoxes of Christ's victory on man's behalf.

INTRODUCTION : ‘The Father and the Son rested after Their work of Creation. “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended His work which He had made. . . . And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it He had rested.” Genesis 2:1-3. The death of Christ was designed to be at the very time in which it took place. It was in God's plan that the work which Christ had engaged to do should be completed on a Friday, and that on the Sabbath He should rest in the tomb, even as the Father and Son had rested after completing Their creative work. The hour of Christ's apparent defeat was the hour of His victory. The great plan, devised before the foundations of the earth were laid, was successfully carried out.’ *The Man of Sorrows, February 24, 1898.*

*Sabbath Afternoon***1. What did Christ do for us by coming to earth as a human being?**

➤ 2 Corinthians 8:9 —

➤ Philippians 2:5-8 —

NOTE : ‘Very earnest and touching is the apostle's appeal that his Corinthian brethren consider anew the matchless love of their Redeemer. “Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ,” he wrote, “that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich.” You know the height from which He stooped, the depth of humiliation to which He descended. Having once entered upon the path of self-denial and sacrifice, he turned not aside until He had given His life. There was no rest for Him between the throne and the cross. Point after point Paul lingered over, in order that those who should read his epistle might fully comprehend the wonderful condescension of the Saviour in their behalf. Presenting Christ as He was when equal with God and with Him receiving the homage of the angels, the apostle traced His course until He had reached the

lowest depths of humiliation. Paul was convinced that if they could be brought to comprehend the amazing sacrifice made by the Majesty of heaven, all selfishness would be banished from their lives. He showed how the Son of God had laid aside His glory, voluntarily subjecting Himself to the conditions of human nature, and then had humbled Himself as a servant, becoming obedient unto death, “even the death of the cross” (Philippians 2:8), that He might lift fallen man from degradation to hope and joy and heaven.’ *Acts of the Apostles*, page 333.

Sunday

1. What are the riches that Christ promises those who follow Him?

- Colossians 1:27 —
- Ephesians 3:16 —
- Philippians 4:19 —

NOTE : “The Lord Jesus entreats human agents not to cheat themselves out of heavenly treasures, and deprive themselves of an immortal inheritance by hoarding their earthly treasures, and by seeking to provide for themselves a portion in this life. He would have them understand that they are a part of the great web of humanity, and that they are to interweave their interests with the interests of others, and recognise that they are a part of the web of humanity, by supplying the needs of God's suffering poor. Christ gives cautions and warnings that are of the highest importance, urging men to establish their principal interest in heaven. “But when thou makes a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind; and thou shalt be blessed; for they cannot recompense thee; for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just.” In His sermon on the mount He brought forth the same truth when He said: “Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal; for where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” *Signs of the Times*, May 14, 1896.

2. What was Christ willing to become for us in being crucified?

- Galatians 3:13 —
- Deuteronomy 21:22-23 —

NOTE : “And when they were come to the place, which is called Calvary, there they crucified Him.” “That He might sanctify the people with His own blood,” Christ “suffered without the gate.” Hebrews 13:12. For transgression of the law of God, Adam and Eve were banished from Eden. Christ, our substitute, was to suffer without the boundaries of Jerusalem. He died outside the gate, where felons and murderers were executed. Full of significance are the words, “Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” Galatians 3:13.’ *Desire of Ages*, page 741.

'There was "laid on Him the iniquity of us all;" He "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses;" He was "made a curse for us." Thus, under all the disadvantages of the curse, and under the curse Himself, laden with the weaknesses, the degeneracy, and the sins of the race when at the brink of ruin, Christ the Son of man triumphed, just where, with all the advantages of the unhindered blessing of God, with all the advantages of open and full communion with angels and even with the Lord himself, and with all the advantages of perfection in himself and in all creation about him, Adam the son of God failed.' *A. T. Jones: Review & Herald, April 11, 1899.*

Monday

1. Because Christ was willing to be made a curse for us, what contrast comes, instead of the curse, to those who receive Him?

➤ **Romans 4:7-8 —**

➤ **Psalm 37:22 —**

NOTE : 'What now does Jesus do for us? He takes the weakness, and gives us in return His strength. "We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities." Hebrews 4:15. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses." Matthew 8:17. He becomes all that we are in order that we may become all that He is. He was "born under the law, to redeem them that were under the law." He hath delivered us from the curse, being made a curse for us, that the blessing might come to us. Although He knew no sin, He was made to be sin for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him." 2 Corinthians 5:21.' *E. J. Waggoner: The Glad Tidings, page 198.*

2. What was Jesus willing to undergo on our behalf?

➤ **John 19:1-3 —**

➤ **Matthew 27:26-31 —**

NOTE : 'Jesus was taken, faint with weariness and covered with wounds, and scourged in the sight of the multitude. "And the soldiers led Him away into the hall, called Praetorium, and they call together the whole band. And they clothed Him with purple, and plaited a crown of thorns, and put it about His head, and began to salute Him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they . . . did spit upon Him, and bowing their knees worshiped Him." Occasionally some wicked hand snatched the reed that had been placed in His hand, and struck the crown upon His brow, forcing the thorns into His temples, and sending the blood trickling down His face and beard. Wonder, O heavens! and be astonished, O earth! Behold the oppressor and the oppressed. A maddened throng enclose the Saviour of the world. Mocking and jeering are mingled with the coarse oaths of blasphemy. His lowly birth and humble life are commented upon by the unfeeling mob. His claim to be the Son of God is ridiculed, and the vulgar jest and insulting sneer are passed from lip to lip.' *Desire of Ages, page 734.*

*Tuesday***1. What did the unmerciful treatment of Christ by His enemies bring to us?**

- Isaiah 53:5 —
- 1 Peter 2:24 —

NOTE : ‘Note the simple facts here presented: Isa 53:5-6 “But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned everyone to his own way; and the LORD hath laid on him the iniquity of us all”. He was treated as we deserved to be treated in order that we might be treated as He deserved to be treated. This is the essence of the good news. He “loved me, and gave Himself up for me.” Galatians 2:20

2. What did Jesus say would be the effect of His being nailed to the cross?

- John 12:32-33 —

NOTE : ‘How, then, are we to be saved? “As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness,” so the Son of man has been lifted up, and everyone who has been deceived and bitten by the serpent may look and live. “Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.” John 1:29. The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself. Then the law of God is written in the mind and heart, and we can say with Christ, “I delight to do Thy will, O my God.” Psalm 40:8.’ *Desire of Ages, page 175.*

*Wednesday***1. What was the more usual reaction to one who was crucified?**

- Matthew 27:39 —

NOTE : ‘Christ came to manifest the love of God to the world to draw the hearts of all men to Himself. He said, “And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me.” The first step toward salvation is to respond to the drawing of the love of Christ. God sends message after message to men, entreating them to repentance, that He may forgive, and write pardon against their names. Shall there be no repentance? Shall His appeals be unheeded? Shall His overtures of mercy be ignored, and His love utterly rejected? O, then man will cut himself off from the medium through which he may gain life eternal; for God only pardons the penitent. By the manifestation of His love, by the entreating of His Spirit, He woos men to repentance; for repentance is the gift of God, and whom He pardons He first makes penitent. The sweetest joy comes to man through his sincere repentance toward God for the transgression of His law, and through faith in Christ as the sinner's Redeemer and Advocate. It is that men may understand the joy of forgiveness, the peace of God, that Christ draws them through the

manifestation of His love. If they respond to His drawing, yielding their hearts to His grace, He will lead them on step by step, to a full knowledge of Himself; and this is life eternal.' *Signs of the Times*, September 12, 1911.

2. What did the crucifixion of Christ apparently show?

➤ 2 Corinthians 13:4 —

➤ John 5:19, 30 —

NOTE : 'In weakness He came, and in weakness He ended His work. "He was crucified through weakness." 2 Corinthians 13:4. Nevertheless "He lives by the power of God," and that is how we are to live.' *E. J. Waggoner: Present Truth*, December 28, 1899.

Thursday

1. What does Christ's weakness, allied with the power of His Father, show?

➤ 1 Corinthians 1:25 —

➤ 2 Corinthians 12:10 —

➤ Philippians 4:13 —

NOTE : 'In His work here as the man Christ Jesus, He did not avail Himself of His own divine power in order to assist Him to live the life of God. He might have done it for Himself; but had He done so, He would not have been our example; we cannot do it; we have no divine power of our own. He voluntarily took that place of weakness with us. "For though He was crucified through weakness, yet He lives by the power of God. For we also are weak in Him, but we shall live with Him by the power of God toward you." 2 Corinthians 13:4. He took a place where He would not obtain strength in any other way than that open to us; and let it be remembered for our encouragement, that our Saviour, when He was here in the flesh, did not use any power for a righteous life which is not at our command to-day. It shows the possibility for humanity. "As the living Father hath sent Me, and I live by the Father: so he that eats Me, even he shall live by Me." "Then answered Jesus and said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, The Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do: for what things soever He doeth, these also doeth the Son likewise." John 6:57; 5:19. He voluntarily took that place where He could do nothing of Himself. Why did Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, give up heaven, and come here as the Son of man, and voluntarily put Himself in our place? So that everything He gained as the Son of man might come to us. "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcome, and am set down with My Father in His throne." And the very place at His own right hand belongs to Jesus Christ as Son of man; and as He won it as the Son of man, that same place belongs to every believer in Jesus. So Jesus Christ came here to reveal to us, in the flesh, what God's ideal for humanity is, and how it may be lived out.' *W. W. Prescott: Review & Herald*, March 24, 1896.

2. How did Christ sum up His mission?

➤ John 10:10 —

NOTE : ‘Adam and Eve needed life from that day in the garden; for if Jesus had not then offered Himself, if He had not then thus “come”, death would have come to them the day that they sinned. But the Lord Jesus came and gave Himself, and thus took upon Himself all that was to fall upon them, or upon us, that Adam and Eve might receive what was better. And in the nature of things, they must have breath to enable them to live long enough to give them time to choose that which God had brought, the gift of himself, which is life. Consequently, at that point He came, that mankind might have life. Then, whosoever will take the proper advantage of this breathing space, of this life which is but a vapour, which is given to us solely that we may choose that which is life indeed... At the moment when the man had incurred death, He came that we might have life, even life enough to allow us to breathe, in order that we might make use of this breathing spell of life in such a way that we should have life more abundantly, even the life which is eternal substance, even as the fullness of the life of God.’ A. T. Jones: *Review & Herald*, October 9, 1900.

Preparation Day

1. What had to happen in order for repentant sinners to have that life Jesus offers?

➤ 1 Thessalonians 5:9-10 —

NOTE : ‘Every earthly blessing has come to us because of the infinite price that has been paid on our behalf. If it has cost so great a price to redeem man, so that he should not perish, but have everlasting life, how we should rejoice that we are privileged to become co-workers with Christ in saving those for whom He has given His precious life! The Lord Jesus loves those for whom He has made the greatest sacrifice. He gave His own most precious life to bring life and immortality to light to all those who should believe.’ *Review and Herald*, January 14, 1896.

Mission Story

Home for a Boy

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

Eleven-year-old Sudip was frightened when Father suddenly fell ill and was rushed to the hospital in Nepal. What was wrong with Father? What would happen next?

The doctor carefully checked Father's liver. It wasn't working properly. The doctor carefully checked Father's kidneys. They weren't working properly. The doctor carefully checked Father's lungs. They weren't working properly. Then the doctor carefully checked Father's heart. It wasn't working properly.

"This is very bad," the doctor said. "Father's organs are failing because of his drinking." Father worked as a builder who built homes. But he also had drunk a lot of alcohol in his life. When he got off work, he drank. At home in the evening, he drank. Sometimes, when he woke up in the morning, he drank. Alcohol had poisoned his body, and he was in very bad shape.

Sudip wondered what would happen next. Mother also wondered what would happen next. Father was the only person who earned money in the family.

The doctor said he was doing all he could to help Father.

"We are doing the best that we can," he said.

But the treatments didn't help. Father's liver stopped working. His kidneys stopped working. His lungs stopped working. Then his heart stopped working.

It was a very dark day for Sudip and Mother when Father died. Sudip cried and cried. Mother cried and cried.

Several days passed. Sudip stopped crying, but Mother kept on crying. She was worried about how she would feed Sudip. She was worried about who would pay for his school supplies and new clothes.

Sudip didn't know how he could help Mother. He was only 11. So, he cried with her. There was nothing else he could do. Mother and son cried and cried.

Just when everything seemed hopeless, Mother heard about an orphanage where poor children could live and study. The orphanage was operated by Seventh-day Adventists from South Korea.

Mother had heard about Adventists many months earlier, and she had wanted to go to an Adventist church on Sabbath. But Father had forbidden her from going. He had said to her, "My father was not a Christian, and my grandfather was not a Christian, and our ancestors were not Christians. We are not Christians. We worship our own god, and we will not go to a Christian church."

But now Father was gone. The Adventist orphanage seemed like the only answer. Mother sent Sudip to the orphanage.

Two years have passed since Sudip arrived at the orphanage, and today he is a happy boy.

"I'm very happy because now I am growing up in a Christian orphanage," he said. "I know who my Saviour is, and I want to know more and more about Him. I want to become a pastor and serve the Lord for the rest of my life."

Every day, Sudip prays and thanks God for His blessings.

Every Sabbath, Sudip goes to church. Mother also goes to church every Sabbath. But some of Father's relatives are angry that Sudip and Mother are going to church. They are trying to persuade them to stop going to church.

"Please pray for my relatives," Sudip said.

"I hope and believe that one day they will come to God. Thank you for your prayers."

Study Help***Sabbath, March 16th, 2024*****The Desire of Ages, Chapter 79, page 758****“It is Finished”**

Christ did not yield up His life till He had accomplished the work which He came to do, and with His parting breath He exclaimed, "It is finished." John 19:30. The battle had been won. His right hand and His holy arm had gotten Him the victory. As a Conqueror He planted His banner on the eternal heights. Was there not joy among the angels? All heaven triumphed in the Saviour's victory. Satan was defeated, and knew that his kingdom was lost.

To the angels and the unfallen worlds the cry, "It is finished," had a deep significance. It was for them as well as for us that the great work of redemption had been accomplished. They with us share the fruits of Christ's victory.

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The arch-apostate had so clothed himself with deception that even holy beings had not understood his principles. They had not clearly seen the nature of his rebellion

It was a being of wonderful power and glory that had set himself against God. Of Lucifer the Lord says, "Thou seal up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty." Ezekiel 28:12. Lucifer had been the covering cherub. He had stood in the light of God's presence. He had been the highest of all created beings, and had been foremost in revealing God's purposes to the universe. After he had sinned, his power to deceive was the more deceptive, and the unveiling of his character was the more difficult, because of the exalted position he had held with the Father.

LESSON 13

“THOUGHT IT NOT ROBBERY TO BE EQUAL WITH GOD”

March 23 — March 29

MEMORY VERSE : Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God.' Philippians 2:5-6.

STUDY HELP : *The Upward Look, page 260*

SCRIPTURES : Philippians 2:1-11

LESSON AIM : To study the paradox that Jesus was one with His Father, but said that His Father was greater than He

INTRODUCTION : ‘Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. He was equal with God, infinite and omnipotent. But He humbled Himself, and took mortality upon Him. As a member of the human family, He was mortal; but as God, He was the fountain of life to the world. He could, in His divine person, ever have withstood the advances of death, and refused to come under its dominion; but He voluntarily laid down His life, that in so doing He might give life and bring immortality to light. He bore the sins of the world, and endured the penalty, which rolled like a mountain upon His divine soul. He yielded up His life a sacrifice, that man should not eternally die. He died, not through being compelled to die, but by His own free will. And this wonderful mystery, the incarnation of Christ and the atonement that He made, must be declared to every son and daughter of Adam.’ *The Faith I Live By, page 46.*

Sabbath Afternoon

1. What are we told of Christ's position before He came to be born in Bethlehem?

➤ Philippians 2:5-6 —

➤ John 1:1-3 —

NOTE : “The Word was with God, and the Word was God” (John 1:1). Before men or angels were created, the Word was with God, and was God. The world was made by Him, “and without Him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:3). If Christ made all things, He existed before all things. The words

spoken in regard to this are so decisive that no one need be left in doubt. Christ was God essentially, and in the highest sense. He was with God from all eternity, God over all, blessed forevermore. The Lord Jesus Christ, the divine Son of God, existed from eternity, a distinct person, yet one with the Father. He was the surpassing glory of heaven. He was the commander of the heavenly intelligences, and the adoring homage of the angels was received by Him as His right. This was no robbery of God.' *Selected Messages, book 1, page 247.*

Sunday

1. Did the Jews understand who Jesus was claiming to be?

➤ John 10:32-33 —

NOTE : 'Christ's words concerning Abraham conveyed to His hearers no deep significance. The Pharisees saw in them only fresh ground for cavilling. They retorted with a sneer, as if they would prove Jesus to be a madman, "Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast Thou seen Abraham?" With solemn dignity Jesus answered, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM." Silence fell upon the vast assembly. The name of God, given to Moses to express the idea of the eternal presence, had been claimed as His own by this Galilean Rabbi. He had announced Himself to be the self-existent One, He who had been promised to Israel, "whose goings forth have been from of old, from the days of eternity." Micah 5:2, margin. Again the priests and rabbis cried out against Jesus as a blasphemer. His claim to be one with God had before stirred them to take His life, and a few months later they plainly declared, "For a good work we stone Thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that Thou, being a man, makes Thyself God." John 10:33. Because He was, and avowed Himself to be, the Son of God, they were bent on destroying Him. Now many of the people, siding with the priests and rabbis, took up stones to cast at Him.' *Desire of Ages, pages 469-470.*

2. How does Isaiah speak of the Child born for us, the Son given to us?

➤ Isaiah 9:6 —

➤ Matthew 1:23 —

NOTE : "Without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory." "Being in the form of God, He thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made Himself of no reputation, and took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a name which is above every name: that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father." In Him "we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins: who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by Him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or

principalities, or powers: all things were created by Him, and for Him: and He is before all things, and by Him all things consist.” *Review & Herald, September 16, 1902.*

Monday

1. What confession of this truth was made by the slowest of Christ's disciples to believe?

➤ **John 20:28** —

NOTE : ‘Thomas, who had settled into stubborn unbelief upon witnessing the death of Christ, said, “Except I shall see in His hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into His side, I will not believe.” John 20:25. When he saw and felt the marks of the crucifixion he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God.” The evidences of Christ's messiahship and His divinity were such as to carry conviction to all minds, excepting those blinded by error and hardened by sin.’ *James White: The Redeemer & Redeemed, page 15.*

‘Jesus, in His treatment of Thomas, gave His followers a lesson regarding the manner in which they should treat those who have doubts upon religious truth, and who make those doubts prominent. He did not overwhelm Thomas with words of reproach, nor did He enter into a controversy with him; but, with marked condescension and tenderness, He revealed Himself unto the doubting one. Thomas had taken a most unreasonable position, in dictating the only conditions of his faith; but Jesus, by His generous love and consideration, broke down all the barriers he had raised. Persistent controversy will seldom weaken unbelief, but rather put it upon self-defence, where it will find new support and excuse. Jesus, revealed in His love and mercy as the crucified Saviour, will bring from many once unwilling lips the acknowledgment of Thomas, “My Lord, and my God”’ *Spirit of Prophecy, volume 3, page 222.*

2. Does the Bible speak of three gods or One?

➤ **James 2:19** —

➤ **Deuteronomy 6:4** —

➤ **Isaiah 43:10** —

➤ **Isaiah 44:6** —

NOTE : ‘Tritheism is the teaching that the Godhead is really three separate beings who are three separate gods. This erring view is often accepted in the cults instead the doctrine of the ‘Three in one God-head’, which states that there is but one God in three persons, Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. The doctrine of the ‘Three in one God-head’ is, by definition, monotheistic; it is a doctrine that affirms that there is only one God in the entire universe, has taken different forms throughout the centuries. In the late 11th century a Catholic monk of Compiègne in France, Roscelin, considered the three Divine Persons as three independent beings and that it could be said they were three gods. He maintained that God the Father and God the Holy Ghost would have become incarnate with God the Son unless there

were three gods. Mormonism is tritheistic, but with a twist. Mormonism teaches that there are many gods in the universe but they serve and worship only one of them. The godhead for earth is to them really three separate gods: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. The Father used to be a man on another world who brought one of his wives with him to this world; they both have bodies of flesh and bones. Son is a second god who was literally begotten by God the Father and his goddess wife. The Holy Ghost is a third god. So, in reality, Mormonism is polytheistic with a tritheistic emphasis. Of course, tritheism clearly contradicts the teaching of the Bible regarding monotheism, that there is only one God.

Tuesday

1. How does the Bible speak of the oneness of the Father and the Son?



NOTE : ‘The Father and the Son are one. John 10:30. Both are worthy of worship. God alone may be worshiped (Revelation 22:8, 9), but Christ did not refuse the adoration of His disciples. Luke 24:52. We are not called upon to explain the mystery of godliness, nor expected to understand it, but Christ has explained to us how He and the Father are one. In His memorable prayer for His disciples, He said: “Holy Father, keep through Thine own name those whom Thou hast given Me, that they may be one, as We are one.” “And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one even as We are one.” John 17:11, 22. . . . The Father and the Son were one in creating the earth, and one in the devising and carrying out of the plan of salvation. They never worked at cross purposes; and in harmony with Christ's prayer that union may exist among His disciples, Paul exhorts us to “all speak the same thing,” and to “be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.” 1 Corinthians 1:10.’ *E. J. Waggoner: Signs of the Times, June 19, 1884.*

2. How does the Bible speak of Christ when He took upon Himself human flesh?

➤ Hebrews 2:9 —

➤ Hebrews 2:6-7 —

NOTE : ‘What a contrast the second Adam presented as He entered the gloomy wilderness to cope with Satan single-handed. Since the fall, the race had been decreasing in size and physical strength, and sinking lower in the scale of moral worth, up to the period of Christ's advent to the earth. In order to elevate fallen man, Christ must reach him where he was. He took human nature, and bore the infirmities and degeneracy of the race. He who knew no sin became sin for us. He humiliated Himself to the lowest depths of human woe, that He might be qualified to reach man and bring him up from the degradation in which sin had plunged him.’ *Confrontation, pages 32-33.*

*Wednesday***1. Why was it necessary for Christ to take upon Himself human nature?**

➤ **Hebrews 2:14-18** —

NOTE : “For it became Him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, in bringing many sons unto glory, to make the Captain of their salvation perfect through sufferings.” “And being made perfect, He became the Author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey Him.” “Wherefore in all things it behoved Him to be made like unto His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people. For in that He himself hath suffered being tempted, He is able to succour them that are tempted.” “For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin.” *Confrontation, page 33.*

2. What did Christ say of Himself when He was made like unto His brethren?

➤ **John 5:19** —

➤ **John 5:30** —

➤ **John 6:38** —

➤ **John 8:28** —

➤ **John 12:49** —

➤ **John 14:10** —

NOTE : ‘The Saviour was deeply anxious for His disciples to understand for what purpose His divinity was united to humanity. He came to the world to display the glory of God, that man might be uplifted by its restoring power. God was manifested in Him that He might be manifested in them. Jesus revealed no qualities, and exercised no powers, that men may not have through faith in Him. His perfect humanity is that which all His followers may possess, if they will be in subjection to God as He was.’ *Desire of Ages, page 664.*

*Thursday***1. Because He had accepted human nature: how did Jesus then describe His relationship with His Father?**

➤ **John 14:28** —

NOTE : ‘The statement is emphatically true in view of the position which Christ had assumed. He “made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men:” Philippians 2:7. He was “made a little lower than the angels, for the suffering of death.” Hebrews 2:9. In order to redeem men, He had to come where they were. He did not lay aside His

divinity, but He laid aside His glory, and veiled His divinity with humanity. So His statement, “My Father is greater than I,” is perfectly consistent with the claim, made by Himself as well as by all who wrote of Him, that He was and is God.’ *E. J. Waggoner: Bible Echo & Signs of the Times, October 1, 1889.*

2. How does the Father address the Son?

- Hebrews 1:8 —
- Psalm 45:6 —

NOTE : “Of the angels He saith, Who makes the angels spirits, and His ministers a flame of fire. But unto the Son He saith, Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever.” And again: “A sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom. Thou hast loved righteousness, and hated iniquity; therefore God, even Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows.” And yet again, the Father, in speaking to the Son, says: “Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of Thine hands: they shall perish; but Thou remains; and they all shall wax old as doth a garment; and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall be changed: but thou art the same, and thy years shall not fail.” Note the contrasts here, and in them read the nature of Christ. The heavens shall perish, but He remains. The heavens shall wax old, but His years shall not fail. The heavens shall be changed, but He is the same. That shows that He is God: of the nature of God. Yet more of this contrast between Christ and the angels: “To which of the angels said He at any time, Sit on My right hand, until I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation?” Thus, in the first chapter of Hebrews, Christ is revealed higher than the angels, as God; and as much higher than the angels as is God, because He is God. In the first chapter of Hebrews Christ is revealed as God, of the name of God, because He is of the nature of God. And so entirely is His nature of the nature of God, that it is the very impress of the substance of God.’ *A. T. Jones: Review & Herald, December 11, 1900.*

Preparation Day

1. How will Christ finally be viewed by all created beings?

- Philippians 2:9-11 —
- Isaiah 45:22-23 —

NOTE : ‘The hour has come when Christ occupies His rightful position and is glorified above principalities and powers and every name that is named. It was for the joy that was set before Him, that He might bring many sons unto glory, that He endured the cross and despised the shame. And inconceivably great as was the sorrow and the shame, yet greater is the joy and the glory. He looks upon the redeemed, renewed in His own image, every heart bearing the perfect impress of the divine, every face reflecting the likeness of their King. He beholds in them the result of the travail of His soul, and He is satisfied. Then, in a voice that reaches the assembled multitudes of the righteous and the wicked, He declares: “Behold the purchase of My blood! For these I suffered, for these I died, that they might dwell in My

presence throughout eternal ages.” And the song of praise ascends from the white-robed ones about the throne: “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing.” Revelation 5:12.' *Great Controversy*, page 671.

Mission Story

Happy, Childless Widow

By ANDREW MCCHESENEY

Ratnamaya got married in Nepal when she was 13 years old.

Many years passed, and she did not have a child.

Townspeople called her unkind names. Friends and relatives looked down on her as cursed.

Her husband blamed her and drank heavily.

Ratnamaya felt very sad. She wanted more than anything in the world to have a child. She tried everything that she could to get pregnant. But nothing helped.

When it seemed that life couldn't get worse, her husband suddenly died.

Ratnamaya's sadness multiplied. Now she had to live with the double pain of being childless and a widow. She felt so lonely. She saw other people living happily with children and grandchildren.

Then the COVID-19 pandemic struck, and she was stuck in lockdown for months. She gradually lost her will to live.

It was then that a nephew stopped by her small house. Lockdown restrictions were easing, and he invited her to visit his church.

"Come to my church," he said. "You will hear many new things, and you can also get a gift."

The church was distributing rice and blankets to needy people during the pandemic. Ratnamaya decided to go.

The Sabbath worship service surprised her. She had been raised in a non-Christian religion, and it was the first time that she had observed a Christian program. She was especially drawn to the hymns, and she felt peace in her heart as she listened to people sing about Jesus.

Church-goers greeted Ratnamaya and spoke with her.

She was astonished that no-one called her names or looked down on her. No-one said that she was to blame for being a childless widow.

Instead, everyone spoke kindly and lovingly to her.

After that Sabbath, several women from the church began to visit Ratnamaya at her home.

They taught her the Bible and prayed with her.

Ratnamaya started to go to church every Sabbath.

She felt good every time she went to church and spoke with people at church. She was especially happy to learn that Jesus loved her very much.

She stopped feeling lonely and sad. In Jesus, she found the joy that had been missing her whole life.

She felt like the happiest person in the world!

“The Lord has given me His peace in my heart,” she said. “I always will be thankful to God for His love and for everything that He has done in my life.”

Today, Ratnamaya is 65 years old and still growing in her Christian faith.

She never went to school, so she cannot read or write.

But she is studying the Bible with the women from church and by listening to a radio podcast produced by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

“I want to grow in the Lord even more, so I ask everyone to pray for me,” she said.

One of Ratnamaya’s favourite Bible verses is Philippians 4:4, where Paul says, “Rejoice in the Lord always. Again I will say, rejoice!” (NKJV).

“I don’t have husband nor children, but I never feel lonely because I can rejoice in my Lord and Saviour,” she said. “My Lord is always with me, and He loves me more than anything.”

Study Help***Sabbath, March 23rd, 2024*****The Upward Look, Chapter 9, pp. 250****“Faithfulness in Little Things”****August 24th**

Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities. [Luke 19:17]

If our active temperament gathers in a large amount of work that we have not strength nor the grace of Christ to do understandingly and with order and exactitude, everything we undertake shows imperfection, and the work is constantly marred. God is not glorified, however good the motive. . .

God would have us pay heed to His words. The carefully wrought service in the sight of God is of value although easily overlooked by human eyes, yet indispensable in this world where we are doing our work. God wants intelligent workers, doing their work not hurriedly, but carefully, and thoroughly, always preserving the humility of Jesus. Those who put thought and painstaking into the higher duties should put care and thought into the smaller duties, showing exactitude and diligence.

Oh, how much neglected work is done, how much leaving things at loose ends because there is a constant desire to take on greater work. The work is slurred over that relates to the service of God, because they pull so much work before them that there is nothing done thoroughly. But all the work must bear the scrutiny of the Judge of all the earth. The smaller duties connected with the service of the Master assume importance because it is Christ's service. Selfishness and self-esteem should be guarded against as your bitterest enemy. But how easily self finds opportunities to exhibit itself, and how Satan exults at the exhibitions, and how sorrowful and ashamed are the angels of God of man's foolishness. How unlike Jesus Christ; in what contrast to the example He has given us in His own life. How far removed from His requirements, to crucify self with the affections and lusts. . .

What will be our feelings when we shall stand on the sea of glass? Shall we look back on the hours of our impatience here? Shall we stand upon the eternal hills of paradise and take in the events of our past life and see how many unnecessary trials we had because we thought God was dependent upon us to do everything? God help us to see our own littleness and God's greatness. God forbid that we should have exalted ideas of our own greatness, and exalt self. Magnitude of experience is no measure of worth. God has a standard so unlike human standards, and if we see God's estimate of us, we would see value where we supposed was littleness, and littleness where we supposed was greatness.--Letter 48, Aug. 24, 1886, to "Dear Brethren Engaged in Labour in Nimes" [France].

Published by
Hope International
6 Tawa St Ohura
New Zealand