

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2023: *Ephesians*

Lesson 1 “Paul *and the Ephesians*”

Read for this week’s study

Acts 18:18–21; Acts 19:13–20:1; Acts 20:17–38; Ephesians 1:1, 2; Ephesians 6:21–24; Ephesians 3:13; Ephesians 1:9, 10.

Memory Text

“Making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth” (Ephesians 1:9, 10, ESV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Paul, Evangelist to Ephesus
- III. A Riot in the Amphitheater
- IV. Hearing the Letter to the Ephesians
- V. Ephesians in Its Time
- VI. Ephesians: A Christ-saturated Letter
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. There are four major interactions between Paul and the Ephesians in the Bible. Around A.D. 52 Paul makes an initial, brief visit (Acts 18:18-21). From roughly A.D. 53-56 Paul actually resides in Ephesus (Acts 19:1-20:1). On his way to Jerusalem in A.D. 57, Paul meets with the elders of Ephesus in Miletus (Acts 20:17-38). And finally, around A.D. 62, Paul writes his letter to the Ephesians, probably from prison in Rome.
2. Read the entire letter to the Ephesians. It should only take you 15 minutes. As you go through the letter, look for the four major metaphors Paul uses for the church. Which of these four do you personally find the most helpful? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
3. Ephesus was one of the largest and most important cities of the Roman Empire. It had a major port, which was a major source of wealth, and it was the capital of the

Roman province of Asia. The protector goddess of Ephesus was named Artemis in Greek and Diana in Latin. At the end of Paul's second missionary journey, he made his first visit to Ephesus. Read Acts 18:18-21. What does he do while he is there? What strange event during his second visit to Ephesus led to widespread reverence for "the Lord Jesus" (Acts 19:13-20)? What did it mean that so many people burned books on that occasion? Is that an example we should follow today? (Sunday's Lesson)

4. Read Acts 19:21 – 20:1. This is one of the clearest evidences of tourism in the Bible! What does it tell us about God that a story like this is in the Bible? What lessons could we draw from this story for today? At the end of his third missionary journey, Paul meets with the elders of the church at Ephesus in another place. How would you summarize Paul's concerns in that meeting (Acts 20:17-38)? (Monday's Lesson)
5. Paul intended the letter to the Ephesians to be read in the house churches of Ephesus and the surrounding region. Scholars estimate that the typical house church in the First Century would include from 20-50 members. On a second reading of the letter to the Ephesians, what themes seem to be central to its message? What of these themes had the biggest impact on you? What does Paul mean when he uses the term "church" in Ephesians? Why do you think Paul has so little to say about the actual circumstances in Ephesus at the time he writes the letter? (Tuesday's Lesson)
6. How does Paul begin and end his letter to the Ephesians (Eph 1:1-2; 6:21-24)? Read Ephesians 3:13. What impact does Paul think his imprisonment might have on the Ephesians themselves? (Wednesday's Lesson)
7. According to Ephesians 1:9-10, what is the central theme of the entire letter? What does Paul mean when he uses the phrase "in Christ"? How can local churches participate in God's grand, universal plan? (Thursday's Lesson)
8. When Ephesians speaks about demonic "powers and authorities" how do such powers work in our world today? In today's world, how can you tell the difference between demonic possession and severe mental illness? (Friday's Lesson)
9. Review the uses of the word "hope" in Ephesians (Eph 1:18; 2:12; 4:4). In what does Paul encourage the Ephesians to hope? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

When you look at Ephesians does your version say that this letter was sent to Ephesus? Yes and no. Interesting, isn't it? Well, look at chapter 3:2 as to why the question has ever been raised about whether or not it went to Ephesus. Chapter 3:2; "assuming that you have heard of the stewardship of God's grace that was given to me for you." To the saints in Ephesus? He spent three years there, and so some have wondered if this could have gone directly to Ephesus.

Moreover, how about the greetings at the end? They're not there, and he had maybe more friends there than anywhere else.

One notable scholar who questioned whether this first went to Ephesians was Goodspeed. He says this must have been an encyclical, designed to go many places, or it would have greetings to the saints in Ephesus, and it wouldn't have chapter 3, verse 2. So he argued that it was an encyclical, a general letter, but since Ephesus was the publication center for the early Christian church, and the letter did indeed go there for distribution, it became known as the letter to the Ephesians.

In the early 1930s, the earliest manuscripts of the New Testament books began to come to light, some brittle papyri, some known as the Chester Beatty papyri. One numbered P46, P for papyri, came to Ann Arbor, Michigan. Goodspeed was teaching at the University of Chicago. And when it arrived, he travelled that short distance from Chicago to Ann Arbor wondering if this manuscript would confirm what he had risked his reputation to present in his book. When he got there, and looked at P46, there was no "*en epheso*" and that really corroborated his view. That's why some versions don't have "in Ephesus." It just has "to the saints who are also faithful." However, I notice that some very modern versions, with the best of scholarship, have put "at Ephesus" back in Ephesians. How's *Today's English*? Do you have "in Ephesus" in yours? They put it in? Well, that's a scholarly version. How about the *New International Version*, NIV?

COMMENT: No.

It doesn't have it? Well, there's no skullduggery going on here. This is what's behind the question as to whether to put it in or not. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from audio series, "Picture Of God In All 66", *Ephesians and Colossians*, recorded May 1982, Riverside CA}

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Ephesians and Colossians, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/67MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/68MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

When the mind of man is brought into communion with the mind of God, the finite with the Infinite, the effect on body and mind and soul is beyond estimate. In such communion is found the highest education. It is God's own method of development. "Acquaint now thyself with Him" (Job 22:21), is His message to mankind. {AA 126.1}

Received into the heart, the leaven of truth will regulate the desires, purify the thoughts, and sweeten the disposition. It quickens the faculties of the mind and the energies of the soul. It enlarges the capacity for feeling, for loving. {COL 101.1}

God could have proclaimed His truth through sinless angels, but this is not His plan. He chooses human beings, men compassed with infirmity, as instruments in the working out of His designs. The priceless treasure is placed in earthen vessels. Through men His blessings are to be conveyed to the world. {AA 330.2}

The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate. He can cause agony, but not defilement. {FLB 327.6}

Love is a heavenly attribute. The natural heart cannot originate it. This heavenly plant only flourishes where Christ reigns supreme. Where love exists, there is power and truth in the life. Love does good and nothing but good. Those who have love bear fruit unto holiness, and in the end everlasting life (VI Jan. 13, 1898). {7BC 952.5}

The church is God's appointed agency for the salvation of men. It was organized for service, and its mission is to carry the gospel to the world. From the beginning it has been God's plan that through His church shall be reflected to the world His fullness and His sufficiency. The members of the church, those whom He has called out of darkness into His marvelous light, are to show forth His glory. The church is the repository of the riches of the grace of Christ; and through the church will eventually be made manifest, even to "the principalities and powers in heavenly places" (Ephesians 3:10), the final and full display of the love of God. {RC 196.2}

What a wonderful statement! The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. In mind, in purpose, in character, they are one, but not in person. By partaking of the Spirit of God, conforming to the law of God, man becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Christ brings His disciples into a living union with Himself and with the Father. Through the working of the Holy Spirit upon the human mind, man is made complete in Christ Jesus. Unity with Christ establishes a bond of unity with one another. This unity is the most convincing proof to the world of the majesty and virtue of Christ, and of His power to take away sin (MS 111, 1903). {5BC 1148.3}

Christ brings all true believers into complete oneness with Himself, even the oneness which exists between Him and His Father. The true children of God are bound up with one another and with their Saviour. They are one with Christ in God. {SD 293.5}

The Bible shows us God in His high and holy place, not in a state of inactivity, not in silence and solitude, but surrounded by ten thousand times ten thousand and thousands of thousands of holy beings, all waiting to do His will. Through these messengers He is in active communication with every part of His dominion. By His Spirit He is everywhere present. Through the agency of His Spirit and His angels He ministers to the children of men. {MH 417.2}

Our God has heaven and earth at His command, and He knows just what we need. We can see only a little way before us; “but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.” Hebrews 4:13. Above the distractions of the earth He sits enthroned; all things are open to His divine survey; and from His great and calm eternity He orders that which His providence sees best. {8T 272.1}

Not even a sparrow falls to the ground without the Father’s notice. Satan’s hatred against God leads him to delight in destroying even the dumb creatures. It is only through God’s protecting care that the birds are preserved to gladden us with their songs of joy. But He does not forget even the sparrows. “Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.” Matthew 10:31. {8T 273.1}

All earthly powers are under the control of the Infinite One. To the mightiest ruler, to the most cruel oppressor, He says, “Hitherto shalt thou come, but no further.” Job 38:11. God’s power is constantly exercised to counteract the agencies of evil; He is ever at work among men, not for their destruction, but for their correction and preservation. {PP 694.1}

He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, will carry forward His work. He will thwart the purposes of wicked men and will bring to confusion the counsels of those who plot mischief against His people. He who is the King, the Lord of hosts, sitteth between the cherubim, and amidst the strife and tumult of nations He guards His children still. When the strongholds of kings shall be overthrown, when the arrows of wrath shall strike through the hearts of His enemies, His people will be safe in His hands. {PK 176.1}

In the annals of human history, the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as if dependent on the will and prowess of man; the shaping of events seems, to a great degree, to be determined by his power, ambition, or caprice. But in the word of God the curtain is drawn aside, and we behold, above, behind, and through all the play and counterplay of human interest and power and passions, the agencies of the All-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. . . . {CC 250.3}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2023: *Ephesians*

Lesson 2 “God’s Grand, Christ-centered Plan”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 1:3–14; Ephesians 2:6; Ephesians 3:10; Colossians 1:13, 14; Deuteronomy 9:29.

Memory Text

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3, ESV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Chosen and Accepted in Christ
- III. Costly Redemption; Lavish Forgiveness
- IV. God’s Grand, Christ-centered Plan
- V. Living in Praise of His Glory
- VI. The Holy Spirit: Seal and Down Payment
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Ephesians 1:3-14. Paul begins his letter to the Ephesians with a majestic thank you note. Count the number of sentences in your translation of the passage. Which of these sentences do you think is the main sentence of this section? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Ephesians 1:3-6. According to this passage, how does God view us? Paul talks a lot about blessings. But what actually IS a blessing? What does it mean that we have been “chosen” before the foundation of the world. What is the key message that verses 3-6 are conveying? The concept of “in the heavenly places” is found only in Ephesians in the New Testament. What does that phrase mean (Eph 1:3, 20; 2:6; 3:10; 6:12)? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Read Ephesians 1:7-8. “Redemption” is an idea frequently mentioned in the New Testament. What is “redemption” in this text in Ephesians? What is its meaning in passages like Colossians 1:13-14 and Titus 2:13-14. How does “forgiveness” redeem us from lawlessness (Titus 2:13-14)? Redemption emphasizes the idea of costliness.

How was our salvation costly to God? To whom was the redemption price paid?
(Monday's Lesson)

4. Read Ephesians 1:9-10. What is God's plan for the "fullness of time"? If this passage implies a cosmic conflict, why is there no reference to Satan or the cross in this text? How does God plan to unify the universe? What does the idea of a plan tell us about God? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read Ephesians 1:11-12. What is Paul's purpose in using such language here? Compare Paul's use of "inheritance" in Ephesians 1:11, 14, 18. What is this inheritance? In what way could it be said that we are an inheritance to God? What is the difference between working to get something and inheriting it instead? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Ephesians 1:13-14. What happened when the Ephesians first trusted in the message of Christ? How do you know when you are "sealed by the Spirit"? How do you know when the Holy Spirit is present in someone else's life? What does it mean that the Holy Spirit is the "guarantee" or "pledge" of the inheritance to come? How does this concept of sealing relate to Revelation 7:1-3? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. What evidence is there in the Bible that when God "elects" or "predestines" people (Eph 1:3-14) He is not determining who will be saved or lost in advance, as some teach? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Obviously, Jesus did not die to win his Father. And how clear Paul is on this. Look quickly at the remaining verses. Second Corinthians 5:19: "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. . . ." (RSV) Nowhere ever does the Bible suggest that God had to be reconciled to us. Never once! But God paid the price to reconcile us to Himself! Nor did Jesus die to pay some mere legal penalty. He died to reveal the truth about God and the falsity of Satan's charges. And even the angels had to learn this. Look at Colossians 1:20: ". . . and through him to reconcile to himself **all things, whether on earth or in heaven**, [emphasis supplied] making peace [not war, but making peace] by the blood of his cross." (RSV)

As Jesus said in the next verse, John 12:32: "When I am lifted up from the earth I will draw everyone to me" (GNT). Not all men, everyone in the whole family of the universe, you see, viewed in the larger setting of the Great Controversy. The way in which Jesus suffered and died is the greatest revelation of the truth about God and His government that the universe will ever see or ever need. Correctly understood, the message of the cross is final defeat for the adversary. No wonder Satan has worked so hard to obscure and misrepresent and even pervert the meaning of the cross.

But to some of us, the cross is great good news. Yes, it is true that sinners will die, but we have no need to be afraid of God; and He died to prove it. And this message has great power to win to repentance and to trust. Paul was so proud of this good news. Look at his understanding of it in the last verses. 1 Corinthians 1:17, 18:

For Christ did not send me to baptize but to preach the gospel [what is the gospel, the good news, about?], and not with eloquent wisdom lest the cross of Christ [that's the gospel] be emptied of its power [his good news has great power]. For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. (RSV)

Now compare with that Romans 1:16, that very famous righteousness by faith verse:

For I am not ashamed of the gospel [this good news]: it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith [wherein lies the power?]. . . . For in it [something is revealed] the righteousness of God is revealed. (RSV)

The good news is that God is not the unrighteous kind of person His enemies have made Him out to be. And it's so wonderful to see all through the Bible that even before the cross God had good friends who trusted him always to do the right thing, the merciful thing, and they were proud to know Him and proud to speak about Him to others. Look at Jeremiah 9:24:

Let him who boasts boast about this: that he understands and knows me, that I am the Lord, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight, declares the Lord. (NIV)

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8, "The Most Costly and Convincing Evidence" recorded March 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/8MMCAG>*

One of the Lord's most memorable parables was about atonement—in the original sense of that word. Jesus told about a son who wasted his life and his share of his father's estate in riotous self-indulgence. Now penniless and starving, he found employment looking after swine.

As he languished there in the pigsty, he began to remember how good it had been at home and wondered if there might be any way to persuade his offended father to let him come back.

His thoughts might have been very different had he known that his father had long been looking down the road, hoping to catch a glimpse of his son coming home. Unfortunately, the son didn't know his father very well.

He began to think of ways to persuade his father to let him in when he arrived at the door. His father could well be very angry with him. Perhaps he should look for his mother first, and she could help persuade his father to forgive and let him have another chance.

And then there was all that money he'd wasted. He would have to find some way to make amends.

"I know what I'll do," the son decided. "I'll ask him to treat me as one of his hired servants." With that, he started out on his way home, practicing his speech as he went.

Had he looked up, he might have noticed his father still watching for him down that road. "But while he was still a long way off his father saw him, and his heart went out to him; he ran to meet him, flung his arms round him, and kissed him.

"The son said, 'Father, I have sinned against God and against you; I am no longer fit to be called your son.'

"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Fetch a robe, the best we have, and put it on him . . . and let us celebrate with a feast. For this son of mine was dead and has come back to life; he was lost and is found.'" (Luke 15:20-24, REB)

At last the son had learned the truth about his father. He didn't even have to finish that speech. His father had forgiven him long before. But he had to come home to find that out. Now his father's forgiveness led him to real repentance.

As the prodigal stood there in his father's arms, he began to experience the original meaning of atonement.

Servants understand atonement as making amends.

Friends understand atonement as making friends. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends? Another Look at God*, 166-68. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter12.html>

Does Paul, in this chapter, tell what the terms are upon which God is going to save people? Well, he does a little later, but how about the rest of Romans, and the rest of the New Testament, and the rest of the sixty-six books? What are God's terms all the way through the Bible? Will He not save anybody and everybody who responds in trust and faith and willingness to listen? Everybody, those are His terms. And we can't determine the terms from these few verses, where Paul, in God's name, is really rebuking these arrogant Jews who were challenging God's right to run His universe the way He wanted to. But challenging God's right to save people on a basis of their faith rather than the basis that the Jews felt, their inheritance, their descent from Abraham, their many centuries of endeavor to obey God's law. And Paul has

already said you failed at that anyway, so if you want to be saved on that basis, you're lost anyway. So let me tell you the only way Jews and Gentiles can be healed and restored is by trusting God. Isn't that good news? And they didn't like it, they resisted it. And if it doesn't make sense that they should resist it, think of resisting Jesus to His face and telling Him that He had a devil for describing how God is and how He regards people. They did this, didn't they? And Jesus had to turn to those Sabbath-keepers and say, "It is not I that has a devil, to tell you that God is gracious and will save everyone who trusts Him, you are of your father the devil. He has lied about God and you prefer his lies, that God is an arbitrary, unforgiving and severe deity."

Hardly one to be loved, but He should be feared, He should be obeyed, if you don't want to be destroyed, and you do want to be saved.

It's strange that those who felt God owed them salvation didn't seem to really love Him. It's just, I suppose, they felt of the choices that was the best one, the safest way to go. Like people who ride on our Adventist bus as I mentioned before, it does seem to be going away from the fire and toward the Kingdom, and there doesn't seem to be a better bus anywhere, and so they sort of go along for the ride, not really caring. Because it's almost more trouble to get off, isn't it, and join another society with different customs of food and dress and recreation, it's kind of comfortable to live with Adventists. Ten thousand of us here, very troublesome at times, but do you know a better place? You know, just born on the bus and going along for the ride, and this message in Romans 9, 10 and 11 is for us just as much as for these Jews. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapter 9, recorded December 1977, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*
<http://pkp.cc/17MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/18MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

This long debate between faith, works and obedience has troubled saints through the years, but it could be so readily resolved if we looked at the biblical word for obedience. I'll even pronounce it (because it's like that other word; faith, is *hupostasis*.) This word obedience is *hupakoē*. The first part "*hup*," means "under." And the second part, "*akoe*" means "hearing." The word means literally, "listening under." A ***humble willingness to listen***, and of course if we love and trust God we'll be willing to listen. It wouldn't make sense for us to ***not*** listen to one we love, trust and admire.

Now could God's expectation of our willingness to listen be one hundred percent? Our performance may be weak. We may stumble as we leave our doctor's office. But a willingness to listen? Is it too much to say, "Don't cheat there. Let that be one hundred percent!"

If it should seem that God is too demanding in asking for such a relationship, that He expects too much of us, it surely is encouraging to read about the heroes and heroines of faith celebrated in the same chapter of the same book that tells us what faith is. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #3, “All God Asks Is Trust” recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/3MMCAG>*

My conviction is that Paul could read James and say, “Well said!” and vice versa. I see no conflict at all between the two. So what do you suppose led to this feeling? Is it possible that there had been so much legalism, in Luther’s day, that he just went too far in the other direction for awhile? Ellen White has an interesting comment. “We’ve heard a great deal about faith, it’s time now we heard a little more about works.” A matter of balance. Isn’t it true that faith without works is a dead faith? Is anyone saved by a dead faith? So you don’t really trust. I don’t see any disagreement between the two at all.

Now, if a man tries to be saved by works without any faith; I mean, can God save those who do not trust Him? No matter how hard they work? No. There must be trust. But the man who says, “I trust you, but I don’t have time to listen, and I don’t intend to follow your instructions, because if I were to follow your instructions, that would be works.” That makes nonsense out of faith. “I trust you, but I’m not going to do what you say.” Try that on your doctor.

You say, “I’m very sick, and I trust you.”

And the doctor says, “do the following.”

“Oh no! It would only be faith if I can go to bed tonight and wake up well in the morning.”

Well, it doesn’t come that easily, does it? It’s a faith that works. Faith is a willingness to listen and to carry through with the instructions as best one can. Now it’s true, our efforts may not be at all perfect—quite fumbling. But the trust must be complete. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – 1&2 Peter and James, recorded July 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/75MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/76MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Our sanctification is God’s object in all His dealing with us. He has chosen us from eternity that we may be holy. Christ gave Himself for our redemption, that through our faith in His power to save from sin, we might be made complete in Him. {3SM 202.2}

The salvation of the human race has ever been the object of the councils of heaven. The covenant of mercy was made before the foundation of the world. It has existed from all eternity, and is called the everlasting covenant. So surely as there never was a time when God was not, so surely there never was a moment when it was not the delight of the eternal mind to manifest His grace to humanity. {FLB 76.4}

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of “the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal.” Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God’s throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, “that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. {DA 22.2}

Through creation and redemption, through nature and through Christ, the glories of the divine character are revealed. By the marvelous display of his love in giving “his only begotten Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” the character of God is revealed to the intelligences of the universe. Through Christ our Heavenly Father is made known as the God of love. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 5}

God is inviting us to close the windows of the soul earthward and open them heavenward, that He may flood our hearts with the glory which is shining across the threshold of heaven. {HP 247.7}

Satan cannot hold the dead in his grasp when the Son of God bids them live. He cannot hold in spiritual death one soul who in faith receives Christ’s word of power. {DA 320.2}

It is not the will of God that His people should be weighed down with care. But our Lord does not deceive us. He does not say to us, “Do not fear; there are no dangers in your path.” He knows there are trials and dangers, and He deals with us plainly. He does not propose to take His people out of a world of sin and evil, but He points them to a never-failing refuge. . . . {TMK 225.2}

God does not employ compulsory measures; love is the agent which He uses to expel sin from the heart. By it He changes pride into humility, and enmity and unbelief into love and faith. {MB 76.3}

The Saviour’s life and death and intercession, the ministry of angels, the pleading of the Spirit, the Father working above and through all, the unceasing interest of heavenly beings,—all are enlisted in behalf of man’s redemption. {SC 21.2}

Some among the redeemed will have laid hold of Christ in the last hours of life, and in heaven instruction will be given to these, who, when they died, did not understand perfectly the plan of salvation. Christ will lead the redeemed ones beside the river of life, and will open to them that which while on this earth they could not understand (Letter 203, 1905). {5BC 1124.13}

Our Lord Jesus Christ came to this world as the unwearied servant of man's necessity. He "took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses," that He might minister to every need of humanity. Matthew 8:17. The burden of disease and wretchedness and sin He came to remove. It was His mission to bring to men complete restoration; He came to give them health and peace and perfection of character. {MH 17.1}

Through the gospel, souls that are degraded and enslaved by Satan are to be redeemed to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. God's purpose is not merely to deliver from the suffering that is the inevitable result of sin, but to save from sin itself. . . . Eternity alone can reveal the glorious destiny to which man, restored to God's image, may attain. {MB 60.3}

The plan of redemption is not merely a way of escape from the penalty of transgression, but through it the sinner is forgiven his sins, and will be finally received into heaven—not as a forgiven culprit pardoned and released from captivity, yet looked upon with suspicion and not admitted to friendship and trust; but welcomed as a child, and taken back into fullest confidence. {7BC 950.6}

God accepts your broken, contrite heart. He offers you free pardon. He offers to adopt you into His family, with His grace to help your weakness, and the dear Jesus will lead you on step by step if you will only put your hand in His and let Him guide you.— Lt 38, 1887. {2MCP 451.3}

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. {DA 568.3}

God's forgiveness is not merely a judicial act by which He sets us free from condemnation. It is not only forgiveness *for* sin, but reclaiming *from* sin. It is the outflow of redeeming love that transforms the heart. {MB 114.1}

Not only to those living in this world, but to the principalities and powers in heavenly places is the church on this earth to reveal the glory of God. {LHU 291.4}

For what was the great controversy permitted to continue throughout the ages? Why was it that Satan's existence was not cut short at the outset of his rebellion? It was that the universe might be convinced of God's justice in His dealing with evil; that sin might receive eternal condemnation. In the plan of redemption there are heights and depths that eternity itself can never exhaust, marvels into which the angels desire to look. The redeemed only, of all created

beings, have in their own experience known the actual conflict with sin; they have wrought with Christ, and, as even the angels could not do, have entered into the fellowship of His sufferings; will they have no testimony as to the science of redemption—nothing that will be of worth to unfallen beings? {Ed 308.3}

Through the plan of salvation a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and result of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. {TMK 366.4}

The soul that has given himself to Christ is more precious in His sight than the whole world.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 480. (1898) {Ev 489.4}

If but one soul would have accepted the gospel of His grace, Christ would, to save that one, have chosen His life of toil and humiliation and His death of shame.—*Ministry of Healing*, p. 135. (1905) {Ev 489.5}

Christ came into the world to represent the Father to man; for Satan had presented Him before the world in a false light. Because God is a God of justice, of terrible majesty, who has power to destroy as well as to preserve man, Satan caused men to regard Him with fear, to look upon Him as a tyrant. Jesus had been with the Father from the everlasting ages, before the creation of man, and He came to reveal the Father, declaring, “God is love.” Jesus represented God as a kind Father, who careth for the subjects of His kingdom. He declared that not a sparrow falls to the ground without the notice of the Father, and that the children of men are of more value in His sight than many sparrows, that the very hairs of their head are all numbered. {LHU 36.2}

Man is ever dear to the heart of God. The Creator of the world comes graciously near and still nearer to all those in every nation who receive Jesus as a personal Saviour.... {UL 45.5}

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 40. {ChS 250.2}

The Lord did not lock the reservoir of heaven after pouring His Spirit upon the early disciples. We also may receive of the fullness of His blessing. Heaven is full of the treasures of His grace, and those who come to God in faith may claim all that He has promised. {AG 193.4}

The Lord is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who serve Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children.—*The Acts of the Apostles*, p. 50. {ChS 251.2}

God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy

Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. . . . There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. . . . Christ declared that the divine influence of the Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. {ML 37.4}

The Spirit recreates, refines, and sanctifies human beings, fitting them to become members of the royal family, children of the heavenly King. {GW 286.3}

While the wind is itself invisible, it produces effects that are seen and felt. So the work of the Spirit upon the soul will reveal itself in every act of him who has felt its saving power. When the Spirit of God takes possession of the heart, it transforms the life. Sinful thoughts are put away, evil deeds are renounced; love, humility, and peace take the place of anger, envy, and strife. Joy takes the place of sadness, and the countenance reflects the light of heaven. No one sees the hand that lifts the burden, or beholds the light descend from the courts above. The blessing comes when by faith the soul surrenders itself to God. Then that power which no human eye can see creates a new being in the image of God. {DA 173.1}

The Holy Spirit never leaves unassisted the soul who is looking unto Jesus. He takes of the things of Christ and shows them unto him. If the eye is kept fixed on Christ, the work of the Spirit ceases not until the soul is conformed to His image. The pure element of love will expand the soul, giving it a capacity for higher attainments, for increased knowledge of heavenly things, so that it will not rest short of the fullness. "Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled." {DA 302.1}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2023: *Ephesians*

Lesson 3 “The Power of the Exalted Jesus”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 1:15–23; Ephesians 3:14–21; 1 Thessalonians 5:16–18; Deuteronomy 9:29;
1 Corinthians 15:20–22; Psalm 110:1.

Memory Text

Through the Holy Spirit, believers may know “what is the exceeding greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power which He worked in Christ when He raised Him from the dead and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:19, 20, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Praying and Thanksgiving
- III. Experiencing Insight From the Holy Spirit
- IV. Participating in Resurrection Power
- V. Christ Above All Powers
- VI. Jesus, All Things, and His Church
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Ephesians 1:19. Why do you think Paul places so much emphasis on God’s power in this verse? How was the superior power of God demonstrated in verses 20-23? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Compare Paul’s two “prayer reports” in Ephesians 1:15-23 and 3:14-21. What do each of these tell us about Paul’s prayer life? Putting these two prayer reports together, what is the picture of Paul’s intention that emerges? What does it really mean to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thessalonians 5:17)? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Read Ephesians 1:16-17. What is Paul’s central request in these verses? How does this request relate to what he has already written in Ephesians 1:13-14? Why is a spirit of thankfulness so important when we pray? Read Ephesians 1:17-19. When Paul prays for the believers to receive special insight from the Holy Spirit, what three

things does he have in mind? What is the common denominator between those three things? How can one better experience the power of God in one's daily life? (Monday's Lesson)

4. Read Ephesians 1:20-23. Note particularly the resurrection of Jesus, mentioned in verse 20. How is the power of God expressed through the resurrection of Jesus (see 1 Corinthians 15:20-22; Philippians 3:8-11; Hebrews 13:20; 1 Peter 1:3)? How important is the resurrection of Jesus for Christian faith? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Re-read Ephesians 1:20. What does being seated at the right hand of God seem to mean to Paul? How have you experienced the power of the resurrection of Jesus in your own personal life? (Tuesday's Lesson)
6. Compare Paul's mentioning of evil, spiritual powers in Ephesians 1:21, 2:2, and 6:12. Why do you think Paul was so interested in these powers? How do such spiritual powers manifest themselves in today's world? In applying biblical teaching on demonic powers, how would one tell the difference between severe mental illness and demonic possession? Were you ever to encounter demonic forces, how would you respond? (Wednesday's Lesson)
7. Read Ephesians 1:22-23. What benefits does the exaltation of Christ to the throne of the universe provide for His church? Since this counsel to take hold of Christ's power in practical, everyday living is found in a prayer report, what is the role of prayer in obtaining the power of God? If prayer is the key that unlocks the power of God, why don't we do more of it? (Thursday's Lesson)
8. In what sense is Jesus already "Lord of all" and in what sense isn't He? What aspects of His reign are active now and which are still in the future? This is what New Testament scholars call the Now and the Not Yet. (Friday's Lessons)
9. To what extent are you living in the light of Christ's rule over all things? To what extent are you living under the authority of these other powers? How would you know which is which? (Friday's Lessons)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And so, the Holy Spirit brings the truth to us—the truth about God. He helps us to see that truth and to be convinced about it, and the truth about ourselves and learn how to tell the truth to our gracious heavenly Father. And then God can do good things for us. Paul even said we should pray without ceasing. You note that last familiar verse, 1 Thessalonians 5:17: "Never stop praying." (*Norlie*) Or as *Goodspeed* translates it, "Never give up praying." But if we should spend all our time on our knees, we would never get anything else done. So how can one pray without ceasing and still be effective in this life? But prayer, you see, in its very essence is thinking toward God. It means that God is at the very center of our thoughts. Eventually it becomes a habit that God should be at the very center of all our plans, always.

When we see Him face to face, as we know we shall, will that be the end of prayer? Does that mean that prayer is yet another of the emergency measures God has used to keep open the channels of communication between Himself and His children until the time comes when there will be no need to talk together anymore? What do we mean when we sing, “Farewell, farewell, sweet hour of prayer”? “Farewell, farewell, I will never talk to you, God, again.” No, if prayer is conversation with a friend, when we meet God, the hour of prayer will have barely just begun. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15, “Talking to God as a Friend” recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/15MMCAG>*

So now, imagine that the Father appears visibly among us here at Loma Linda this evening. How would we speak to Him? Or to make it more personal, let us say that He is willing to meet us in the fellowship room. As many of us as could, would go over there and gather around Him, just as the crowds did around Jesus; and Mary loved to sit there at His feet. Supposing we should have the inestimable privilege of talking there freely with God the Father for a whole hour. Would it be appropriate at the end for someone among us to arise and say, “This has been such a special occasion, don’t you think we ought to close this meeting with a word of prayer?” Or would it be correct to understand that talking, conversing, having conversation with our God as with a friend for that whole hour actually is real prayer, and we have been praying the whole hour long? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15, “Talking to God as a Friend” recorded May 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/15MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

All the paternal love which has come down from generation to generation through the channel of human hearts, all the springs of tenderness which have opened in the souls of men, are but as a tiny rill to the boundless ocean when compared with the infinite, exhaustless love of God. {5T 740.1}

It will take the whole of eternity for man to understand the plan of redemption. It will open to him line upon line; here a little and there a little (MS 21, 1895). {6BC 1115.15}

No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple courts, that every soul may have free access to God. {FLB 65.3}

He came to show that His gift of mercy and love is as unconfined as the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh the earth. {FLB 65.4}

His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan's influence those who have been deluded by his deceptions, and places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. {FLB 65.5}

Through Christ's redeeming work the government of God stands justified. The Omnipotent One is made known as the God of love. Satan's charges are refuted, and his character unveiled. Rebellion can never again arise. Sin can never again enter the universe. Through eternal ages all are secure from apostasy. By love's self-sacrifice, the inhabitants of earth and heaven are bound to their Creator in bonds of indissoluble union. {DA 26.2}

The work of redemption will be complete. In the place where sin abounded, God's grace much more abounds. The earth itself, the very field that Satan claims as his, is to be not only ransomed but exalted. Our little world, under the curse of sin the one dark blot in His glorious creation, will be honored above all other worlds in the universe of God. Here, where the Son of God tabernacled in humanity; where the King of glory lived and suffered and died,—here, when He shall make all things new, the tabernacle of God shall be with men, “and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God.” And through endless ages as the redeemed walk in the light of the Lord, they will praise Him for His unspeakable Gift,—*Immanuel, “God with us.”* {DA 26.3}

Our God is a very present help in time of need. He is acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our hearts, with all the intents and purposes of our souls. When we are in perplexity, even before we open to Him our distresses, He is making arrangements for our deliverance.—Letter 73, Feb. 1, 1905, to Drs. D. H. and Laurette Kress. {UL 46.6}

He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. {ML 289.5}

God is to us a tender, compassionate, heavenly Father. {ML 289.6}

All the treasures of the universe will be open to the study of God's children. With unutterable delight we shall enter into the joy and the wisdom of unfallen beings. We shall share the treasures gained through ages upon ages spent in contemplation of God's handiwork. And the years of eternity, as they roll, will continue to bring more glorious revelations. “Exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think” (Ephesians 3:20) will be, forever and forever, the impartation of the gifts of God. {Ed 307.5}

It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. Thus faith is strengthened to claim and to receive more and more. There is greater encouragement for us in

the least blessing we ourselves receive from God than in all the accounts we can read of the faith and experience of others. The soul that responds to the grace of God shall be like a watered garden. His health shall spring forth speedily; his light shall rise in obscurity, and the glory of the Lord shall be seen upon him. Let us then remember the loving-kindness of the Lord, and the multitude of His tender mercies. {DA 348.2}

The Lord will not leave His afflicted, tried children to be the sport of Satan's temptations. It is your privilege to trust in Jesus. The heavens are full of rich blessings. . . . {TMK 78.5}

Unceasing prayer is the unbroken union of the soul with God, so that life from God flows into our life; and from our life, purity and holiness flow back to God. {SC 97.2}

In the secret place of prayer, where no eye but God's can see, no ear but His can hear, we may pour out our most hidden desires and longings to the Father of infinite pity, and in the hush and silence of the soul that voice which never fails to answer the cry of human need will speak to our hearts. {Pr 182.6}

Prayer is the opening of the heart to God as to a friend. Not that it is necessary in order to make known to God what we are, but in order to enable us to receive Him. Prayer does not bring God down to us, but brings us up to Him. {Pr 8.4}

Keep your wants, your joys, your sorrows, your cares, and your fears before God. You cannot burden Him; you cannot weary Him. He who numbers the hairs of your head is not indifferent to the wants of His children. "The Lord is very pitiful, and of tender mercy." James 5:11. His heart of love is touched by our sorrows and even by our utterances of them. Take to Him everything that perplexes the mind. Nothing is too great for Him to bear, for He holds up worlds, He rules over all the affairs of the universe. Nothing that in any way concerns our peace is too small for Him to notice. There is no chapter in our experience too dark for Him to read; there is no perplexity too difficult for Him to unravel. No calamity can befall the least of His children, no anxiety harass the soul, no joy cheer, no sincere prayer escape the lips, of which our heavenly Father is unobservant, or in which He takes no immediate interest. "He healeth the broken in heart, and bindeth up their wounds." Psalm 147:3. The relations between God and each soul are as distinct and full as though there were not another soul upon the earth to share His watchcare, not another soul for whom He gave His beloved Son. {SC 100.1}

Through sincere prayer we are brought into connection with the mind of the Infinite. We may have no remarkable evidence at the time that the face of our Redeemer is bending over us in compassion and love, but this is even so. We may not feel His visible touch, but His hand is upon us in love and pitying tenderness. {SC 96.3}

God desires man to exercise his reasoning powers; and the study of the Bible will strengthen and elevate the mind as no other study can do. It is the best mental as well as spiritual exercise for the human mind. {5T 703.3}

God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. {8T 19.1}

When Christ ascended to the Father, He did not leave His followers without help. The Holy Spirit, as His representative, and the heavenly angels, as ministering spirits, are sent forth to aid those who against great odds are fighting the good fight of faith. Ever remember that Jesus is your helper. No one understands as well as He your peculiarities of character. He is watching over you, and if you are willing to be guided by Him, He will throw around you influences for good that will enable you to accomplish all His will for you. {AG 196.2}

The Holy Spirit is ready to cooperate with all who will receive Him and be taught by Him. All who lay hold on the truth and are sanctified through the truth are so united with Christ that they can represent Him in word and action. . . . {UL 353.5}

Christ came to this world as the expression of the very heart and mind and nature and character of God. He was the brightness of the Father's glory, the express image of His person. But He laid aside His royal robe and kingly crown, and stepped down from His high command to take the place of a servant. He was rich, but for our sake, that we might have eternal riches, He became poor. He made the world, but so completely did He empty Himself that during His ministry He declared, "Foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." {MM 19.1}

The resurrection of Jesus was a sample of the final resurrection of all who sleep in Him. The risen body of the Saviour, His deportment, the accents of His speech, were all familiar to His followers. In like manner will those who sleep in Jesus rise again. We shall know our friends even as the disciples knew Jesus. Though they may have been deformed, diseased, or disfigured in this mortal life, yet in their resurrected and glorified body their individual identity will be perfectly preserved, and we shall recognize, in the face radiant with the light shining from the face of Jesus, the lineaments of those we love. {FLB 180.3}

Christ had not exchanged His divinity for humanity; but He had clothed His divinity in humanity (RH Oct. 29, 1895). {5BC 1128.3}

The atonement of Christ is not a mere skillful way to have our sins pardoned; it is a divine remedy for the cure of transgression and the restoration of spiritual health. It is the Heaven-ordained means by which the righteousness of Christ may be not only upon us but in our hearts and characters (Letter 406, 1906). {6BC 1074.2}

If the human agent consents, God can and will so identify His will with all our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His Word, that when obeying His will, we are only carrying out the impulses of our minds. {UL 187.5}

Christ came to this earth in human form that He might stand as the Captain of our salvation, so that we should not be overcome by Satan's power. And when the enemy has seemed to be gaining a signal victory over righteousness, God has been working in mercy and power to counteract his designs. {TDG 308.4}

Holy, ministering agencies of heaven are cooperating with human agencies to lead into safe paths all who love truth and righteousness. It is the greatest joy of the angels of heaven to spread the shield of their tender love over souls who turn to God; . . . {7BC 922.9}

God does not ask us to do in our own strength the work before us. He has provided divine assistance for all the emergencies to which our human resources are unequal. He gives the Holy Spirit to help in every strait, to strengthen our hope and assurance, to illuminate our minds and purify our hearts. {8T 19.1}

Christ has made provision that His church shall be a transformed body, illumined with the light of heaven, possessing the glory of Immanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. There is no limit to the usefulness of the one who, putting self aside, makes room for the working of the Holy Spirit upon his heart and lives a life wholly consecrated to God. {8T 19.3}

To human beings, striving for conformity to the divine image, there is imparted an outlay of heaven's treasure, an excellency of power that will place them higher than even the angels who have never fallen. {HP 148.5}

There is by our side a witness, a heavenly messenger, who will lift up for us a standard against the enemy. He will shut us in with the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness. Beyond this Satan cannot penetrate. He cannot pass this shield of holy light. {COL 171.3}

Every manifestation of creative power is an expression of infinite love. The sovereignty of God involves fullness of blessing to all created beings. {PP 33.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2023: *Ephesians*

Lesson 4 “How God Rescues Us”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 2:1–10; Ephesians 5:14; Romans 5:17; Ephesians 5:6; 2 Timothy 1:7.

Memory Text

“But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ” (Ephesians 2:4, 5, ESV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Once Dead and Deceived by Satan
- III. Once Deluded by Our Own Desires
- IV. Now Resurrected, Ascended, and Exalted With Christ
- V. Now Blessed Forever by Grace
- VI. Now Saved by God
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. In Ephesians 2:1-10 Paul gives us an up-close-and-personal view of the grandest, most sweeping rescue mission of all time. But we humans are not just spectators of someone else’s rescue, as we so often are on news broadcasts, we are witnesses of our own rescue from sin and its consequences. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Ephesians 2:1-10. How would you summarize the message of this passage? What stages of life did the Ephesians go through as narrated by Paul? Reread Ephesians 2:1-2. What does it mean to be spiritually dead? What is death a metaphor of in this passage? What are the two external forces that dominated the Ephesians before their conversion? What do these verses teach us about the cosmic conflict? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Read Ephesians 2:3. Notice how Paul shifts here from external forces operating on unconverted people to internal forces driving their unconverted behavior. How does Paul describe these two realities? What did Paul mean when he said that the Ephesians were by nature “children of wrath”? (Monday’s Lesson)

4. Read Ephesians 2:4-6. How does Paul open the sentence in verse 4? According to this passage, what qualities in God make the salvation of human beings possible? Paul describes their salvation as moving from death to life. What is another way to describe this shift? In what sense do believers participate in Christ's resurrection, ascension and exaltation? Read 2 Timothy 1:7. How does Ephesians 2:4-6 help us understand what Paul says in Timothy? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read Ephesians 2:7. What are the essential elements and goals of God's plan of salvation? What kind of future does Paul have in mind for the saved here? What might Hebrews 2:5-9 and Revelation 3:21 add to what Paul is hinting at here? What kind of role will humanity be expected to play in eternity? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Ephesians 2:8-10. What points does Paul highlight as he concludes his passage on the basics of salvation? Why does Paul need to emphasize so much that salvation arises from God and is not based on our own sense of worth or on our efforts to do good? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. Can you put the story of salvation in Ephesians into a timeline in your own words? In what ways is the story of Ephesians our story as well? (Friday's Lesson)
8. Why do you think Paul so frequently recalls the sinful past of his Gentile audience? When is dwelling on the past a healthy thing and when does it become a sign that we are not living in the present? (Friday's Lesson)
9. Compare Paul's summary of the gospel in Ephesians 2:8-10 with his earlier summary in Romans 1:16-17. How are these two accounts of the gospel similar and how are they different? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The purpose of the plan of salvation is to restore that trust, to bring the rebellion to an end, and thus to establish at-one-ment once again in the whole universe. All of God's children are unavoidably involved.

Some seem to find it disappointing, even offensive, to learn that Christ did not die primarily for them. But unless God wins this war and reestablishes peace in his family, our salvation is meaningless. Who would want to live for eternity in a warring universe?

Without this larger understanding of a conflict that has involved the universe, it's hard to understand Paul's explanation that Jesus shed his blood to bring peace, reconciliation, and unity to God's children in heaven as well as on earth. But recognition of the war and its issues helps one to take a larger view of the cross and of the plan of salvation and atonement.

The kind of unity God desires cannot be commanded or produced by force or fear. In the course of human history, many tyrants have tried to maintain unity by terror and brutality. But that

kind of at-one-ment does not last. Look at what has happened in a number of countries just in recent years.

The kind of at-one-ment God desires is described in the New Testament as a unity that is “inherent in our faith and in our knowledge of the Son of God.” (Ephesians 4:13, REB) People who love and trust the same Jesus and the same God are naturally attracted to each other. The same truth about God that sets them free from tyranny and fear binds them together in the firmest kind of unity. Friends of a friendly God enjoy at-one-ment with each other.

This is where the meaning of the cross is so important. There can be no friendship and at-one-ment where there is fear. Calvary says there is no need to be afraid of God. When God says, “Be my friend,” he’s not saying, “Be my friend or I’ll punish you severely; I’ll even put you to death.” You don’t talk that way to friends—especially if you want to keep their friendship. And friendship is the whole purpose and meaning of atonement. {Maxwell, Graham. *Servants or Friends? Another Look at God*, 164-65. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 1992.}

<http://www.pineknoll.org/graham/sof/chapter12.html>

Further Study with Ellen White

The leaven hidden in the flour works invisibly to bring the whole mass under its leavening process; so the leaven of truth works secretly, silently, steadily, to transform the soul. The natural inclinations are softened and subdued. New thoughts, new feelings, new motives, are implanted. A new standard of character is set up—the life of Christ. The mind is changed; the faculties are roused to action in new lines. Man is not endowed with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience is awakened. We are endowed with traits of character that enable us to do service for God. {COL 98.3}

As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan’s temptations. God works, and man works, that man may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God. Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places. The mind rests with peace and assurance in Jesus. . . . In Him there is inexhaustible fullness. . . . {AG 235.5}

God has given us every facility, every grace. He has provided the riches of heaven’s treasure, and it is our privilege to draw continually from this capital. {AG 235.6}

The sanctification of the soul is accomplished through steadfastly beholding Him [Christ] by faith as the only-begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth. The power of truth is to transform heart and character. Its effect is not like a dash of color here and there upon the canvas; the

whole character is to be transformed, the image of Christ is to be revealed in words and actions. A new nature is imparted. Man is renewed after the image of Christ in righteousness and true holiness. . . . (Letter 2a, 1892). {6BC 1117.15}

The religion of Christ means more than the forgiveness of sin; it means that sin is taken away, and that the vacuum is filled with the Spirit. It means that the mind is divinely illumined, that the heart is emptied of self, and filled with the presence of Christ. {OHC 154.5}

Every human being is the object of loving interest to Him who gave His life that He might bring men back to God. Souls guilty and helpless, liable to be destroyed by the arts and snares of Satan, are cared for as a shepherd cares for the sheep of his flock. {MH 162.1}

In every human being He discerned infinite possibilities. He saw men as they might be, transfigured by His grace—in “the beauty of the Lord our God” (Psalm 90:17). {AG 223.3}

God’s grace is ever working upon the human heart, and when it is received, the evidence of its reception will appear in the life and character of its recipient, for spiritual life will be seen developing from within. The grace of Christ in the heart will always promote spiritual life, and spiritual advancement will be made. {TMK 163.2}

By the grace of Christ, perform every duty that has been made plain to your understanding, and you will be enabled to understand and perform those of which you are now in doubt. {SC 111.2}

The deep necessity of man for a divine teacher was known in heaven. The pity and sympathy of God were exercised in behalf of man, fallen and bound to Satan’s chariot-car; and when the fullness of time was come, He sent forth His Son. The One appointed in the counsels of heaven came to the earth as an instructor. He was no less a being than the Creator of the world, the Son of the Infinite God. The rich benevolence of God gave Him to our world; and to meet the necessities of humanity, He took on Him human nature. To the astonishment of the heavenly host, He walked this earth as the Eternal Word. Fully prepared, He left the royal courts to come to a world marred and polluted with sin. Mysteriously He allied Himself to human nature. “The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us.” God’s excess of goodness, benevolence, and love was a surprise to the world, of grace which could be realized, but not told. {FE 399.4}

And while Christ opens heaven to man, the life which He imparts opens the heart of man to heaven. Sin not only shuts us away from God, but destroys in the human soul both the desire and the capacity for knowing Him. All this work of evil it is Christ’s mission to undo. The faculties of the soul, paralyzed by sin, the darkened mind, the perverted will, He has power to invigorate and to restore. He opens to us the riches of the universe, and by Him the power to discern and to appropriate these treasures is imparted. {Ed 28.3}

Christ came to change the current of his [man's] thoughts and affections.—1T 196 (1859).
{2MCP 670.1}

If we keep our minds stayed upon Christ, he will come unto us as the rain, as the former and latter rain upon the earth. As the Sun of Righteousness, He will arise with healing in His wings. We may grow as the lily, revive as the corn, and grow as the vine. {3SM 204.3}

All heaven has been looking on with interest, and ready to do whatever God might appoint, to help fallen men and women to become what God would have them. God will work for His children, but not without their cooperation. They must have indomitable energy, and a constant desire to become all that it is possible for them to be. {RC 296.3}

The encounter with the demoniacs of Gergesa had a lesson for the disciples. It showed the depths of degradation to which Satan is seeking to drag the whole human race, and the mission of Christ to set men free from his power. {DA 341.1}

But man was not abandoned to the results of the evil he had chosen. In the sentence pronounced upon Satan was given an intimation of redemption. "I will put enmity between thee and the woman," God said, "and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel." Genesis 3:15. This sentence, spoken in the hearing of our first parents, was to them a promise. Before they heard of the thorn and the thistle, of the toil and sorrow that must be their portion, or of the dust to which they must return, they listened to words that could not fail of giving them hope. All that had been lost by yielding to Satan could be regained through Christ. {Ed 27.1}

While we rejoice that there are worlds which have never fallen, these worlds render praise and honor and glory to Jesus Christ for the plan of redemption to save the fallen sons of Adam, as well as to confirm themselves in their position and character of purity. The arm that raised the human family from the ruin which Satan has brought upon the race through his temptations, is the arm which has preserved the inhabitants of other worlds from sin. Every world throughout immensity engages the care and support of the Father and the Son; and this care is constantly exercised for fallen humanity. Christ is mediating in behalf of man, and the order of unseen worlds also is preserved by His mediatorial work. {MYP 254.1}

Through the plan of salvation a larger purpose is to be wrought out even than the salvation of man and the redemption of the earth. Through the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the beneficence of the divine government would be manifested before the universe, the charge of Satan refuted, the nature and results of sin made plain, and the perpetuity of the law fully demonstrated. Satan had declared that the law of God was faulty, and that the good of the universe demanded a change in its requirement. In attacking the law, he thought to overthrow the authority of its Author, and gain for himself the supreme allegiance. But through the plan of salvation the precepts of the law were to be proved perfect and immutable, that at last one

glory and love might rise to God throughout the universe, ascribing glory and honor and praise to him that sitteth upon the throne and to the Lamb forever and ever. {ST, February 13, 1893 par. 12}

Well, then, might the angels rejoice as they looked upon the Saviour's cross; for though they did not then understand all, they knew that the destruction of sin and Satan was forever made certain, that the redemption of man was assured, and that the universe was made eternally secure. Christ Himself fully comprehended the results of the sacrifice made upon Calvary. To all these He looked forward when upon the cross He cried out, "It is finished." {DA 764.4}

God's work is the same in all time, although there are different degrees of development and different manifestations of His power, to meet the wants of men in the different ages.

Beginning with the first gospel promise, and coming down through the patriarchal and Jewish ages, and even to the present time, there has been a gradual unfolding of the purposes of God in the plan of redemption. . . . He who proclaimed the law from Sinai, and delivered to Moses the precepts of the ritual law, is the same that spoke the sermon on the mount. . . . The Teacher is the same in both dispensations. God's claims are the same. The principles of His government are the same. {AG 130.4}

But the plan of redemption had a yet broader and deeper purpose than the salvation of man. It was not for this alone that Christ came to the earth; it was not merely that the inhabitants of this little world might regard the law of God as it should be regarded; but it was to vindicate the character of God before the universe. To this result of His great sacrifice—its influence upon the intelligences of other worlds, as well as upon man—the Saviour looked forward when just before His crucifixion He said: "Now is the judgment of this world: now shall the prince of this world be cast out. And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all unto Me." John 12:31, 32. The act of Christ in dying for the salvation of man would not only make heaven accessible to men, but before all the universe it would justify God and His Son in their dealing with the rebellion of Satan. It would establish the perpetuity of the law of God and would reveal the nature and the results of sin. {PP 68.2}

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. {DA 758.2}

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. The archapostate 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. {DA 758.3}

That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. The significance of the death of Christ will be seen by saints and angels. . . .The angels

ascribe honor and glory to Christ, for even they are not secure except by looking to the sufferings of the Son of God. It is through the efficacy of the cross that the angels of heaven are guarded from apostasy. Without the cross they would be no more secure against evil than were the angels before the fall of Satan. Angelic perfection failed in heaven. . . The plan of salvation, making manifest the justice and love of God, provides an eternal safeguard against defection in unfallen worlds, as well as among those who shall be redeemed by the blood of the Lamb.
{ST, December 30, 1889 par. 4}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2023: *Ephesians*

Lesson 5 “Horizontal Atonement: The Cross *and the Church*”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 2:11–22; Romans 3:31; Romans 7:12; Isaiah 52:7; Isaiah 57:19; John 14:27;
1 Corinthians 3:9–17.

Memory Text

“But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one” (Ephesians 2:13, 14, ESV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Brought Near in Christ
- III. Reconciliation: God’s Gift From the Cross
- IV. Breaking Down the Dividing Wall
- V. Jesus, Preacher of Peace
- VI. The Church, a Holy Temple
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. In Ephesians 2:1-10 Paul taught that we live in solidarity with Jesus. In this lesson we will look at Ephesians 2:11-22. There Paul teaches that the implication of our solidarity with Jesus is that we can now live in solidarity with each other, even when the “other” has been a foreigner, a stranger, or an enemy in the past. Jesus’ death has vertical benefits in relation to God (Eph 2:1-10) and horizontal benefits in relationship with others (Eph 2:11-22). (Thursday’s lesson)
2. Read Ephesians 2:13-14. When Paul speaks of “you” in this passage, who is he talking to? Important background to this lesson would be imagining a former Gentile visiting the temple complex in Jerusalem. He has left the worship of other gods and embraced the God he found in Judaism. Nevertheless, as he approaches the temple itself, he is confronted by a four-foot-high wall with inscriptions next to all the gaps in the wall. The inscriptions say that any Gentile passing that entrance point will be responsible for his own death, which would follow shortly thereafter. Gentiles were shut out from the apex location of the Jewish religion, and therefore alienated from those who shared his new-found faith. Awareness of that wall inside the temple

complex seems to lie behind the key message of this week's passage. As a result of this deliberate separation, it is natural that some would ask, "Does a Gentile need to become a Jew in order to follow Jesus?" (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)

3. Read Ephesians 2:11-12 and compare it with 2:1-3. Both contain a description of the Ephesians' past. Why do you think Paul repeatedly reminds the Ephesians to remember where they came from? What language does he use in 2:13 to describe the conversion experience of the Ephesians? Read Isaiah 57:19. How does Paul reshape the meaning of Isaiah to the point he was making in Ephesians? (Sunday's Lesson)
4. Read Ephesians 2:14-16. How does Paul impact the cross in each of these three verses? What do other texts in Ephesians add to what Paul says here about how the cross transforms human relationships (Eph 1:7-8; 4:32; 5:2, 25)? Paul's favorite word for "atonement" is reconciliation. What does reconciliation look like? How does it feel to be reconciled? (Monday's Lesson)
5. Read Ephesians 2:14-16. What do you think Paul means by the phrase "the law of commandments expressed in ordinances"? What would abolishing these "commandments" achieve? What would you say to people who argue that these commandments are the Ten Commandments and that they are now abolished in Christ? (Tuesday's Lesson)
6. How does Paul summarize the ministry of Christ in Ephesians 2:17-18? What meaning does Paul place on the word "peace" here? Paul claims that Jesus was a "preacher of peace". What evidence can you find to support that claim in the Gospels (see John 14:27; 16:33; 20:19, 21, 26)? Read Ephesians 4:1-3. How does Paul suggest believers participate in sharing Jesus' message of peace? How is a man supposed to relate of all these "feminine" traits? (Wednesday's Lesson)
7. Read Ephesians 2:19-22. What set of images does Paul use to express the unity between Jews and Gentiles in the church? How does Paul's use of the church-as-temple metaphor compare with the similar use of this metaphor in 1 Corinthians 3:9-17, 2 Corinthians 6:14 – 7:1, and 1 Peter 2:4-5? Note how he combines temple imagery with biological imagery. (Thursday's lesson)
8. How does Ephesians 2:11-22 offer a distinctive, Christ-centered approach to the theme of how members of one ethnic group should relate to members of another? (Friday's Lesson)
9. According to the evidence of Scripture, how does God treat those who are "different"? What implications might that have for us? (Friday's Lesson)

Further Study with Ellen White

The glory of heaven is in lifting up the fallen, comforting the distressed. And wherever Christ abides in human hearts, He will be revealed in the same way. Wherever it acts, the religion of Christ will bless. Wherever it works, there is brightness. {COL 386.1}

Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. The scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national benefit of the gifts of heaven, and to exclude the rest of God's family in the world. But Christ came to break down every wall of partition. He came to show that His gift of mercy and love is as unconfined as the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh the earth. {RC 27.2}

The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste, a religion by which Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common brotherhood, equal before God. No question of policy influenced His movements. He made no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. That which appealed to His heart was a soul thirsting for the waters of life. {RC 27.3}

Though He was a Jew, Jesus mingled freely with the Samaritans. . . . And while He drew their hearts to Him by the tie of human sympathy, His divine grace brought to them the salvation which the Jews rejected.—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 25, 26. {RC 27.7}

Superstition, tradition, bigotry, and idolatry ruled the world. The Jews alone claimed to have a certain knowledge of God, and they were so exclusive, both socially and religiously, that they were despised by every other people. The high wall of separation which they had raised made the Jews a little world to themselves, and they called all other classes heathen and dogs. But Jesus committed to his disciples the scheme of making known their religion to all nations, tongues, and people. It was the most sublime enterprise ever intrusted to man—to preach a crucified and risen Saviour, and a full and free salvation to all men, both rich and poor, learned and ignorant—to teach that Christ came to the world to pardon the repentant, and to offer them a love high as heaven, broad as the world, and enduring as eternity. {6Red 55.3}

The enemy can never take out of the hand of Christ the one who is simply trusting in His promises. If the soul is trusting and working obediently, the mind is susceptible to divine impressions, and the light of God shines in, enlightening the understanding. What privileges we have in Christ Jesus! {SD 351.4}

Those who accept Christ as their personal Saviour are not left as orphans, to bear the trials of life alone. He receives them as members of the heavenly family; He bids them call His Father their Father. They are His "little ones," dear to the heart of God, bound to Him by the most tender and abiding ties. He has toward them an exceeding tenderness, as far surpassing what our father or mother has felt toward us in our helplessness as the divine is above the human. {DA 327.2}

God regards us as His children. He has redeemed us out of the careless world and has chosen us to become members of the royal family, sons and daughters of the heavenly King. He invites us to trust in Him with a trust deeper and stronger than that of a child in his earthly father. Parents love their children, but the love of God is larger, broader, deeper, than human love can possibly

be. It is immeasurable. Then if earthly parents know how to give good gifts to their children, how much more shall our Father in heaven give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him? {COL 142.1}

Kind words are never lost. Jesus records them as if spoken to Himself. Sow the seeds of kindness, of love, and of tenderness, and they will blossom and bear fruit (MS 33, 1911). {6BC 1118.2}

The rabbis had a saying that there is rejoicing in heaven when one who has sinned against God is destroyed; but Jesus taught that to God the work of destruction is a strange work. That in which all heaven delights is the restoration of God's own image in the souls whom He has made. {COL 190.1}

Jesus had begun to break down the partition wall between Jew and Gentile, and to preach salvation to the world. Though He was a Jew, He mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at naught the Pharisaic customs of His nation. In face of their prejudices He accepted the hospitality of this despised people. He slept under their roofs, ate with them at their tables,—partaking of the food prepared and served by their hands,—taught in their streets, and treated them with the utmost kindness and courtesy. {DA 193.2}

The gospel invitation is not to be narrowed down, and presented only to a select few, who, we suppose, will do us honor if they accept it. The message is to be given to all. Wherever hearts are open to receive the truth, Christ is ready to instruct them. He reveals to them the Father, and the worship acceptable to Him who reads the heart. For such He uses no parables. To them, as to the woman at the well, He says, "I that speak unto thee am He." {DA 194.2}

The religion of Jesus Christ is not merely to prepare us for the future immortal life; it is to enable us to live the Christ life here on earth. Jesus is not only our pattern, He is also our friend and our guide, and by taking hold of His strong arm and partaking of His Spirit, we may walk "even as he walked." {TMK 298.6}

Jesus presented the Father as one to whom we could give our confidence and present our wants. When we are in terror of God, and overwhelmed with the thought of His glory and majesty, the Father points us to Christ as His representative. What you see revealed in Jesus, of tenderness, compassion, and love, is the reflection of the attributes of the Father. The cross of Calvary reveals to man the love of God. Christ represents the Sovereign of the universe as a God of love. By the mouth of the prophet He said, "I have loved thee with an everlasting love: therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee" (Jeremiah 31:3). {HP 18.3}

There is one safeguard against Satan's deceptions and snares—that is the truth as it is in Jesus. The truth planted in the heart, nourished by watchfulness and prayer, nourished by the grace of Christ, will give us discernment. The truth must abide in the heart, be felt in its power in spite of all the alluring enchantments of Satan, and your experience and mine must be that the truth

can purify, guide, and bless the soul.—Letter 17, Dec. 1, 1886, to “My Dear—”(addressee unknown). {UL 349.6}

Christ walks unseen through our streets. With messages of mercy He comes to our homes. With all who are seeking to minister in His name, He waits to co-operate. He is in the midst of us, to heal and to bless, if we will receive Him. {MH 107.2}

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. Then let us not cast away our confidence, but have firm assurance, firmer than ever before. “Hitherto hath the Lord helped us,” and He will help us to the end. 1 Samuel 7:12. Let us look to the monumental pillars, reminders of what the Lord has done to comfort us and to save us from the hand of the destroyer. Let us keep fresh in our memory all the tender mercies that God has shown us,—the tears He has wiped away, the pains He has soothed, the anxieties removed, the fears dispelled, the wants supplied, the blessings bestowed,—thus strengthening ourselves for all that is before us through the remainder of our pilgrimage. {SC 125.1}

Jesus is ever ready to speak peace to souls that are burdened with doubts and fears. He waits for us to open the door of the heart to Him, and say, Abide with us. {DA 803.3}

Christ has made provision that His church shall be a transformed body illumined with the light of heaven, possessing the glory of Immanuel. It is His purpose that every Christian shall be surrounded with a spiritual atmosphere of light and peace. {HP 283.6}

From eternal ages it was God’s purpose that every created being, from the bright and holy seraph to man, should be a temple for the indwelling of the Creator. Because of sin, humanity ceased to be a temple for God. Darkened and defiled by evil, the heart of man no longer revealed the glory of the Divine One. But by the incarnation of the Son of God, the purpose of Heaven is fulfilled. God dwells in humanity, and through saving grace the heart of man becomes again His temple. {FLB 191.2}

How graciously and tenderly our heavenly Father deals with His children! He preserves them from a thousand dangers to them unseen and guards them from the subtle arts of Satan, lest they should be destroyed. {3T 373.1}

The life of Christ is to be revealed in humanity. Man was the crowning act of the creation of God, made in the image of God, and designed to be a counterpart of God; but Satan has labored to obliterate the image of God in man, and to imprint upon him his own image. Man is very dear to God, because he was formed in His own image. {LHU 48.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2023: *Ephesians*

Lesson 6 “The Mystery of the Gospel”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 3; Job 11:5–9; Ezekiel 43:13–16; Amos 7:7, 8; Revelation 11:1, 2.

Memory Text

“Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen” (Ephesians 3:20, 21, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Paul: Imprisoned Apostle to the Gentiles
- III. The Long-hidden Mystery of the Gospel
- IV. The Church: Revealer of God’s Wisdom
- V. Christ, Dwelling in Your Heart
- VI. Glory in the Church and in Christ Jesus
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Ephesians 3:6. How does it summarize chapter 2? Basically, in chapter 3 Paul takes the main theme of chapter 2 and extends it from the individual (2:1-10) to the church (2:11-22) to the entire universe. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read the whole of the third chapter of Ephesians. What is the natural dividing point of the chapter? What major points does Paul seem to be making in the chapter? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Read Ephesians 3:1-6. What is the “mystery” that has been entrusted to Paul? Who do you think Paul is referring to when he uses the term “prophets”? Is it the prophets of the Old Testament or the prophets of the New Testament era? In Ephesians 2 and 3 Paul has a lot to say about the inclusiveness of the gospel. What kind of attitudes do many church members hold that would contradict this kind of inclusiveness? How can such attitudes be changed? (Monday’s Lesson)

4. What does Paul say about God and the actions of God in Ephesians 3:7-13? Who are the “rulers and authorities mentioned in this passage? How is it that Paul is able to exude confidence and humility at the same time (based particularly on verse 12)? (Tuesday’s Lesson)
5. Compare Paul’s earlier prayer request (Eph 1:16-19) with his pleas for the believers in Ephesians 3:14-19. In what ways are the two prayers similar? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
6. Read Ephesians 3:20-21. What do you think is the main point of the passage? For what does Paul praise God? Some suggest this passage inappropriately elevates the church, placing it on par with Christ. How would you respond to such an assertion? How would you understand the phrase “throughout all generations, forever and ever”? Does this language portray an unending, earthbound future for the church? What blessings from God are especially valuable to you? How often do you thank God for them? (Thursday’s Lesson)
7. Compare the doxology in Ephesians 3:20-21 with other doxologies in the New Testament (Romans 11:33-36; 16:25-27; Philippians 4:20; 2 Peter 3:18b; Jude 24-25). What are the common themes in all these passages? How does one develop the attitude of praise and worship they illustrate? (Friday’s Lesson)
8. Compare Paul’s four uses of “fullness” (Greek: *plêroma*) in Ephesians (1:10, 23; 3:19; 4:13). Why do you think this idea is so important to Paul? (Friday’s Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

The Bible records just such a demonstration, all the way from the entrance of sin into the universe, up until the death of Christ on the cross. My understanding is that Christ died to re-establish peace in God’s family. The apostle Paul so explained the meaning of the purpose of the cross, and why Jesus had to die, and we’ll spend a whole evening on this a little later in our series. But just by way of introduction tonight, notice the three passages on the Bible Reference Sheet where Paul makes this point so forcibly. Look at Colossians 1:19, 20:

For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him [to reconcile, to atone, to bring to unity] to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of the cross. (RSV)

Note where peace is made. Or, to take another version, *Today’s English*, or the *Good News Bible*:

For it was by God’s own decision that the Son has in himself the full nature of God. Through the Son, then, God decided to bring the whole universe back to himself. God

made peace through his Son's death on the cross and so brought back to himself all things, both on earth and in heaven. (TEV)

Truly that's a description of the ending of the war. Notice two other passages in Ephesians that make the same point. Ephesians 1:9, 10 reads:

For he has made known to us in all wisdom and insight the mystery of his will, according to his purpose which he set forth in Christ as a plan for the fullness of time [to unite all things, that's the opposite of war—that's peace], to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. (RSV)

And the other one, Ephesians 3:9, 10:

...and to make all men see what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things; that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the principalities and the powers in heavenly places. (RSV)

The way God has worked through His church, through His people, is the way He has demonstrated the truth about Himself and won the war. And that God has worked through the church is explained in a dramatic way in the next text on the sheet, 1 Corinthians 4:9: "...we have become a spectacle to the world, to angels and to men." (RSV) Do you know the Greek word for spectacle is *theatron*, from which we get "theater"? Some saints might be reluctant to attend the theater. We need to realize we live in a theater all the time. God's stage.

And on this stage He's demonstrated the truth about Himself by the way He has dealt with His church. Then on the inclusion of the whole family in the results of this demonstration, look at the last verse, John 12:32: "When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw [not "all men", that's supplied. I will draw] everyone to me." (TEV). And that's the real meaning of the original. All. Everyone. Not just people on this planet, but even the loyal angels, I believe, were drawn closer to God by this costly demonstration. These verses say to me that Christ died for sinless angels too. And they certainly needed no forgiveness, or adjustment of their legal standing. And yet the Bible says they needed the message of the cross.

So what is the message of the cross? Evidently it's much more than the payment of a legal penalty so that somehow God can justly forgive you and me. The cross was needed by the loyal angels. And this truly suggests (and we'll do it in this series) that we ought to go back to the foot of the cross and join the universe, the family of the universe, in watching closely just how Jesus died. And then listening very carefully to how Jesus cried, and what He cried: "My God, My God, why hast thou forsaken Me?" What does that mean? And how does that suffering and death bring peace—once again—to God's family? I believe that in the Great Controversy, all Christian beliefs take on much broader significance.

Particularly does the gospel take on a much larger meaning. You see, while we're still preoccupied with our own salvation, the gospel quite naturally might be understood as the good news about what God has done for me and for you. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #1, "The Conflict in God's Family" recorded January 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

Whatever your anxieties and trials, spread out your case before the Lord. Your spirit will be braced for endurance. The way will be open for you to disentangle yourself from embarrassment and difficulty. The weaker and more helpless you know yourself to be, the stronger will you become in His strength. The heavier your burdens, the more blessed the rest in casting them upon your Burden Bearer. {MH 72.1}

In His wisdom the Lord brings those who are seeking for truth into touch with fellow beings who know the truth. It is the plan of Heaven that those who have received light shall impart it to those in darkness. Humanity, drawing its efficiency from the great Source of wisdom, is made the instrumentality, the working agency, through which the gospel exercises its transforming power on mind and heart. {AA 134.3}

God is a being, and man was made in His image. After God created man in His image, the form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it had no vitality. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, breathing, intelligent being. All parts of the human machinery were put in motion. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the perceptions of the mind, the senses, were placed under physical law. It was then that man became a living soul. {TDG 273.4}

By His life and His death, Christ has achieved even more than recovery from the ruin wrought through sin. It was Satan's purpose to bring about an eternal separation between God and man; but in Christ we become more closely united to God than if we had never fallen. In taking our nature, the Saviour has bound Himself to humanity by a tie that is never to be broken. {DA 25.3}

There we shall know even as also we are known. There the loves and sympathies that God has planted in the soul will find truest and sweetest exercise. The pure communion with holy beings, the harmonious social life with the blessed angels and with the faithful ones of all ages, the sacred fellowship that binds together "the whole family in heaven and earth"—all are among the experiences of the hereafter. {Ed 306.2}

Satan has represented God as selfish and oppressive, as claiming all, and giving nothing, as requiring the service of His creatures for His own glory, and making no sacrifice for their good. But the gift of Christ reveals the Father's heart. It testifies that the thoughts of God toward us are "thoughts of peace, and not of evil." Jeremiah 29:11. {DA 57.1}

The salvation of the human race has ever been the object of the councils of heaven. The covenant of mercy was made before the foundation of the world. It has existed from all eternity, and is called the everlasting covenant. So surely as there never was a time when God was not, so surely there never was a moment when it was not the delight of the eternal mind to manifest His grace to humanity. . . . {AG 130.2}

All heaven is interested in our salvation. The angels of God, thousands upon thousands, and ten thousand times ten thousand, are commissioned to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. They guard us against evil and press back the powers of darkness that are seeking our destruction. {MH 253.3}

God takes men as they are, with the human elements in their character, and trains them for His service, if they will be disciplined and learn of Him. They are not chosen because they are perfect, but notwithstanding their imperfections, that through the knowledge and practice of the truth, through the grace of Christ, they may become transformed into His image. {DA 294.4}

The Lord could have cut off the sinner, and utterly destroyed him; but the costlier plan was chosen. In His great love He provides hope for the hopeless, giving His only-begotten Son to bear the sins of the world. And since He has poured out all heaven in that one rich gift, He will withhold from man no needed aid that he may take the cup of salvation, and become an heir of God, joint heir with Christ. {1SM 323.1}

Never are we absent from the mind of God. God is our joy and our salvation. {3SM 338.1}

That prayer of Christ embraces all His followers to the close of time. Our Saviour foresaw the trials and dangers of His people; He is not unmindful of the dissensions and divisions that distract and weaken His church. He is looking upon us with deeper interest and more tender compassion than moves an earthly parent's heart toward a wayward, afflicted child. He bids us learn of Him. He invites our confidence. He bids us open our hearts to receive His love. He has pledged Himself to be our helper. {5T 237.2}

Though now He has ascended to the presence of God, and shares the throne of the universe, Jesus has lost none of His compassionate nature. Today the same tender, sympathizing heart is open to all the woes of humanity. Today the hand that was pierced is reached forth to bless more abundantly His people that are in the world. "And they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand." The soul that has given himself to Christ is more precious in His sight than the whole world. The Saviour would have passed through the agony of Calvary

that one might be saved in His kingdom. He will never abandon one for whom He has died. Unless His followers choose to leave Him, He will hold them fast. {DA 480.5}

Recommended Reading: *Desire of Ages* Chapter 43 – “Barriers Broken Down”

<https://egwwritings.org>

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2023: *Ephesians*

Lesson 7 “The Unified Body of Christ”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 4:1–16; Philippians 2:3; Psalm 68:18; Acts 2; 1 Corinthians 12:4–11, 27–30; Isaiah 5:4.

Memory Text

“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11, 12, ESV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Unity of the Spirit
- III. Together as One in the One
- IV. The Exalted Christ, Giver of Gifts
- V. Gifts of the Exalted Jesus
- VI. Growing Up Into Christ
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “In Ephesians 4:1–16, Paul redeploys the body metaphor that he used so effectively earlier (Rom. 12:3–8, 1 Cor. 12:12–31). Christ is now the Head of the body, supplying the body with ‘gifted’ people who help unify the body, with each part—each church member—contributing its abilities to the whole. Paul’s picture of a healthy, unified body helps us understand God’s goal for us: to be parts of a fruitful church united in Christ.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What are the three basic things that Paul urges the believers to do? (4:1-3; Sunday’s lesson) What kind of “calling” or “vocation” is Paul talking about here? Why is it significant that Christian life is described by the metaphor of “walking”? What lessons can we learn from that? What role do humility, gentleness and patience play in this?
3. Why is “unity” such an important concept for Paul? (4:4-6; Monday’s lesson) He uses the word ‘one’ seven times! How does he develop the concept further from chapter 2? How can we understand and appreciate this call for unity in our divided and

polarized Christianity and world? What is it that we need to overcome, put behind us and demolish?

4. The third thing emphasized in this section is the way in which the risen and ascended Lord gives a variety of gifts to the different members of his body (4:7-10; Tuesday's lesson) What does this tell us about God? The diversity intrinsic in the creation is astounding. Why does God increase it even more in redemption?
5. So why is it that when we human beings get together, we are so concerned that everyone should be the same – the same as us? Racism, sexism, nationalism, tribalism, sectarianism – it seems we human beings only feel safe when we are part of an undifferentiated social ice cube. To feel comfortable, we want to surround ourselves with people who think, act, eat, dress, and talk the same as we do. And those who do not fit into our conformist club get treated with suspicion, exclusion, and hostility. In what ways does diversity threaten our psychological security?
6. What is the meaning of the quotation from Psalm 68:18? In what sense does Christ act like an ancient conquering general? In what sense is he different? What is the connection with the story of Moses? (Wednesday's lesson)
7. "We should be careful when we identify 'shepherds' (or 'pastors'), 'teachers,' and 'evangelists,' since we think of these positions within our own context and time. As far as we are able to determine, in Paul's day these would all have been lay leaders who were serving the house churches of Ephesus (compare 1 Pet. 2:9, Acts 2:46, Acts 12:12)." (Wednesday's lesson) What is the significance of these gifts? In what practical way do they contribute to the unity of the body? If this is so important, why would most members have difficulty identifying their top three spiritual gifts?
8. Thursday's lesson focuses on Growing up in Christ. It is obvious that Paul wants his young Christians to grow up. Why does Jesus say: "Be like children"? and Paul says: "Do not be like babies"? How both can be true?
9. Some aspects of Christian maturity take time to develop, other aspects follow naturally once a believer has discovered and experienced the presence and power of the risen Christ in their life. In verse 14, Paul combines the metaphors of small babies, a boat being tossed on a stormy sea and cunning tricksters playing with a loaded dice.
10. How are we, in today's world, vulnerable to various kinds of tricksters who want to take advantage of immature believers? How significant is this in the year that we are reminded of the 30th anniversary of Waco?
11. Paul's solution to overcoming vulnerability and gullibility is to grow up and become mature. For that to happen, we must be able to speak and receive truth – which requires humility. How willing are we to receive (and give) even the last difficult 10% of truth?
12. There is no spiritual growth without emotional growth. What helps us in that process? What metaphor does Paul use in verse 16? Are there areas in which we need to grow towards maturity as individuals and as a church?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Take a look at Ephesians 4 again, let's start with 11, where Paul is speaking of the whole purpose of the Christian church, and the reason why we have individuals among us with different gifts, which we should share:

His gifts were that some among us should be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, for the equipment of the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ [which means the whole company, the whole church], until [he could have just said, 'We all grow up', but he spells it out. Until] we all attain to the unity [that is produced by the bailing wire of rules and regulations and someone in authority telling us what to do? No, that's for babies in playpens. Until we all attain to the unity] that is inherent in our faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood.

Grownups don't have to be told these things. They worship and admire the same God. And there's nothing artificial about their unity. They just find there are others who rejoice as Jeremiah did, that they know God. And this holds them together. Look at the details now:

And sharing this faith, this unity that is inherent in their faith and their knowledge of the Son of God, they reach mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ [He's their model, of course]: so that we may no longer be children [and here he doesn't say 'who need milk'. Here he says, children], who are tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles.

Isn't that another way of saying they have "their faculties trained by practice to distinguish good from evil"? Isn't this the group in Daniel 12 who survive, or the ones who endure in Revelation to the end? These are the ones who are "sealed". They're so settled into the truth that they cannot be moved. And I understand God waits, not for more and more babes in the truth, but He's waiting for a generation of mature people, like Job, who could survive the time of trouble, because it will come. It must come, if God allows the end to come without His manipulation. When He withdraws His restraint, as Paul says in Thessalonians, all hell will break loose. And who can survive? There will be no havens of refuge then. We must have grown up. Now, how old do we have to be to behave like this? Sixty-five? Ninety-five? I think it's marvelous that Jesus died at thirty-three. But look how He was behaving. And He's our goal. And He didn't just become mature at thirty-three, did He? Look how He behaved earlier on.

And in a manner that was appropriate for a little boy of twelve, He behaved with marvelous poise and grace. Not to suggest that He was doing something that no other little boys could do. He behaved like a little boy. Ellen White is very eloquent on that. He grew up in the normal course of events, and He behaved like a twelve-year-old little boy, but a remarkably good,

poised, polite, gracious twelve-year-old boy. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Hebrews, recorded July 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/73MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/74MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

John 12, John 14: “If you see Me, you’ve seen the Father.” “If you know Me, you know the Father.” All right. Do we believe that the Father is just as gracious as the Son? Is that an integral part of our Christian theology? Did anyone need to reconcile Christ Jesus to us as sinners? Did anything need to be done to assuage and appease the wrath of gentle Jesus and win Him to our side? Then if we believe His testimony about the Father, nothing had to be done to reconcile the Father to us either. He loves us just as much as the Son. Are we so settled into this truth about our God that we cannot be moved? Are we still easily swayed to and fro by every wind of doctrine? Remember Ephesians 4:14, 15, the next verse on the list:

We are no longer to be children, tossed by the waves and whirled about by every fresh gust of teaching, dupes of crafty rogues and their deceitful schemes. No, let us speak the truth in love; so shall we fully grow up into Christ. (NEB)

We should ask ourselves, are we still such children in the faith, babes in the truth, that we need emergency measures to be reverent toward our God and to do what is right? If we still need those measures, we are still babes. So Paul also wrote Hebrews 5:13, 14; 16:1. And I like to say Paul wrote this. The language sounds more like Luke sometimes, but that great physician and that great minister worked together until the end:

Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness [Melchizedek, the king of peace and righteousness. That’s what God wants.]. But solid food is for the mature [*King James*, ‘perfect’], who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity. . . . (NIV)

What are the elementary teachings about Christ? What are the rudiments of our beliefs, as some versions have it? Well, let us ask ourselves. Do we still need the law in order to love God and love each other, and not hate and desire to murder our enemies? Would we murder them if there was no law to say we must not do it? If it’s the law that keeps you from murdering your mother-in-law, then you are still very much a child and not ready for the awful time of trouble.

Let me ask it another way. Which moves you more, the thunders of Sinai or the still small voice of truth? Satan is going to bring great thunder and fire from heaven in the sight of men, miracles and wonders. If that is what moves us, then we are very vulnerable. We’re still babes in the truth. God has used those methods with babes, but He waits for us to grow up. The one thing

that the devil cannot come with is the still small voice of truth, for it is not with him. We must be ready to recognize that as the supreme authority.

Do you obey because God has told you to, and He has the power to reward and destroy? That's the obedience of a little child. Do you obey because God has told you to, and you love Him and want to please Him? That's the only reason why you don't murder your enemies. It upsets Him. You do want to please Him. That's sweet, but still the faith of a little child. Or do you do what is right, because it is right? Do we offer God the intelligent, agreeing obedience of free, grown-up children of our heavenly Father? That is what pleases Him most. Then we are ready for the days to come.

Are we still preoccupied with our own salvation, with what God has done for me, and you too, to be sure? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #18, "God Waits for His Children to Grow Up" recorded June 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:*

<http://pkp.cc/18MMCAG>

Further Study with Ellen White

Love imparts to its possessor grace, propriety, and comeliness of deportment. Love illuminates the countenance and subdues the voice; it refines and elevates the entire man. It brings him into harmony with God, for it is a heavenly attribute. {4T 559.3}

The Sun of Righteousness did not burst upon the world in splendor, to dazzle the senses with His glory. It is written of Christ, "His going forth is prepared as the morning." Hosea 6:3. Quietly and gently the daylight breaks upon the earth, dispelling the darkness and waking the world to life. So did the Sun of Righteousness arise, "with healing in His wings." Malachi 4:2. {MH 32.3}

Jesus, the brightness of the Father's glory, thought "it not a thing to be grasped to be on an equality with God, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant." Philippians 2:6, 7, R.V., margin. Through all the lowly experiences of life He consented to pass, walking among the children of men, not as a king, to demand homage, but as one whose mission it was to serve others. There was in His manner no taint of bigotry, no cold austerity. The world's Redeemer had a greater than angelic nature, yet united with His divine majesty were meekness and humility that attracted all to Himself. {MB 14.2}

God's abounding love and presence will give you the power of self-control. He will mold and fashion your mind and character. He will direct your aims and purposes and capabilities in a channel that will give you moral and spiritual power which you will not have to leave here in this world but can carry with you and retain through eternal ages. {TMK 53.6}

In his own strength man cannot rule his spirit. But through Christ he may gain self-control. In His strength he may bring his thoughts and words into subjection to the will of God. The religion of Christ brings the emotions under the control of reason and disciplines the tongue. Under its influence the hasty temper is subdued, and the heart is filled with patience and gentleness. {MYP 136.1}

How great the diversity manifested in the natural world! Every object has its peculiar sphere of action; yet all are found to be linked together in the great whole. Christ Jesus is in union with the Father, and from the great center this wonderful unity is to extend . . . through all classes and diversities of talents. {OHC 169.4}

During every hour of Christ's sojourn upon the earth, the love of God was flowing from Him in irrepressible streams. All who are imbued with His Spirit will love as He loved. The very principle that actuated Christ will actuate them in all their dealing one with another. {DA 677.2}

When men are bound together, not by force or self-interest, but by love, they show the working of an influence that is above every human influence. Where this oneness exists, it is evidence that the image of God is being restored in humanity, that a new principle of life has been implanted. It shows that there is power in the divine nature to withstand the supernatural agencies of evil, and that the grace of God subdues the selfishness inherent in the natural heart. {DA 678.1}

The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one. {8T 269.4}

Remember, God will make use of all His children if they will surrender to Him. He has a place and work for all. {TDG 243.4}

It is the union of the Holy Spirit and the testimony of the living witness that is to warn the world. The worker for God is the agent through which the heavenly communication is given, and the Holy Spirit gives divine authority to the word of truth (RH April 4, 1893). {6BC 1053.2}

The promise of the Holy Spirit is not limited to any age or to any race. Christ declared that the divine influence of His Spirit was to be with His followers unto the end. From the Day of Pentecost to the present time, the Comforter has been sent to all who have yielded themselves fully to the Lord and to His service. To all who have accepted Christ as a personal Saviour, the Holy Spirit has come as a counselor, sanctifier, guide, and witness. The more closely believers have walked with God, the more clearly and powerfully have they testified of their Redeemer's love and of His saving grace. The men and women who through the long centuries of persecution and trial enjoyed a large measure of the presence of the Spirit in their lives, have stood as signs and wonders in the world. Before angels and men they have revealed the transforming power of redeeming love. {AA 49.2}

The work of transformation from unholiness to holiness is a continuous one. Day by day God labors for man's sanctification, and man is to cooperate with Him, putting forth persevering efforts in the cultivation of right habits. He is to add grace to grace; and as he thus works on the plan of addition, God works for him on the plan of multiplication. Our Saviour is always ready to hear and answer the prayer of the contrite heart, and grace and peace are multiplied to His faithful ones. Gladly He grants them the blessings they need in their struggle against the evils that beset them. {ML 101.3}

God has different ways of working, and He has different workmen to whom He entrusts varied gifts. One worker may be a ready speaker; another a ready writer; another may have the gift of sincere, earnest, fervent prayer; another the gift of singing; another may have special power to explain the word of God with clearness. And each gift is to become a power for God, because He works with the laborer. To one God gives the word of wisdom, to another knowledge, to another faith; but all are to work under the same Head. The diversity of gifts leads to a diversity of operations; but "it is the same God which worketh all in all." [1 Corinthians 12:6.] {GW 483.1}

The Lord has not qualified any one of us to bear the burden of the work alone. He has associated together men of different minds, that they may counsel with and assist one another. In this way the deficiency in the experience and the abilities of one is supplied by the experience and the abilities of another. {TDG 154.2}

All men do not receive the same gifts, but to every servant of the Master some gift of the Spirit is promised. {FLB 292.3}

God will today endow men and women with power from above, as He endowed those who on the day of Pentecost heard the word of salvation. At this very hour His Spirit and His grace are for all who need them and will take Him at His word. {FLB 292.7}

From the endless variety of plants and flowers, we may learn an important lesson. All blossoms are not the same in form or color. Some possess healing virtues. Some are always fragrant. There are professing Christians who think it their duty to make every Christian like themselves. This is man's plan, not the plan of God. In the church of God there is room for characters as varied as are the flowers in a garden. In His spiritual garden there are many varieties of flowers.—Letter 95, 1902. {Ev 99.1}

One of the divine plans for growth is impartation. The Christian is to gain strength by strengthening others. "He that watereth shall be watered also himself." This is not merely a promise; it is a divine law, a law by which God designs that the streams of benevolence, like the waters of the great deep, shall be kept in constant circulation, continually flowing back to their source. In the fulfilling of this law is the secret of spiritual growth (ST June 12, 1901). {7BC 947.3}

In the matchless gift of His Son, God has encircled the whole world with an atmosphere of grace as real as the air which circulates around the globe. All who choose to breathe this life-giving atmosphere will live and grow up to the stature of men and women in Christ Jesus. {SC 68.1}

In the divine arrangement God does nothing without the cooperation of man. He compels no man's will. That must be given to the Lord completely, else the Lord is not able to accomplish His divine work that He would do through the human agency. Jesus declared that in a certain place He could not do many mighty works among the people because of their unbelief. He wanted to do for them in that place just what He knew that they needed to have done, but He could not because unbelief barred the way. The potter cannot mold and fashion unto honor that which has never been placed in his hands. The Christian life is one of daily surrender, submission, and continual overcoming, gaining fresh victories every day. This is the growing up into Christ, fashioning the life into the divine Model. . . . {TMK 55.4}

The Lord's angels are appointed to keep strict watch over those who put their faith in the Lord, and these angels are to be our special help in every time of need. Every day we are to come to the Lord with full assurance of faith, and to look to Him for wisdom. . . . Those who are guided by the Word of the Lord will discern with certainty between falsehood and truth, between sin and righteousness. {AG 201.4}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2023: *Ephesians*

Lesson 8 “Christ-Shaped Lives *and* Spirit-Inspired Speech”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 4:17–32; Colossians 3:1–17; Zechariah 3:3–5; Zechariah 8:16; Isaiah 63:10; Romans 8:16, 26, 27.

Memory Text

“You were taught, with regard to your former way of life, to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness” (Ephesians 4:22–24, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Downward Spiral of Sin
- III. A Dramatic Change of Clothing
- IV. Unity-Building, Grace-Filled Speech
- V. The Holy Spirit in the Believer’s Life
- VI. Kindness (Not Bitterness)
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “In Ephesians 4:17–32, Paul argues that believers have experienced a complete transformation. They have taken off their old selves and have embraced their new identity [...] though, this is no mere external transformation. It includes being ‘renewed in the spirit of your minds’ (Eph. 4:23, ESV), bringing into the life ‘true righteousness and holiness’ (Eph. 4:24, ESV).” (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. What is the similarity between 4:1 and 4:17? In 4:1-16, Paul’s theme was the unity of the church. In Ephesians 4:17–24, Paul contrasts a Gentile lifestyle, which undermines unity (Eph. 4:17–19), with Christian patterns of life that nourish it (Eph. 4:20–24). Why is it significant that the Christian life is described as a “walk” (4:17 cf. 2:2)? What is the reason for the ‘downward spiral of sin’ (4:17-19)? Why is it

- significant that to change behavior, we first need to change something in our thinking? (Sunday's lesson)
3. How is it that the truth of Christianity 'opens' the mind (4:20, 21)? How do we ensure that the metaphor of "putting off" and "putting on" does not represent simply a superficial change (4:22-24)? What was significant about the change of clothing in the culture of the first century? Why is the secret to Christian life to 'be renewed in the spirit of your mind'? (4:23) (Monday's lesson)
 4. What is significant about the structure of 4:25-32? How do you reconcile "all anger needs to be put away" (4:31) with the command "be angry, but do not sin" (4:26)? How is Christ's transforming grace manifested in 4:28, 29? (Tuesday's lesson)
 5. What is the role of the Holy Spirit in the community of believers (4:30, 31)? The "seal" was an official stamp on a document or package marking it for a specific purpose or occasion. This mark indicates who it belongs to and what it is for. Why is Paul speaking about 'grieving the Holy Spirit', rather than Christ or the Father (Isaiah 63:10)? (Wednesday's lesson)
 6. What is it that needs to be put away (4:31)? What is the positive command and what is the rationale for it (4:32)? Why is kindness one of the purest forms of imitating God? (Thursday's lesson)
 7. How can we reflect the life and love of God in the prevailing culture of our day? How is it similar and different from first century Ephesus? What can we do individually and collectively so that truth and love replace falsehood and bitterness in our time and sphere of influence?
 8. How are forgiveness and bitterness connected? What is the difference between forgiving for *our* sake, for *their* sake, and for *Jesus'* sake (4:32)? If we have been raised from the dead, why would we wear graveclothes? Jesus says of us as He said of Lazarus: "Loose him, and let him go!" What is it that we need to let go in order to live lives that are shaped by Christ and filled by the Spirit?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

A grown up person loves, and is never rude, and never arrogant, never insists on having his own way, never impatient, and so on. That's the way grown-ups behave. And there's peace in that kind of community. "So that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine." There's no stability in the family when every person that comes by with some new idea can confuse the family. Satan comes by and says, "God is an arbitrary tyrant, exacting, unforgiving, and severe." Like children, we think, "Well, maybe so," we're not really settled into the truth. "Tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the cunning of men, by their craftiness in deceitful wiles. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ."

And then we have unity again. So there's another way of saying God's goal for us is, "Though it's very sweet to be reborn, and have new hearts and right spirits, don't be retarded. I mean, grow up without delay, and come to the place where I can just turn you loose in my universe, knowing you will behave like mature people, and there'll be a unity inherent in the fact that we all love and trust each other. I can even trust you!" So many places in the Bible describe, it seems to me, this quality of life that God wants, and is the only way to have peace, and harmony, and unity, and freedom for eternity. Do you know any other way to have freedom forever, than this? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Ephesians and Colossians, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/67MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/68MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

This is not an act of arbitrary power on the part of God. The rejecters of His mercy reap that which they have sown. God is the fountain of life; and when one chooses the service of sin, he separates from God, and thus cuts himself off from life. He is "alienated from the life of God." Christ says, "All they that hate Me love death." Ephesians 4:18; Proverbs 8:36. God gives them existence for a time that they may develop their character and reveal their principles. This accomplished, they receive the results of their own choice. By a life of rebellion, Satan and all who unite with him place themselves so out of harmony with God that His very presence is to them a consuming fire. The glory of Him who is love will destroy them. {DA 764.1}

At the beginning of the great controversy, the angels did not understand this. Had Satan and his host then been left to reap the full result of their sin, they would have perished; but it would not have been apparent to heavenly beings that this was the inevitable result of sin. A doubt of God's goodness would have remained in their minds as evil seed, to produce its deadly fruit of sin and woe. {DA 764.2}

But not so when the great controversy shall be ended. Then, the plan of redemption having been completed, the character of God is revealed to all created intelligences. The precepts of His law are seen to be perfect and immutable. Then sin has made manifest its nature, Satan his character. Then the extermination of sin will vindicate God's love and establish His honor before a universe of beings who delight to do His will, and in whose heart is His law. {DA 764.3}

As we near the end of time, falsehood will be so mingled with truth, that only those who have the guidance of the Holy Spirit will be able to distinguish truth from error. (MS 43, 1907). {7BC 907.1}

Sanctification means habitual communion with God (RH March 15, 1906). {7BC 908.16}

God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led, if they could see the end from the beginning, and discern the glory of the purpose which they are fulfilling as co-workers with Him. {DA 224.5}

Satan was exulting that he had succeeded in debasing the image of God in humanity. Then Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. He came to lift us up from the dust, to reshape the marred character after the pattern of His divine character, and to make it beautiful with His own glory. {DA 37.3}

By beholding we are to become changed; and as we meditate upon the perfections of the divine Model, we shall desire to become wholly transformed, and renewed in the image of His purity. It is by faith in the Son of God that transformation takes place in the character, and the child of wrath becomes the child of God. He passes from death unto life; he becomes spiritual and discerns spiritual things. The wisdom of God enlightens his mind, and he beholds wondrous things out of His law. As a man is converted by the truth, the work of transformation of character goes on. He has an increased measure of understanding. In becoming a man of obedience to God, he has the mind of Christ, and the will of God becomes his will. {1SM 338.1}

By beholding Jesus as He is, the sinner is transformed and elevated to the very summit of dignity, even to a seat with Christ upon his throne. . . . {TMK 96.4}

It is a law of the human mind that by beholding we become changed. Man will rise no higher than his conceptions of truth, purity, and holiness. If the mind is never exalted above the level of humanity, if it is not uplifted by faith to contemplate infinite wisdom and love, the man will be constantly sinking lower and lower. The worshipers of false gods clothed their deities with human attributes and passions, and thus their standard of character was degraded to the likeness of sinful humanity. They were defiled in consequence. "God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. . . . The earth also was corrupt before God; and the earth was filled with violence." God had given men His commandments as a rule of life, but His law was transgressed, and every conceivable sin was the result. The wickedness of men was open and daring, justice was trampled in the dust, and the cries of the oppressed reached unto heaven. {PP 91.2}

It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature, that by beholding, we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence. Man will never rise higher than his standard of purity or goodness or truth. If self is his loftiest ideal, he will never attain to anything more exalted. Rather, he will constantly sink lower and lower. The grace of

God alone has power to exalt man. Left to himself, his course must inevitably be downward. {GC 555.1}

By beholding we are to become changed; and as we meditate upon the perfections of the divine Model, we shall desire to become wholly transformed, and renewed in the image of His purity. It is by faith in the Son of God that transformation takes place in the character, and the child of wrath becomes the child of God. {AG 302.5}

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of Scriptures. {COL 60.1}

The mighty power of the Holy Spirit works an entire transformation in the character of the human agent, making him a new creature in Christ Jesus. {6BC 1117.17}

The love which Christ diffuses through the whole being is a vitalizing power. Every vital part—the brain, the heart, the nerves—it touches with healing. By it the highest energies of the being are roused to activity. It frees the soul from the guilt and sorrow, the anxiety and care, that crush the life forces. With it come serenity and composure. It implants in the soul, joy that nothing earthly can destroy,—joy in the Holy Spirit,—health-giving, life-giving joy. {MH 115.3}

Our Saviour's words, "Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28), are a prescription for the healing of physical, mental, and spiritual ills. Though men have brought suffering upon themselves by their own wrongdoing, He regards them with pity. In Him they may find help. He will do great things for those who trust in Him. {MH 115.4}

When the soul surrenders itself to Christ, a new power takes possession of the new heart. A change is wrought which man can never accomplish for himself. It is a supernatural work, bringing a supernatural element into human nature. The soul that is yielded to Christ becomes His own fortress, which He holds in a revolted world, and He intends that no authority shall be known in it but His own. A soul thus kept in possession by the heavenly agencies is impregnable to the assaults of Satan. {DA 324.1}

The truths of God's word are not mere sentiments, but the utterances of the Most High. He who makes these truths a part of his life becomes in every sense a new creature. He is not given new mental powers, but the darkness that through ignorance and sin has clouded the understanding is removed. {CT 452.2}

When Jesus speaks of the new heart, He means the mind, the life, the whole being. To have a change of heart is to withdraw the affections from the world, and fasten them upon Christ. To

have a new heart is to have a new mind, new purposes, new motives. What is the sign of a new heart?—A changed life. {OHC 159.5}

The new birth consists in having new motives, new tastes, new tendencies. Those who are begotten unto a new life by the Holy Spirit, have become partakers of the divine nature, and in all their habits and practices they will give evidence of their relationship to Christ. (RH April 12, 1892). {6BC 1101.1}

Kind words are as dew and gentle showers to the soul. {AH 435.2}

Tender, compassionate, sympathetic, ever considerate of others, He represented the character of God, and was constantly engaged in service for God and man. {8T 286.4}

The Bible enjoins courtesy, and it presents many illustrations of the unselfish spirit, the gentle grace, the winsome temper, that characterize true politeness. These are but reflections of the character of Christ. All the real tenderness and courtesy in the world, even among those who do not acknowledge His name, is from Him. And He desires these characteristics to be perfectly reflected in His children. It is His purpose that in us men shall behold His beauty. {Ed 241.5}

Kind, tender, compassionate words will flow from sanctified hearts and lips. {SD 180.7}

Kind words are never lost. Jesus records them as if spoken to Himself. Sow the seeds of kindness, of love, and of tenderness, and they will blossom and bear fruit. {OHC 293.5}

The work of Christ is to redeem, to restore, to seek and to save that which was lost. If we are connected with Christ, we also are partakers of the divine nature and are to be laborers together with God. We are to bind up the bruised and wounded soul; and if a brother or a sister has erred, we are not to join with the enemy in destroying and ruining, but to work with Christ to restore such a one in the spirit of meekness. {HP 291.2}

The Lord did not lock the reservoir of heaven after pouring His Spirit upon the early disciples. We also may receive of the fullness of His blessing. Heaven is full of the treasures of His grace, and those who come to God in faith may claim all that He has promised. {6BC 1055.4}

Just as soon as the people of God are sealed in their foreheads—it is not any seal or mark that can be seen, but a settling into the truth, both intellectually and spiritually, so they cannot be moved—just as soon as God's people are sealed and prepared for the shaking, it will come. Indeed, it has begun already; the judgments of God are now upon the land, to give us warning, that we may know what is coming (MS 173, 1902). {4BC 1161.6}

Jesus gives the Holy Spirit in large measure for great emergencies, to help our infirmities, to give us strong consolation, to illuminate our minds, and purify and ennoble our hearts. Christ becomes unto us wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption. {RC 103.5}

Through the agency of the Holy Spirit, God works a moral change in the lives of His people, changing them into the likeness of Christ. Then, when the last trumpet call shall reach the ears of the dead who sleep in Christ, they will come forth to a new life, clothed with the garments of salvation. They enter in through the gates into the City of God, welcomed to the happiness and joy of their Lord. {UL 78.3}

The same Spirit that in His stead was sent to be the instructor of His first co-workers, Christ has commissioned to be the instructor of His co-workers today. “Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world” (Matthew 28:20), is His promise. {Ed 96.1}

The Holy Spirit was sent as the most priceless treasure man could receive. {ML 36.5}

When Christ ascended to the Father, He did not leave His followers without help. The Holy Spirit, as His representative, and the heavenly angels, as ministering spirits, are sent forth to aid those who against great odds are fighting the good fight of faith. Ever remember that Jesus is your helper. No one understands as well as He your peculiarities of character. He is watching over you, and if you are willing to be guided by Him, He will throw around you influences for good that will enable you to accomplish all His will for you. {MYP 17.1}

The children of God are cooperating with all the invisible host of light. And more than angels are in their ranks; the Holy Spirit, the representative of the Captain of the Lord’s host, comes down to direct the battle. Our infirmities may be many, our mistakes and sins numerous, but forgiveness is for all who, with contrition of heart, will confess and forsake their sins. Angels of light are sent to render them all the help that is required.—Letter 102a, March 9, 1896, to O. A. Tait, at the time circulation manager of the Review and Herald. {UL 82.5}

Provision is made by God Himself for every soul that turns to the Lord, to receive His immediate cooperation. The Holy Spirit becomes His efficiency. {ML 47.4}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2023: *Ephesians*

Lesson 9 “Living Wisely”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 5:1–20; 1 Corinthians 5:1–11; Revelation 16:1–16; Colossians 4:5; Proverbs 20:1; Proverbs 23:29–35; Acts 16:25.

Memory Text

“Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:15–17, ESV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Instead Let There Be Thanksgiving
- III. Walking as Children of Light
- IV. “Awake, O Sleeper!”
- V. The Holy Spirit in the Believer’s Life
- VI. Spirit-Filled Worship
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “In Ephesians 5:1–20, Paul contrasts what pagans and believers valued. Believers should treasure, among other things, ‘all that is good and right and true’ (Eph. 5:9, ESV) in Christ. Paul, thus, urges them to snap up the bargains found in Christ as they live (as we all do) on the threshold of eternity (Eph. 5:15–17).” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Most children learn best by watching and imitating. The Greek word used in 5:1 is “*mimics*”, so Paul says, “be imitators of God, as beloved children, and walk in love, as Christ loved us.” “Instead, let there be thanksgiving.” (5:4) (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Why is Christ’s sacrifice presented as who “loved us/you and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.” (5:2) How do you understand the meaning of those words and Christ’s sacrifice?
4. Ephesians 5:3–5 introduces a section expressing concern for sexual ethics. The young converts in Ephesus (just like in Corinth) were in danger of reversing their

Christian calling and being drawn back into sexual behavior that would negate their Christian witness (compare 1 Corinthians 5:1–11; 6:12–20, 2 Corinthians 12:21).

5. Paul says, “Don’t be fooled with empty words” (5:6). What were the empty words and false promises in the Roman world of the first century and what are they in our time? How does the repressive presentation of the body as evil, sex as intrinsically dirty and wicked, ultimately lead to a no restraint ‘anything goes’ culture? How do cheap imitations betray all those who are “fooled with empty words”? What does it mean to “walk as children of light” in this context (5:8)? (Monday’s lesson)
6. How do you understand that “for because of these things the wrath of God comes on those who are disobedient” (5:6)? Is the “wrath of God” mentioned here the end-time judgement? How does it do more damage than good to present a picture of an arbitrary God who makes up rules and then gets angry with the people who ignore those rules and who go ahead anyway and enjoy themselves? How do certain behaviors bring their own nemesis?
7. What can we learn from the contrast between light and darkness in 5:9-14? How do we imitate God as the source of light? What does it mean to “awake from sleep” (5:14)? How are awaking from sleep, being raised from dead, and the shining connected (Isaiah 60:1-3; Matthew 28:1)? (Tuesday’s lesson)
8. What does it mean to “walk, not as unwise but as wise” (5:15), “understanding what the will of the Lord is” (5:17) and “redeeming the time” (5:16)? How do we make sure that “redeeming the time” does not lead us to an obsessive lifestyle with no peace? How do we learn to relax, rest, trust and allow God to immerse us in His peace? How can we see every day as an opportunity to walk with God, learning more about His will and exploring ways to serve more effectively?
9. What do we learn about Spirit-filled worship from 5:18-20? The emphasis on mind and wisdom shows that worship must move beyond stimulation to transformation and incarnation. When the New Testament church gathers, the focus is on mutual edification not on worship. Under the New Covenant, worship happens all the time, including when the people of God gather together. But mutual edification does not. That takes place only when Christians gather together.
10. Worship prepares us to hear God’s voice – in our hearts, in the family, in the church and in the world. Worship is responding to all that God is with all that we are. What are some ways we can make it a transforming reality in our own context, culture?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

What I like about this is, the kind of worship God desires is described as rational, intelligent, spiritual worship; not mechanical, not ritualistic, not ceremonial. We worship an intelligent God. He wants us to worship him in spirit and in truth, Jesus said. So to do something mechanical, learned by rote, is a terrible misrepresentation of the truth about God. Remember Isaiah? “Your worship of me is but the commandments of men learned by rote.” You come into the temple, but your hearts aren’t in it. Remember the Sabbath keepers in Amos? All that kind of unthinking obedience suggests an unthinking God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Romans, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/61MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/62MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

So please stop *everything* that suggests we worship a tyrannical, legalistic, arbitrary God, especially at times of worship (Romans 12:1), no more dead pigeons please. Bring yourselves in the best condition possible for God would like to *reason* with us and reveal more of the truth to us about himself. He wants intelligent worship, the worship of mind and heart, you remember, in Romans 12. Since God is not arbitrary, not critical, not judgmental, not legalistic with us, neither should we be with each other. Now we realize we’ve all been welcomed back to the family and we should be at peace with each other, and try to win all our wandering brothers and sisters back to trust God (Romans 14 and 15). {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series Romans, chapters 15 & 16, recorded February 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/29MMROMANS66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/30MMROMANS66> (Part 2)

Now, instead of grieving the Spirit by rejecting this truth about God that would lead me back to trust so that he could heal me, 5:18 says, in a most interesting verse, “do not get drunk with wine, for that is debauchery; but be filled with the Spirit.” Does anybody have *Phillips* here tonight?

COMMENT: Do not get your stimulus from wine, for there is always a danger of excessive drinking; but let the Spirit stimulate your souls.

Now, look at that! “Do not get your stimulus from wine, where there is danger of excess; but let the Holy Spirit stimulate your souls.” It is interesting that through the history of mankind, we have needed some stimulants. Man was never designed to survive on this planet alone, and God, knowing how difficult things would be, had made provision that when we felt depressed

the Spirit would stimulate us. When there was hostility, the Spirit would bring love. When we were sad, the Spirit would bring joy. “Love, joy, peace,” and that whole long list.

But of course, when you are under the influence of this Spirit, this Spirit is stimulating you, it never would lead to a loss of self-control, the last of the fruits of the Spirit, so there’s no danger of excess. But man, who has not wanted to come under the stimulus of the Spirit of God, has still needed stimulus; and he’s tried everything under the sun, through the years. And one of the most popular methods of finding love, joy, peace, and all these others, has been alcohol, though the ancients didn’t know what it was. But when they went to religious services, they got filled with the spirit, and they called it spirit. You know, that’s why alcohol is called spirits. You go to the Spirit Shop to get alcohol.

It always amuses me when I drive by “Ye Olde Spirit Shoppe”. It’s the same word for the Holy Spirit. Isn’t it true, when people are depressed, they drink and they feel better. When the Russians and the British and the Americans were at the Yalta Conference, and you know there wasn’t the warmest feeling between them all, the cocktails and the vodka flowed, and they had arms around each other, and they made very ridiculous decisions at times; but they thought it was love! Of course, truth wasn’t there, or self-control. But all through the years, people have used artificial stimulants.

Now there’s only one group that tries to survive with none. They’d rather die than take artificial stimulants. But they’re not stimulated by the Holy Spirit, either. They are known as the lukewarm Laodiceans. And God says, “I’d rather you were cold, than just lukewarm.” So, you see, what’s worse? To be stimulated by an artificial stimulant, or stimulated not at all? Well, neither one is a live option, I hope. The only way is to let the Holy Spirit stimulate you. But it does add an interesting thing. When you are stimulated by the Spirit, you notice what happens:

Addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with all your heart, always and for everything giving thanks in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ to God the Father.

Some do feel that dignified Christians lack a little enthusiasm and warmth at times. I believe that one can be the most scholarly in his pursuit of truth, and yet be a highly stimulated person. Now, sometimes that’s thought to be undignified. You know, scholars are people of great poise and reserve, and they sometimes give a false impression here. I like the thought that nobody was a better scholar than Paul, and he understood these things in a most intricate way, and yet he’s most stimulated. And I think it’s a pity that we couldn’t demonstrate the most unimpeachable scholarship in our understanding of these matters; and at the same time come through in a very warm, obviously stimulated manner. And certainly not lukewarm about it. It is not a violation of good scholarship to be enthusiastic about these things. I sometimes wonder if unstimulated scholars really see the truth, or maybe they just feel they have to keep this image

of self-control. You see, the Spirit that brings self-control is also described here as “stirring” people to give expression to these matters. Certainly when Jesus spoke, he spoke with tremendous feeling. And there are many other descriptions of biblical writers doing the same. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Ephesians and Colossians, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/67MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/68MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

And the same compassion that reached out to rescue Peter is extended to every soul who has fallen under temptation. It is Satan’s special device to lead man into sin, and then leave him, helpless and trembling, fearing to seek for pardon. But why should we fear, when God has said, “Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me?” Isaiah 27:5. Every provision has been made for our infirmities, every encouragement offered us to come to Christ. {COL 156.1}

It is the Holy Spirit, the Comforter, which Jesus said He would send into the world, that changes our character into the image of Christ; and when this is accomplished, we reflect as in a mirror the glory of the Lord. That is, the character of the one who thus beholds Christ is so like His that one looking at him sees Christ’s own character shining out as from a mirror. Imperceptibly to ourselves, we are changed day by day from our ways and will into the ways and will of Christ, into the loveliness of His character. Thus we grow up into Christ, and unconsciously reflect His image. . . . {HP 337.3}

Such transformation of character as is seen in the life of John is ever the result of communion with Christ. There may be marked defects in the character of an individual, yet when he becomes a true disciple of Christ, the power of divine grace transforms and sanctifies him. Beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, he is changed from glory to glory, until he is like Him whom he adores. {AA 559.1}

Holiness is wholeness to God. The soul is surrendered to God. The will, and even the thoughts, are brought into subjection to the will of Christ. The love of Jesus fills the soul, and is constantly going out in a clear, refreshing stream, to make glad the hearts of others (MS 33, 1911). {6BC 1076.2}

Christ abiding in the soul exerts a transforming power, and the outward aspect bears witness to the peace and joy that reign within. We drink in the love of Christ, as the branch draws nourishment from the vine. If we are grafted in Christ, if fiber by fiber we have been united with the Living Vine, we shall give evidence of the fact by bearing rich clusters of living fruit. If we are

connected with the Light, we shall be channels of light, and in our words and works we shall reflect light to the world. {RC 104.3}

Determined to efface the image of God in man, Satan works with an intensity of effort to hide God from view. Not openly does he work, but secretly, mingling the human and the divine, the spurious and the genuine, so seeking to bring confusion and distress. But in proportionate power divine mercy is revealed to counteract this wicked working, and bring to light the enemy's hidden purposes. {TDG 308.5}

The sin of blasphemy against the Holy Spirit does not lie in any sudden word or deed; it is the firm, determined resistance of truth and evidence. {FLB 58.4}

It is not that God sends out a decree that man shall not be saved. He does not throw a darkness before the eyes which cannot be penetrated. But man at first resists a motion of the Spirit of God, and, having once resisted, it is less difficult to do so the second time, less the third, and far less the fourth. Then comes the harvest to be reaped from the seed of unbelief and resistance. Oh what a harvest of sinful indulgences is preparing for the sickle! . . . {FLB 58.5}

On the other hand, every ray of light cherished will yield a harvest of light. Temptation once resisted will give power to more firmly resist the second time; every new victory gained over self will smooth the way for higher and nobler triumphs. Every victory is a seed sown to eternal life. {FLB 58.6}

God destroys no one. The sinner destroys himself by his own impenitence. {FLB 58.7}

No one need look upon the sin against the Holy Ghost as something mysterious and indefinable. The sin against the Holy Ghost is the sin of persistent refusal to respond to the invitation to repent. {FLB 58.8}

God destroys no man. Everyone who is destroyed will have destroyed himself. Everyone who stifles the admonitions of conscience is sowing the seeds of unbelief, and these will produce a sure harvest. By rejecting the first warning from God, Pharaoh of old sowed the seeds of obstinacy, and he reaped obstinacy. God did not compel him to disbelieve. The seed of unbelief which he sowed produced a harvest of its kind. Thus his resistance continued, until he looked upon his devastated land, upon the cold, dead form of his first-born, and the first-born of all in his house and of all the families in his kingdom, until the waters of the sea closed over his horses and his chariots and his men of war. His history is a fearful illustration of the truth of the words that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7. Did men but realize this, they would be careful what seed they sow. {COL 84.4}

Men act out their own free will, either in accordance with a character placed under the molding of God or a character placed under the harsh rule of Satan. {FLB 155.6}

Every act, every word, is a seed that will bear fruit. Every deed of thoughtful kindness, of obedience, or of self-denial, will reproduce itself in others, and through them in still others. So every act of envy, malice, or dissension is a seed that will spring up in a “root of bitterness” (Hebrews 12:15), whereby many shall be defiled. {FLB 155.7}

God destroys no man; but after a time the wicked are given up to the destruction they have wrought for themselves. {YI, November 30, 1893 par. 6}

God destroys no man; but when a man stifles conviction, when he turns from evidence, he is sowing unbelief, and will reap as he has sown. As it was with Pharaoh, so it will be with him; when clearer light shines upon the truth, he will meet it with increased resistance, and the work of hardening the heart will go on with each rejection of the increasing light of heaven. In simplicity and truth we would speak to the impenitent in regard to the way in which men destroy their own souls. You are not to say that God is to blame, that he has made a decree against you. No, he is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to the knowledge of the truth, and to the haven of eternal bliss. No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. God follows men with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. The responsibility rests upon the sinner. By resisting the Spirit of God today, he prepares the way for a second resistance of light when it comes with mightier power; and thus he will pass from one stage of indifference to another, until, at last, the light will fail to impress him, and he will cease to respond in any measure to the Spirit of God. {RH, February 17, 1891 par. 2}

The God of heaven is constantly at work. It is by His power that vegetation is caused to flourish, that every leaf appears and every flower blooms. Every drop of rain or flake of snow, every spire of grass, every leaf and flower and shrub, testifies of God. These little things so common around us teach the lesson that nothing is beneath the notice of the infinite God, nothing is too small for His attention. {8T 260.1}

Since God is infinite, and in Him are all the treasures of wisdom, we may to all eternity be ever searching, ever learning, yet never exhaust the riches of His wisdom, His goodness, or His power. {Ed 172.2}

It was by deception that Satan seduced angels; thus he has in all ages carried forward his work among men, and he will continue this policy to the last. Should he openly profess to be warring against God and His law, men would beware; but he disguises himself, and mixes truth with error. The most dangerous falsehoods are those that are mingled with truth. It is thus that errors are received that captivate and ruin the soul. By this means Satan carries the world with him. But a day is coming when his triumph will be forever ended. {PP 338.3}

God's dealings with rebellion will result in fully unmasking the work that has so long been carried on under cover. The results of Satan's rule, the fruits of setting aside the divine statutes, will be laid open to the view of all created intelligences. The law of God will stand fully vindicated. It will be seen that all the dealings of God have been conducted with reference to the eternal good of His people, and the good of all the worlds that He has created. Satan himself, in the presence of the witnessing universe, will confess the justice of God's government and the righteousness of His law. {PP 338.4}

How precious are these assurances that we shall never be left to take one step in our own finite strength, for He has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Hebrews 13:5. We are fighting in the presence of invisible hosts. Unseen intelligences survey the whole array of evil, and help is at hand. We shall not only be provided with that which is necessary but shall be placed upon vantage ground. . . . {OHC 311.4}

Those who walk in wisdom's ways are, even in tribulation, exceedingly joyful, for He whom their soul loveth walks invisible beside them. At each upward step they discern more distinctly the touch of His hand; at every step, brighter gleamings of glory from the Unseen fall upon their path; and their songs of praise, reaching ever a higher note, ascend to join the songs of the angels before the throne. "The path of the righteous is as the light of dawn, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."—ST Aug. 3, 1904. {RY 155.2}

In actual experience Christ has overcome the world, and how great is His love to us when He invites us to come to Him in all our afflictions, distresses, heartaches, and perplexities, with the assurance that He will help us. He will bring health and brightness into our lives. If we place our hand in the hand of Jesus Christ, He will place our feet on solid rock, a better foundation than we ever had before. He will make us more strong in His strength and He will work with all our efforts. {UL 162.4}

With the trusting faith of a little child, we are to come to our heavenly Father, telling Him of all our needs. He is always ready to pardon and help. The supply of divine wisdom is inexhaustible, and the Lord encourages us to draw largely from it. {SD 121.3}

Since God is infinite, and in Him are all the treasures of wisdom, we may to all eternity be ever searching, ever learning, yet never exhaust the riches of His wisdom, His goodness, or His power. {Ed 172.2}

God has a deep and earnest love for every member of the human family; not one is forgotten, not one is left helpless and deceived to be overcome by the enemy. And if those who have enlisted in the army of Christ will put on the whole armor of God, and wear it, they will be proof against all the assaults of the enemy. Those who really desire to be taught of God, and to walk in His way, have the sure promise that if they feel their lack of wisdom and ask of God, He will give liberally, and upbraid not. {FE 299.2}

Jesus declares that the Father is more willing to give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him than parents are to give good gifts to their children. The Holy Spirit understands man's every necessity. He will bestow upon the earnest seeker that for which he hungers and thirsts. The blessings that God has to bestow are unlimited. We cannot comprehend their height and depth and breadth. All heaven is at the command of those who, realizing their lack of wisdom, come directly to the source of wisdom. To such ones God gives liberally and upbraids not. But let them ask in faith, nothing wavering. . . . The one who receives wisdom from on high is the one who holds fast to the promise, the one who feels his need, and will not be turned aside. . . . {HP 294.4}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Third Quarter 2023: *Ephesians*
Lesson 10 “Husbands *and* Wives: Together *at the Cross*”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 5:21–33; Philippians 2:3, 4; Ezekiel 16:1–14; 2 Corinthians 11:1–4; Genesis 2:15–25.

Memory Text

“Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish” (Ephesians 5:25–27, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Counsel to Christian Wives
- III. The Church as the Bride of Christ: Part 1
- IV. The Church as the Bride of Christ: Part 2
- V. Love Your Wife as You Do Yourself
- VI. The “One Flesh” Model of Marriage
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “In Ephesians 5:21–33, Paul builds on the idea of the submission of believers to each other (Eph. 5:21); he then offers counsel to Christian wives (Eph. 5:22–24) and husbands (Eph. 5:25–32); and he concludes with a distillation of the instruction to both (Eph. 5:33).” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Ephesians 5:21-33 is one of the most abused texts in the entire Bible! Why? A) It has a seemingly obvious meaning – it can be easy to conclude that a plain reading provides the clear understanding of the text. B) By misunderstanding sin and its consequences on human nature, and because we all start from the position of emptiness, ultimately, we can often try to use another person to fill the empty hole inside us. We may be convinced that if we are able to control a certain situation, or if the other person behaves in a certain way, this may bring the happiness we seek. In

this context, it may be tempting and easy to use authority or to force submission as a way of meeting our needs.

3. The passage 5:18-33 starts with an introduction, found in 18-20. The command is: “Allow yourself to be continuously filled with the Spirit.” God offers an amazing and continuous supply of Himself to meet our needs; we experience this as we remain in a continuously dependent relationship with Him.
4. The condition for the success of a mutual subjection is submission to the Triune God (Spirit [v.19], Father [v.20], Christ [v.21]). Mutual submission among believers (5:21) is only possible where people have learned to submit to the supremacy of Christ.
5. The key passage is 5:21 – “Submit to one another out of reverence for *Christ*.” *Mutual* submission is the proper attitude of believers toward one another within the *church* (vs. 18-20) and also within the *home* (vs. 22-23).
6. Sunday’s lesson deals with Paul’s counsel to Christian wives (5:22-24). What does it mean for the wife to “submit to her husband as to the Lord” (v. 22)? Does it mean that a wife is to submit to her husband as if he were Christ, in His place? Or, instead, does it mean that Christ is the truest and highest focus of her submission?
7. The word authority is never used in the New Testament to describe any aspect of the husband/wife relationship. Husbands are never instructed to exercise authority over their wives. Wives are never commanded to obey their husbands or to submit to the authority of their husbands. No threat ever accompanies the injunction for wives to submit to their husbands.
8. Monday’s and Tuesday’s lessons consider verse 5:23: “Christ is the head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body”. By analogy, the husband is “the head of the wife”. How do you understand the term “head”? Where do we go to get the meaning of the word? Do you get it from your experience, culture or society? (similarly to concepts of “wrath” or “atonement”)?
9. If Christ is head over you and me (the church), it is not because He positioned Himself over us. It is because we placed ourselves under Him. In fact, we become Christians by submitting to Christ as our Lord. We submit to His headship. All the activity of Christ, as our head, is to serve, to build up, to empower, and even to die for the church.
10. Wednesday’s lesson explores 5:28-30 – “In the same way, husbands should love their wives as their own bodies...” The only role prescribed for husbands is one of love-motivated self-surrender that is willing to subject itself even to death for the sake of their wives. Thus, the requirements laid here on husbands demand of them a surrender infinitely more stringent and exhaustive than the submission expected of wives. Among spouses it is possible to submit without love, but it is impossible to love without submitting.
11. Thursday’s lesson concludes our study by exploring the “one flesh” model of marriage from the creation narrative of Genesis 2:15-25. In a relationship of grace, a

- wife can submit to her husband, using all her feminine gifts to support her husband in becoming everything God created him to be.
12. In a relationship of grace, a husband can submit to his wife, bringing to bear everything about himself that is masculine in order to enable his wife to become everything God created her to be.
 13. If you saw a husband and wife who were filled with the Spirit and mutually submissive, their presence would inspire most relationships and marriages in the world today, or even in the church. Not only for Ephesus then, but for anybody to do this today requires inspiration from the Trinity and being daily filled by the Holy Spirit.
 14. The primary purpose of marriage is not procreation; childless marriages can be very fulfilling. The primary purpose of marriage is not social hierarchy, or exercise of authority. The primary purpose of marriage is spiritual growth, physical togetherness, social oneness, and emotional belonging to one another. What are some of the steps we can take in our relationships to reflect this divine ideal?

Further Study with Ellen White

God Himself gave Adam a companion. He provided “an help meet for him”—a helper corresponding to him—one who was fitted to be his companion, and who could be one with him in love and sympathy. Eve was created from a rib taken from the side of Adam, signifying that she was not to control him as the head, nor to be trampled under his feet as an inferior, but to stand by his side as an equal, to be loved and protected by him. A part of man, bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh, she was his second self, showing the close union and the affectionate attachment that should exist in this relation. “For no man ever yet hated his own flesh; but nourisheth and cherisheth it.” Ephesians 5:29. “Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife; and they shall be one.” {PP 46.2}

Had Christ come in His divine form, humanity could not have endured the sight. The contrast would have been too painful, the glory too overwhelming. Humanity could not have endured the presence of one of the pure, bright angels from glory; therefore Christ took not on Him the nature of angels; He came in the likeness of men. {5BC 1131.1}

But thirty years was all that the world could endure of its Redeemer. For thirty years He dwelt in a world all seared and marred with sin, doing the work that no other one ever had done or ever could do (ST Feb. 15, 1899). {5BC 1131.2}

When one surrenders to Christ, the mind is brought under the control of the law; but it is the royal law, which proclaims liberty to every captive. By becoming one with Christ, man is made free. Subjection to the will of Christ means restoration to perfect manhood. {MH 131.1}

The heart of Infinite Love yearns after those who feel powerless to free themselves from the snares of Satan; and He graciously offers to strengthen them to live for Him. “Fear thou not,” He bids them; “for I am with thee: be not dismayed; for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee: yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of My righteousness.” . . . {CC 235.4}

In both the Old and the New Testament, the marriage relation is employed to represent the tender and sacred union that exists between Christ and His people. To the mind of Jesus the gladness of the wedding festivities pointed forward to the rejoicing of that day when He shall bring home His bride to the Father’s house, and the redeemed with the Redeemer shall sit down to the marriage supper of the Lamb. {DA 151.1}

Christ’s love is deep and earnest, flowing like an irrepressible stream to all who will accept it. There is no selfishness in His love. If this heaven-born love is an abiding principle in the heart, it will make itself known, not only to those we hold most dear in sacred relationship, but to all with whom we come in contact. It will lead us to bestow little acts of attention, to make concessions, to perform deeds of kindness, to speak tender, true, encouraging words. It will lead us to sympathize with those whose hearts hunger for sympathy (MS 17, 1899). {5BC 1140.5}

The love of Christ is a golden chain that binds finite, human beings who believe in Jesus Christ to the Infinite God. The love that the Lord has for His children passeth knowledge. No science can define or explain it. No human wisdom can fathom it. The more we feel the influence of this love, the more meek and humble shall we be (Letter 43, 1896). {5BC 1141.7}

His heart was constantly burning with the love that brought Him from heaven to our world. His goodness and His power enabled Him to reveal in His life the truth that He came to this earth to bring to the fallen race. In every word, in every act, He manifested the love of God, cheering and encouraging the downcast and distressed. In heavenly wisdom He asserted His true majesty by bending all things to the present and future happiness of human beings. He came to teach men and women how to live, here below, the life of which He gave them an example—the life that will make them fit to enter the abodes of bliss. {UL 229.3}

A tender spirit, a gentle, winning deportment, may save the erring and hide a multitude of sins. The revelation of Christ in your own character will have a transforming power upon all with whom you come in contact. Let Christ be daily made manifest in you, and He will reveal through you the creative energy of His word—a gentle, persuasive, yet mighty influence to re-create other souls in the beauty of the Lord our God. {MB 128.3}

The love of God alone can open and expand the heart, and give to love and sympathy a breadth and height that is without measure. Those who love Jesus will love all the children of God. The sense of personal infirmities and imperfections will lead the human agent to look away from self to Christ; and the Saviour's love will break down every cold, Pharisaical barrier, it will banish all harshness and selfishness, and there will be a blending of soul with soul, even with those who are opposite in temperament. {OHC 183.3}

God is the source of life and light and joy to the universe. Like rays of light from the sun, like the streams of water bursting from a living spring, blessings flow out from Him to all His creatures. And wherever the life of God is in the hearts of men, it will flow out to others in love and blessing. {SC 77.1}

What a wonderful reverence for human life Jesus expressed in His life mission! He stood not among the people as a king, demanding attention, reverence, service, but as one who wished to serve, to uplift humanity. He said He had not come to be ministered unto but to minister. . . . {OHC 176.3}

Love is the basis of godliness. Whatever the profession, no man has pure love to God unless he has unselfish love for his brother. But we can never come into possession of this spirit by *trying* to love others. What is needed is the love of Christ in the heart. When self is merged in Christ, love springs forth spontaneously. The completeness of Christian character is attained when the impulse to help and bless others springs constantly from within—when the sunshine of heaven fills the heart and is revealed in the countenance. {COL 384.2}

The unity that exists between Christ and His disciples does not destroy the personality of either. They are one in purpose, in mind, in character, but not in person. It is thus that God and Christ are one. {MH 422.1}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2023: *Ephesians*

Lesson 11 “Practicing Supreme Loyalty to Christ”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 6:1–9; Mark 10:13–16; Colossians 3:21; 1 Peter 2:18–25; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Colossians 3:24, 25.

Memory Text

“And masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that he who is both their Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with him” (Ephesians 6:9, NIV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Advice to Children
- III. Advice to Parents
- IV. Slavery in Scripture and History
- V. Slaves of Christ
- VI. Masters Who Are Slaves
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Today, in our time and culture, our important challenge is to read Ephesians 6:1–9 in the context of the full story of salvation, as is revealed in the complete Bible. What can we learn as we watch Paul apply the values of the gospel to the flawed social structures of his day?” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson focuses on Paul’s advice to children (6:1-3); Monday’s lesson on advice to parents (6:4). Tuesday’s and Wednesday’s lessons look at Paul addressing the slaves (6:5-8). Thursday’s lesson pays attention to masters (*kyrioi*) who should not be “threatening” their slaves but be like Christ (*Kyrios*) with whom there is no “partiality” (6:9).
3. For centuries Christians had to wrestle with the fact that their sacred texts described the practice of slavery as sanctioned by God Himself. God not only winked at the institution of slavery, he clearly endorsed it and gave laws in the Bible that appeared

to prescribe slavery as his will. The battle over slavery was in many ways a battle over how to interpret the Bible and to understand the authority of Scripture. Paul could not envisage a world without slavery, just as we cannot envisage a world without electricity.

4. Episcopal bishop John Henry Hopkins (1864) claimed that those who opposed slavery were engaged in “a willful or conscious opposition to the truth.” He asked: “Who are we that in our modern wisdom presume to set aside the Word of God ... and invent for ourselves a higher law that those holy Scriptures which are given to us as ‘a light to our feet and a lamp to our paths’?” Bernard Whitman noted in 1831, “When [Moses] speaks the words of the God of the Hebrews, it is for us to listen, not to call into question.”
5. Reverend Henry Van Dyke wrote in 1860, “The tree of Abolition is evil and only evil. It is nourished by an utter rejection of the Scriptures. When the Abolitionist tells me that slaveholding is sin, in the simplicity of my faith in the Holy Scriptures, I point him to this sacred record, and tell him, in all candor, as my text does, that his teaching blasphemes the name of God and his doctrine.” Abolitionists pitted Scripture against Scripture in order to reclaim Scripture.
6. To understand the *redemptive trajectory* of the Scriptures, we must read the Bible within its broader historical and social Ancient Near East context, see the redemptive movement in the canonical context (storyline), before we can make a contemporary ethical application (Galatians 3:28; Colossians 3:11). See texts like Deuteronomy 21:10-14; 23:15-16; Exodus 21:20-21. Masters are admonished to turn away from harshness and to show genuine care for their slaves (Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 4:1).
7. To appreciate the redemptive trajectory with regards to children (Ephesians 6:1-4), notice the difference in terminology used for spouses on one hand, and for children on the other. Whereas the husbands were instructed to love their wives, and wives to submit to their husbands and both be in mutual subjection, children are told to “obey” their parents. In the NT the command to “obey” is given to children and slaves (6:5; Colossians 3:20-22). Obedience pertains to the language of authority which Paul uses for parental and slave relationships. You cannot mutually obey one another, so Paul deliberately avoids that language for marital relationships.
8. There is a clear redemptive trajectory at work here. Paul could have written: “Children, obey your mother, who obeys your father.” Or “Children, obey your parents as your mother obeys your father.” But Paul establishes no such hierarchy between husband and wife. Children are accountable to both parents. This presumes a harmonious relationship between parents, rather than being locked in a power struggle.
9. Since the raising of children has traditionally fallen within the purview of mothers, Paul addresses a special corrective to the fathers to redress the imbalance (6:4). Paul encourages fathers to be involved in the nurture and guidance that children need. But since the father’s relationship with their children is not tempered by mutual

submission (as with his wife), their attitude may be overbearing and arbitrary. To prevent such conduct, Paul offers fathers some negative advice, by warning them against abusive recourse to authority which produces rebellion. Fathers are to nurture their children in a responsible manner. Once the children are not being “brought up”, they will honor, not obey (6:2).

10. Paul could not envisage a world without slavery, yet EGW says “slavery itself is a sin and in the sight of heaven it is a sin of the darkest dye.” {1T 359.2} And to Alexander Ross she said: “Your views of slavery, and the sacred, important truths for this time, cannot harmonize. You must yield your views or the truth. Both cannot be cherished in the same heart, for they are at war with each other.” (Lt 24, 1862)
11. How do we model ‘supreme loyalty to Christ’ in our time and our culture today? How does our understanding of the redemptive trajectory and the storyline help us avoid repeating the shortcomings of the past? Mere repetition of God’s Word may hinder a communication of God’s message intended for us in our world today. How do we wisely listen for “the careful sacred important truths for this time”?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

So many things in the Bible reflect the times and the culture, and in the Bible God does meet people where they are and speak a language they can understand. He doesn’t seek to change culture all at once. Take slavery, for example. Even in the New Testament, the Bible does not recommend a revolution to bring slavery to an end. Rather, it’s the book of Philemon. But if Philemon had heeded, and evidently he did, Paul’s message in that very short half-page epistle, Onesimus was no longer treated as a slave but as a brother. But Paul did say, “Go home and be the best servant in that household.” But then he said to Philemon, “Would you treat this servant as your brother.” And if tradition is correct, there is evidence that Onesimus may have become the Bishop of Ephesus and a leader in the Christian church. If that’s true, then Philemon did heed the message. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Deuteronomy, recorded November 1981, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1983:

<http://pkp.cc/9MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/10MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

He [Christ] identified Himself with the lowly, the needy, and the afflicted. He took little children in His arms and descended to the level of the young. His large heart of love could comprehend their trials and necessities, and He enjoyed their happiness. His spirit, wearied with the bustle and confusion of the crowded city, tired of association with crafty and hypocritical men, found rest and peace in the society of innocent children. His presence never repulsed them. The Majesty of heaven condescended to answer their questions and simplified His important lessons to meet their childish understanding. He planted in their young, expanding minds the seeds of truth that would spring up and produce a plentiful harvest in their riper years.

{AH 275.1}

In His work as a public teacher, Christ never lost sight of the children. When wearied with the bustle and confusion of the crowded city, tired of contact with crafty and hypocritical men, His spirit found rest and peace in the society of innocent little children. His presence never repelled them. His large heart of love could comprehend their trials and necessities, and find happiness in their simple joys; and He took them in His arms and blessed them. {CT 179.2}

The man who attempts to keep the commandments of God from a sense of obligation merely—because he is required to do so—will never enter into the joy of obedience. He does not obey. When the requirements of God are accounted a burden because they cut across human inclination, we may know that the life is not a Christian life. True obedience is the outworking of a principle within. It springs from the love of righteousness, the love of the law of God. The essence of all righteousness is loyalty to our Redeemer. This will lead us to do right because it is right—because right doing is pleasing to God. {COL 97.3}

Satan is constantly urging men to accept his principles. Thus he seeks to counterwork the work of God. He is constantly representing the chosen people of God as a deluded people. He is an accuser of the brethren, and his accusing power he is constantly using against those who work righteousness. The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan's charges by showing the result of obedience to right principles. {6T 11.2}

But notice here that obedience is not a mere outward compliance, but the service of love. The law of God is an expression of His very nature; it is an embodiment of the great principle of love, and hence is the foundation of His government in heaven and earth. If our hearts are renewed in the likeness of God, if the divine love is implanted in the soul, will not the law of God be carried out in the life? When the principle of love is implanted in the heart, when man is renewed after the image of Him that created him, the new-covenant promise is fulfilled, "I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them." Hebrews 10:16. And if the law is written in the heart, will it not shape the life? Obedience—the service and allegiance of love—is the true sign of discipleship. Thus the Scripture says, "This is the love of God, that we keep His commandments." "He that saith, I know Him, and keepeth not His commandments, is

a liar, and the truth is not in him.” 1 John 5:3; 2:4. Instead of releasing man from obedience, it is faith, and faith only, that makes us partakers of the grace of Christ, which enables us to render obedience. {SC 60.2}

The government of God is not, as Satan would make it appear, founded upon a blind submission, an unreasoning control. It appeals to the intellect and the conscience. “Come now, and let us reason together” is the Creator’s invitation to the beings He has made. Isaiah 1:18. God does not force the will of His creatures. He cannot accept an homage that is not willingly and intelligently given. A mere forced submission would prevent all real development of mind or character; it would make man a mere automaton. Such is not the purpose of the Creator. He desires that man, the crowning work of His creative power, shall reach the highest possible development. He sets before us the height of blessing to which He desires to bring us through His grace. He invites us to give ourselves to Him, that He may work His will in us. It remains for us to choose whether we will be set free from the bondage of sin, to share the glorious liberty of the sons of God. {SC 43.4}

All whose hearts are in sympathy with the heart of Infinite Love will seek to reclaim, and not to condemn. Christ dwelling in the soul is a spring that never runs dry. Where He abides, there will be an overflowing of beneficence.— *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, p. 39. (1896)
{Ev 174.3}

Jesus was ever a lover of children. He accepted their childish sympathy and their open, unaffected love. The grateful praise from their pure lips was music in His ears, and refreshed His spirit when oppressed by contact with crafty and hypocritical men. Wherever the Saviour went, the benignity of His countenance, and His gentle, kindly manner won the love and confidence of children. {DA 511.1}

So long as we surrender the will to God, and trust in His strength and wisdom, we shall be guided in safe paths, to fulfill our appointed part in His great plan. {DA 209.2}

The qualities which it is essential for all to possess are those which marked the completeness of Christ’s character—His love, His patience, His unselfishness, and His goodness. These attributes are gained by doing kindly actions with a kindly heart. . . . {5BC 1141.3}

God’s everlasting arm encircles the soul that turns to Him for aid, however feeble that soul may be. {4T 328.1}

God does not force the will or judgment of any. He takes no pleasure in a slavish obedience. He desires that the creatures of His hands shall love Him because He is worthy of love. He would have them obey Him because they have an intelligent appreciation of His wisdom, justice, and benevolence. And all who have a just conception of these qualities will love Him because they are drawn toward Him in admiration of His attributes. {GC 541.3}

Slavery itself is a sin and in the sight of heaven it is a sin of the darkest dye. {1T 359.2}

“Satan was the first great leader in rebellion. God is punishing the North, that they have so long suffered to exist the accursed sin of slavery; for in the sight of heaven it is a sin of the darkest dye. God is not with the South, and he will punish them dreadfully in the end. Satan is at the bottom of all rebellion. You, I saw, Bro. R., have permitted your political principles to destroy your judgment, and your love for the truth. They are eating out true godliness from your heart. You never have looked upon slavery in the right light, and your views of this matter have thrown you on the side of the rebellion, which Satan and his host have stirred up. Your views of slavery, and the sacred, important truths for this time, cannot harmonize. You must yield your views, or the truth. Both cannot be cherished in the same heart, for they are at war with each other.” {T09 4.3}

“You have cast your influence on the wrong side, with those whose course of life is to sow thorns and plant misery for others. I saw you casting your influence with a degraded company, a God forsaken company; and angels of God fled from you in disgust.” {1T 359.3}

“Your views of slavery, and the sacred, important truths for this time, cannot harmonize. You must yield your views or the truth. Both cannot be cherished in the same heart, for they are at war with each other.” (Lt 24, 1862 to Alexander Ross) {1T 359.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2023: *Ephesians*

Lesson 12 “The Call to Stand”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 6:10–20; Deuteronomy 20:2–4; Romans 13:11–14; 1 Thessalonians 5:6–8;
1 Corinthians 15:23, 24.

Memory Text

“Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength of his might. Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil” (Ephesians 6:10, 11, ESV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Battle Speech
- III. Finding Strength in Christ
- IV. The Great Controversy in Paul’s Letters
- V. Standing on the Ancient Battlefield
- VI. Wrestling Against Evil Powers
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “In composing Ephesians 6:10–20, Paul prays for an enhanced vision for believers so that they will be able to see the full reality of the great controversy and to draw hope from what it reveals to them.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. N.T. Wright says: “I have often reflected that if the Reformers had focused on Ephesians rather than Romans or Galatians, the entire history of Western Europe would have been different.” (*The Day the Revolution Began*, p. 33.) As we focus on the last 11 verses of Ephesians (and we will have another lesson on the actual armor of God), what is it about the Letter to the Ephesians that gives another perspective on salvation than the traditional medieval one?
3. Sooner or later, every believer discovers that the Christian life is a battleground, not a playground, and that we face an enemy who is much stronger than we are. As Paul himself was chained to a Roman soldier (6:20) and his readers were certainly familiar with soldiers and the equipment they used, Paul gives one of his favorite

illustrations of Christian life (2 Corinthians 10:4; 1 Timothy 6:12; 2 Timothy 2:3; 4:7). What does Paul's battle cry mean to us today, as combatants in the Great Controversy? (Sunday's lesson)

4. How do we deal with spiritual warfare? Both ignoring the forces of evil or being preoccupied with them in an unhealthy way come with some serious risk and can cause us harm. Most Christians at times find it a struggle to forgive people, to pray regularly, or resist temptation. They struggle to practice their Christianity or find time to learn more about faith. Recognizing these struggles and placing them in the setting of the larger cosmic conflict can give us valuable insights. Why is that perspective important? (Monday's lesson)
5. What is the downside of using a military metaphor when speaking about heavenly realities? What does it mean when Paul concludes his final section with the words: "Finally, be strong in the Lord and in the strength/power of his might" (6:10)? (Tuesday's lesson)
6. Paul previously called the believers to "put on" gospel clothing (4:20–24), now he calls them to put on God's "full armor" (6:11-17). Note how many times Paul uses some form of the verb 'stand' in Ephesians 6:10–20. (Wednesday's lesson) What difference does it make whether we fight *for* victory or *from* victory?
7. Who is the enemy and his helpers that we are "fighting"? Why is it significant that our battle is not against human beings? How is forgetting that reality manifested in the "fights" on local and global church levels? (Thursday's lesson)
8. Many Christians feel ready to give up their faith because they feel that they can't get anything right, they are too sinful or too corrupt, to be saved. Who is putting that idea into their mind? What forms do the "schemes of the devil" (6:11) take on in our time?
9. What are some expressions of the "powers of darkness" and "spiritual forces of evil" we may identify in our time? How does a sober, realistic assessment of both the struggle we are engaged in and the weapons we have at our disposal help us in our everyday life, both as individuals and as a community of faith?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

In the last days, our experience will be very much like that of Job. If we do not have the larger, whole Bible, all sixty-six books, great controversy, universe-wide understanding of God and the Great Controversy and the plan of salvation, we will be no help to ourselves. We will be no help to anyone else. We will be very vulnerable when Satan seeks to deceive us that God is an arbitrary, vengeful Deity.

It seems to me that a great deal of current Christian theology is preoccupied with our legal standing with our God. Is that why God still waits and waits until we grow up into a much larger

understanding of the truth? For without that larger understanding of the truth, we will never survive the time of trouble. So Paul says, “Put on the whole armor that God has supplied; and particularly the armor of the truth.” Look at Ephesians 6:11-14:

Put on all the armor which God provides, so that you may be able to stand firm [as Job did] against the devices of the devil. For our fight is not against human foes, but **against cosmic powers** [you know what the Greek word is—*cosmocrats*. Not democrats and aristocrats, but cosmocrats, rulers of the cosmos, cosmic powers. We know who they are.], against the authorities and potentates of this dark world, **against the superhuman forces of evil in the heavens** [where the war began, remember]. Therefore, take up God’s armor; then you will be able to stand your ground when things are at their worst, to complete every task and still to stand. Stand firm, I say. **Fasten on the belt of truth** [emphases supplied]. (NEB)

We know what that truth is: the truth, the good news about our God. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #18, “God Waits for His Children to Grow Up” recorded June 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/18MMCAG>*

Thinking for many, many years of the best way to approach this, you remember the counsel that we’re to take the Bible as a whole and relate it to the one central theme. And if you do that, you see the whole great controversy over the character of God running through the sixty-six books. We see the charges that Satan has leveled against God, of being a legalist, arbitrary, unforgiving and severe. And then we see how so many have accepted these charges, and we have distrusted God. And left to ourselves we have become sinful, rebellious, untrustworthy, self-indulgent individuals, who’ve reaped all the consequences of this disorderliness physically, mentally, and spiritually. And yet God, our heavenly Father, remains gracious. He is not arbitrary, unforgiving and severe. He wishes to be seen as the father of the prodigal son. And He offers to do for us whatever needs to be done. Is there anything wrong that needs to be set right? In the order of things, what’s the most important thing that needs to be set right? What went wrong first? And what might have to be the first thing to be set right?

Was it not a growing distrust of God among the members of his family, ‘til one-third of the brilliant angels agreed with Satan that God could not be trusted. And the first thing that was mentioned to the human race was that God was a selfish liar. He cannot be trusted. Then if the damage done is to be restored, would not the first step be winning us back to trust? In fact, knowing God to be the infinitely powerful Creator of the whole vast universe, if only we could trust him, couldn’t he most readily restore whatever damage has been done? Couldn’t he do it?

It's in that light that Ellen White's statement right after the Minneapolis General Conference, I think, becomes very, very significant. (See her explanation of why Jesus came to this world to do what he did, which she describes as "setting us right." (In *Signs of the Times*, January 20, 1890) {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Galatians, #3, recorded February 1978, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/3MMGALATIANS66>*

Who would dare to question the integrity of God? Who would dare suggest that God cannot be trusted? Yet with this incredible accusation, the Biblical account of human history begins.

The one who raised this charge had not always been God's enemy. He is pictured first as highly honored, standing in the very presence of our heavenly Father. As God's trusted spokesman he went out among his fellow angels bearing light and truth. He was called "the Light Bearer" — sometimes translated "Lucifer" or "Morning Star" — a name belonging also to the Son of God himself (see Ezekiel 28:14; Isaiah 14:12; 2 Peter 1:19; Revelation 22:16).

But Jesus later called him "a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44). The last book in the Bible describes him as "that ancient serpent, who is called the Devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world" (Revelation 12:9).

"Of course you will not die," the serpent said to Eve. "God knows that as soon as you eat it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing both good and evil" (Genesis 3:4, 5, NEB, margin). "God has no respect for your freedom and dignity as intelligent individuals," Satan argued. "In selfish tyranny he is depriving you of knowledge and experience that are rightfully yours. He has lied and is not worthy of your trust."

With such falsehoods Satan had already led one third of the angels to side with him against God. Though he is a created being, he had come to think of himself as divine. "I will ascend to heaven; above the stars of God I will set my throne on high; . . . I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will make myself like the Most High" (Isaiah 14:13, 14). Insane pride led him later even to ask Jesus, his Creator, to bow down and worship him (Matthew 4:8–10).

To set himself up as God he first must undermine confidence in the One he wished to supplant, and he sought to do this by destroying God's reputation. Since he could find no fault in God, he must resort to deceit.

So began that long struggle for the loyalty of God's free, intelligent creatures. Who was right—God or the brilliant Light Bearer? Could it be true that God was arbitrary and severe, unworthy of the love and trust of the beings he had made? What kind of god would allow his character to be so challenged? Was it strength or weakness that led him to permit such long debate, to allow this controversy to spread throughout his universe?

Finally Satan and his followers even ventured into open revolt. Then God, in his farsighted plan for the best good of all concerned, expelled the rebels from his presence, and the great controversy was extended to the planet on which we live.

As described in the frequently symbolic language of the Book of Revelation, “Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels waged war upon the dragon. The dragon and his angels fought, but they had not the strength to win, and no foothold was left them in heaven. So the great dragon was thrown down, that serpent of old that led the whole world astray, whose name is Satan, or the Devil—thrown down to the earth, and his angels with him. . . . But woe to you, earth and sea, for the Devil has come down to you in great fury, knowing that his time is short!” (Revelation 12:7–9, 12, NEB).

Someday soon, before Christ returns, Satan will make a last, desperate attempt to win us all to his side. He will appear as an angel of light—the Light Bearer again; Lucifer, the Morning Star (see 2 Corinthians 11:14). He will even proclaim himself to be God. Just as he tried to persuade Christ to worship him in the wilderness of temptation, so he will seek to win our worship now.

The Bible predicts that his efforts will seem to be completely successful. The whole world will worship him—except for a few, “the remnant” (KJV), who will not be deceived. On the contrary, they will take their stand with the loyal angels and maintain their trust in God (see Revelation 12:17; 13:1–8; 14:12). {Maxwell, Graham. *Can God Be Trusted?*, 13-15. Redlands, California: Pine Knoll Publications, 2002}

<http://speakingwellofgod.org/written-materials/can-god-be-trusted-chapters/chapter-02>

Further Study with Ellen White

Christ will give strength to all who seek it. No man without his own consent can be overcome by Satan. The tempter has no power to control the will or to force the soul to sin. He may distress, but he cannot contaminate. He can cause agony, but not defilement. The fact that Christ has conquered should inspire His followers with courage to fight manfully the battle against sin and Satan. {GC 510.3}

God bids us fill the mind with great thoughts, pure thoughts. He desires us to meditate upon His love and mercy, to study His wonderful work in the great plan of redemption. Then clearer and still clearer will be our perception of truth, higher, holier, our desire for purity of heart and clearness of thought. The soul dwelling in the pure atmosphere of holy thought will be transformed by communion with God through the study of the Scriptures. {AG 34.2}

Christ knows our weakness, and to Him we can go daily for help. It is not necessary for us to gain strength a month ahead. We are to conquer from day to day (MS 28, 1886). {7BC 974.3}

God asks us to live only one day at a time. You need not look a week or a month ahead. *Today* do your best. Today speak and act in a way that will honor God. The promise is, “As thy days, so shall thy strength be” (Deuteronomy 33:25). {HP 59.6}

We are to keep close to the Source of our strength day by day, and when the enemy comes in like a flood the Spirit of the Lord lifts up a standard for us against the enemy. The promise of God is sure, that strength shall be proportioned to our day. {OHC 125.5}

We are to live only one day at a time. We do not have to do the work of a lifetime in a few hours. We need not look into the future with anxiety; for God has made it possible for us to be overcomers every day. {FLB 249.4}

None, however weak in faith and hope and courage, need to despair, for Christ has provided divine assistance to combine with man’s human effort. Christ works constantly to draw the soul into a pure and holy atmosphere. He is acquainted with our infirmities, and with the embarrassment we meet on every hand in the world. Assistance has been provided for every advanced step. When the earnest, struggling soul is compassed with infirmities and surrounded by foes to discourage, the Comforter draws near. The Holy Spirit helps our infirmities. {UL 296.4}

They are to contend with supernatural forces, but they are assured of supernatural help. All the intelligences of heaven are in this army. And more than angels are in the ranks. The Holy Spirit, the representative of the Captain of the Lord’s host, comes down to direct the battle. Our infirmities may be many, our sins and mistakes grievous; but the grace of God is for all who seek it with contrition. The power of Omnipotence is enlisted in behalf of those who trust in God. {DA 352.2}

In the closing scenes of this earth’s history, when intensity is taking possession of every earthly element, the Lord requires of us a vigilance that knows no relaxation. But we are not left to struggle alone. Amid the dangers increasing on every hand, those who walk humbly before God, distrustful of their own wisdom, will have angels as their helpers and protectors. In times of special peril they will know the power of God’s keeping care.—RH April 25, 1907. {TA 272.3}

A guardian angel is appointed to every follower of Christ. These heavenly watchers shield the righteous from the power of the wicked one. . . . The angels appointed to minister to the children of God have at all times access to His presence. {GC 512.2}

Thus God’s people, exposed to the deceptive power and unsleeping malice of the prince of darkness, and in conflict with all the forces of evil, are assured of the unceasing guardianship of heavenly angels. {GC 513.1}

But those who follow Christ are ever safe under His watchcare. Angels that excel in strength are sent from heaven to protect them. The wicked one cannot break through the guard which God has stationed about His people.—GC 511-513, 516, 517. {TA 13.1}

Angels of God are watching over us. Upon this earth there are thousands and tens of thousands of heavenly messengers commissioned by the Father to prevent Satan from obtaining any advantage over those who refuse to walk in the path of evil. And these angels who guard God's children on earth are in communication with the Father in heaven.—HP 99. {TA 16.4}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2023: *Ephesians*

Lesson 13 “Waging Peace”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 6:10–20; 1 Peter 4:1; 1 Peter 5:8; Isaiah 59:17; Isaiah 52:8–10; 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18.

Memory Text

“In all circumstances take up the shield of faith, with which you can extinguish all the flaming darts of the evil one; and take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God” (Ephesians 6:16, 17, ESV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Church: A Unified Army
- III. Belt and Breastplate
- IV. Shoes: The Church Wages Peace
- V. Shield, Helmet, and Sword
- VI. Practicing Battlefield Prayer
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “In Ephesians [6:10-20] the great missionary apostle imagines a great army, the church, visiting God’s army and suiting up in the divine *panoplia*, the Greek term for full, head-to-toe armor. God’s army holds enough of the finest weaponry for every soldier in His army to be ‘clad with northern steel from top to toe,’ as they set forth to wage peace in His name.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Do you have any memories of sermons about the “armor of God”? Is Paul primarily depicting an individual believer’s spiritual battle against evil, or the church’s corporate war against evil? Where does the individualist interpretation come from? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. What does this imply regarding the approaches often proposed to escape the eschatological “time of trouble”? Understanding the Great Controversy background, how can we, as a corporate body, work together to help each other in our mutual

struggles against evil, in whatever form it presents itself? Why does the New Testament emphasize Christ making each one of us part of a new type of community?

4. How is each individual piece of the “whole armor” significant (Monday’s, Tuesday’s & Wednesday’s lessons)? Since we are fighting against enemies in the spiritual realm, why do we need special equipment both for offense and defense?
5. How does God’s truth possess and protect us as opposed to us possessing God’s truth? How can the truth have a transforming impact on our lives?
6. How does Paul connect the shoes with peace (8 times in Ephesians; see 6:15 cf. Isaiah 52:7)? What does it tell us about the whole idea of “fighting” versus “standing” (four times)?
7. The helmet (6:17) refers to the mind being controlled by God. How can we achieve balance between a cerebral or intellectual form of Christianity and the idea that the intellect is not important in the Christian experience? How is the mind important in achieving Christian growth, service and victory? How can we “grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18) What does that look like in practice?
8. The shield soaked in water was able to extinguish arrows dipped in pitch and set on fire. Old Testament presents God as the shield of his people (Genesis 15:1, Psalm 3:3; 7:10; 18:2; 28:7; 33:20; 84:11, etc.) How is this significant in the cosmic battle?
9. Roman legionnaires also carried two javelins to throw at the enemy. Why is it significant that they are not mentioned by Paul? He only mentions the short, two-edged sword, representing “the sword of the Spirit” which is identified as “the word of God.” How do you interpret that?
10. Instead of the two javelins, Paul mentions prayer as the final weapon (6:17-20), if it is to be classified as such. Paul began the letter with an extended prayer, then added his own prayers for the believers in the Lycus valley area and now finishes with an urgent request that they join him in praying for his ministry. Prayer remains mysterious, as no one quite knows ‘how it works’. But that’s part of the point that it is not magic.
11. Paul is a prisoner in Rome, yet he ends his letter with peace, love, faith, and grace. Our personal story that can be retold so that even the bad bits or the unfortunate events are included, but by retelling them they appear in a new light. They gain on a new meaning, we assign them different weight and we see them from a fresh perspective. The story of this world, and even of the entire universe can be recapitulated in a new way! Paul says that this is happening right now and that God is actively involved in it and it brings him joy! How can the Letter to Ephesians bring that perspective to us today?

Further Study with Ellen White

If we have on the heavenly armor, we shall find that the assaults of the enemy will not have power over us. Angels of God will be round about us to protect us (RH May 25, 1905). {6BC 1119.4}

The student should learn to view the Word as a whole, and to see the relation of its parts. He should gain a knowledge of its grand, central theme, of God's original purpose for the world, of the rise of the great controversy, and of the work of redemption. He should understand the nature of the two principles that are contending for supremacy, and should learn to trace their working through the records of history and prophecy, to the great consummation. He should see how this controversy enters into every phase of human experience; how in every act of life he himself reveals the one or the other of the two antagonistic motives; and how, whether he will or not, he is even now deciding upon which side of the controversy he will be found.— *Education*, p. 190. (1903) {Ev 339.3}

Angels are belting the world, refusing Satan his claims to supremacy, made because of the vast multitude of his adherents. We hear not the voices, we see not with the natural sight the work of these angels, but their hands are linked about the world, and with sleepless vigilance they are keeping the armies of Satan at bay till the sealing of God's people shall be accomplished. {7BC 967.9}

The ministers of Jehovah, angels have skill and power and great strength, being commissioned to go forth from heaven to earth to minister to His people. They are given the work of keeping back the raging power of him who has come down like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. The Lord is a refuge for all who put their trust in Him. He bids them hide in Him for a little moment, until the indignation shall be overpast. {7BC 967.10}

The angels of heaven are interested in behalf of man. The power of Omnipotence is at the service of those who trust in God. {FW 93.1}

When the Christian takes his baptismal vow, divine help is pledged to him. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit stand ready to work in his behalf. God places at his command the resources of heaven, that he may be an overcomer. His own power is small; but God is omnipotent, and God is his helper. Daily he is to make known his wants at the throne of grace. By faith and trust, by availing himself of the resources provided, he can be more than a conqueror. {OHC 157.5}

The truths of the Bible, treasured in the heart and mind and obeyed in the life, convince and convert the soul, transform the character, and comfort and uplift the heart. . . . {TMK 199.2}

The truth as it is in Jesus will not degrade but elevate the receiver, purify his life, refine his taste, sanctify his judgment. {OHC 230.6}

Satan was artful in presenting his side of the question. As soon as he found that one position was seen in its true character, he changed it for another. Not so with God. He could work with only one class of weapons,—truth and righteousness. Satan could use what God could not,—crookedness and deceit. These are the very weapons that he uses in our day to make the truth of none effect. When the truth is presented to the people, it seems to many to be consistent and right; and if the enemy and his followers did not come in and oppose it by every means in their power, where there are now ten who take hold of it, there would be thousands.

{RH, March 9, 1886 par. 6}

And the man who lives by every word of God will improve in mental and moral capabilities. He will have a clearer understanding than he manifested before he opened his heart to the entrance of the Word of life. Connected by faith with the living Source of wisdom and knowledge, the mental powers will grow and expand. While the powers of the intellect were under the sway of Satan, the whole man was deformed. But when the power of the truth is brought into the heart, it influences the entire being. {OHC 36.3}

God is the author of truth. He enlightens the darkened understanding and gives to the human mind power to grasp and comprehend the truths which He has revealed. {SL 49.1}

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. . . {DA 311.2}

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.

{COL 311.4}

Happiness drawn from earthly sources is as changeable as varying circumstances can make it; but the peace of Christ is a constant and abiding peace. It does not depend upon any circumstances in life, on the amount of worldly goods or the number of earthly friends. Christ is the fountain of living water, and happiness drawn from Him can never fail. {MB 16.2}

It is when we come into difficult places that He reveals His power and wisdom in answer to humble prayer. Have confidence in Him as a prayer-hearing, prayer-answering God. He will reveal Himself to you as One who can help in every emergency. He who created man, who gave him his wonderful physical, mental, and spiritual faculties, will not withhold that which is necessary to sustain the life He has given. He who has given us His word—the leaves of the tree

of life—will not withhold from us a knowledge of how to provide food for His needy children. {MH 199.4}

The heart that is in harmony with God is a partaker of the peace of heaven and will diffuse its blessed influence on all around. The spirit of peace will rest like dew upon hearts weary and troubled with worldly strife. {HP 35.3}

By prayer, by the study of His word, by faith in His abiding presence, the weakest of human beings may live in contact with the living Christ, and He will hold them by a hand that will never let go. {MH 182.1}

To look to God for help at all times, this is our safety. {TDG 199.2}

It is God's glory to encircle sinful, repentant human beings in the arms of His love, to bind up their wounds, to cleanse them from sin, and to clothe them with the garments of salvation. {PK 668.3}

We may commune with God in our hearts; we may walk in companionship with Christ. When engaged in our daily labor, we may breathe out our heart's desire, inaudible to any human ear; but that word cannot die away into silence, nor can it be lost. Nothing can drown the soul's desire. It rises above the din of the street, above the noise of machinery. It is God to whom we are speaking, and our prayer is heard. {GW 258.2}

God in His providence does not permit us to know the end from the beginning; but He gives us the light of His Word to guide us as we pass along, and bids us to keep our minds stayed upon Jesus. Wherever we are, whatever our employment, our hearts are to be uplifted to God in prayer. This is being instant in prayer. We need not wait until we can bow upon our knees, before we pray. {3BC 1136.5}

At all times and in all places, in all sorrows and in all afflictions, when the outlook seems dark and the future perplexing, and we feel helpless and alone, the Comforter will be sent in answer to the prayer of faith. Circumstances may separate us from every earthly friend; but no circumstance, no distance, can separate us from the heavenly Comforter. Wherever we are, wherever we may go, He is always at our right hand to support, sustain, uphold, and cheer. {DA 669.4}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2023: *Ephesians*

Lesson 14 “Ephesians *in the Heart*”

Read for this week’s study

Ephesians 1–Ephesians 6.

Memory Text

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (Ephesians 2:8–10, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. We Are Blessed in Christ
- III. We Are Redeemed for Community
- IV. We Are the Church of the Living God
- V. The Unity of Faith
- VI. We Are Recipients and Givers of Grace
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The letter to the Ephesians is like the view from the top of a high mountain. It offers a clear but distant view of the entire landscape. Rather than focusing on issues of local concern, as Paul often does, he addresses issues that affect believers everywhere and throughout time. In a way, this letter addresses all of us more directly than the rest of Paul’s letters. In this concluding lesson on the letter to the Ephesians, we will take a chapter by chapter approach to the whole book. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Ephesians 1:3-14. What is the key theme that is repeated over and over? What does the phrase “in Christ” mean? According to this passage, what is the central issue in the cosmic conflict? Read Ephesians 1:15-23. What is the main reason for Paul’s thanksgiving (Eph 1:15-18), and how does he cap off the chapter (Eph 1:19-22)? (Sunday’s Lesson)

3. When Paul tells us that Christ “chose us in Him before the foundation of the world” (Eph 1:4, NKJV), what difference does that make? What does that mean to you personally? (Sunday’s Lesson)
4. What in your view is the main point of Ephesians 2:1-10? How is what Christ has done for us related to the descriptions of Christ in Ephesians 1:20-22? What are the implications of Ephesians 2 for issues like slavery (human trafficking), how we treat people with handicaps, or age discrimination? Why does Paul have to say these things to the Ephesians? What is the main point of Ephesians 2:11-18? How does this relate to what Paul has said in the first part of the letter? How do you understand the temple theology at the end of the chapter? (Monday’s Lesson)
5. What does Paul claim as a unique, personal revelation from God about the church (Ephesians 3:1-13)? Re-read Ephesians 3:9-11. Who are these rulers and authorities (“principalities and powers”) in heavenly places? How does Ephesians 6:12 clarify the meaning? What does the inclusion of the Gentiles in the church teach Satan and his angels? What does it teach the wider universe? In practical terms, what kinds of barriers between believers get in the way of God’s purpose for the church? How does one remove such barriers in a local community? What does Paul mean by being “filled with all the fullness of God” (Eph 3:19)? (Tuesday’s Lesson)
6. What has God provided to build and nourish unity in the church? Read Ephesians 4:11-16. How does that unity happen (see Ephesians 4:22 - 5:2)? How do you foster unity in a local congregation when you are dealing with opinionated Pharisees? (Wednesday’s Lesson)
7. What is the main theme of Ephesians 5? Read Ephesians 5:1-2. What is the relationship between imitating God and walking in love? What is the larger context of the admonitions in Ephesians 5 (Eph 4:27; 6:10-17)? Read Ephesians 5:3-21. How would you group this practical advice into main themes? In what areas is the church to work out its mission to imitate God and walk in love? How does Ephesians 5:22-33 continue the theme of imitating God’s love? (Thursday’s Lesson)
8. What are some of the different ways that Paul portrays the church in the letter to the Ephesians? (Friday’s Lesson)
9. What is the main point of Ephesians 6:10-17? (Friday’s Lesson)
10. Though we are not saved by works, what does Paul mean when he writes that we were “created in Christ Jesus for good works. . . ?” Eph 2:10. What is the purpose of our good works?
11. Read Ephesians 3:20. What is the power that works within us, and how should that power be made manifest in our lives?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Does predestination bother anybody? Romans 8:29:

For those whom he foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son [we're predestined then], . . . And those whom he predestined [verse 30], he also called; and those whom he called he also justified; and those whom he justified he also glorified.

Well, if you're predestined, then why stay any longer tonight? How about chapter 9, about the potter and the clay? He can take out of one lump; he can take some clay and make vessels made for destruction; take out the same lump and make vessels for salvation. Does that cancel all out? Could I suggest this very quickly? In Romans 8:29, "those whom He foreknew ..." How many does he foreknow? Everybody. "He predestined." So how many are predestined? All. And all who are predestined, he calls. How many does he call? All. And those whom he calls, he justifies. How many? And those whom he justifies, he glorifies. How many does he glorify? Well, we have no need to worry! He's going to justify and glorify everybody! Everybody! Saints and sinners alike? Then no one will be lost? It doesn't work. So we start back through. How many does he glorify? Only those that he justifies. How many does he justify? Only those whom he calls. But he calls everybody. Then there's something wrong, because if you start in from both ends, you don't meet in the middle. So there must be some word misunderstood in there; and I wouldn't have chosen this so late, except that it fits in with all the purpose of our study—those whom he foreknew. What does it mean in the Bible to know?

"Thee only have I known." I thought he knew everybody. "Depart from me. I never knew you." I thought he knew everybody. In the Bible, to know means to know as a friend. It even means to know with love and intimacy. Hence, "Adam knew Eve his wife" and they had a baby. It isn't that babies come from being introduced. And you remember in Kings, when David had that extraordinary hot water bottle, and it says that he never knew her (1 Kings 1:4), it doesn't mean that he never learned her name. So we're very familiar with this in the Bible. To know means to know in a special way. And to foreknow means to know in a special way. Those whom God foreknew would be his friends. Then all the rest follows. Does God know who will be his friends and who will not? Read Romans 9. Jacob and Esau, and the others. He knows this.

Do you mind that God foreknows the future? Would you trust anybody else with that kind of knowledge? Would God abuse such infinite power and knowledge? Not the kind of God we worship. So I don't mind how much he knows. So then it makes sense. We're not predestined. "Choose you this day." We're free. "Whosoever will" is made plain all through scripture.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Romans, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference,*

click on the following direct links: <http://pkp.cc/61MMPOGIA66> (Part 1)

<http://pkp.cc/62MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

God is not dependent upon men for the advancement of His cause. He might have made angels the ambassadors of His truth. He might have made known His will, as He proclaimed the law from Sinai with His own voice. But in order to cultivate a spirit of benevolence in us, He has chosen to employ men to do this work. {CS 20.1}

The gospel invitation is not to be narrowed down and presented only to a select few, who, we suppose, will do us honor if they accept it. The message is to be given to all. When God blesses His children, it is not alone for their own sake, but for the world's sake. As He bestows His gifts on us, it is that we may multiply them by imparting. {MH 102.1}

And the effort to bless others will react in blessings upon ourselves. This was the purpose of God in giving us a part to act in the plan of redemption. He has granted men the privilege of becoming partakers of the divine nature and, in their turn, of diffusing blessings to their fellow men. This is the highest honor, the greatest joy, that it is possible for God to bestow upon men. Those who thus become participants in labors of love are brought nearest to their Creator. {SC 79.1}

Let your mind dwell upon the goodness of God, upon the great love wherewith He has loved us, as evidenced in the work of redemption. If He did not love us and consider us of value, then this great sacrifice would not have been made. He is beneficent in mercy and in grace. Let your heart and mind be at rest like a tired child in the arms of its mother. His everlasting arms are beneath you. In all your afflictions Jesus is afflicted. . . . {2MCP 513.1}

Christ does not acknowledge any caste, color, or grade as necessary to become a subject of His kingdom. Admittance to His kingdom does not depend upon wealth or a superior heredity. But those who are born of the Spirit are the subjects of His kingdom. Spiritual character is that which will be recognized by Christ. His kingdom is not of this world. His subjects are those who are partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust. And this grace is given them of God. Christ does not find His subjects fitted for His kingdom, but He qualifies them by His divine power. Those who have been dead in trespasses and sins are quickened to spiritual life. The faculties which God has given them for holy purposes are refined, purified, and exalted, and they are led to form characters after the divine similitude. . . . {AG 52.2}

All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, ... that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. {TMK 99.5}

Love to man is the earthward manifestation of the love of God. It was to implant this love, to make us children of one family, that the King of glory became one with us. And when His parting words are fulfilled, "Love one another, as I have loved you" (John 15:12); when we love

the world as He has loved it, then for us His mission is accomplished. We are fitted for heaven; for we have heaven in our hearts. {AG 54.6}

In Christ, God has bestowed Heaven's best gift to redeem man, and, as the gift is full and infinite, so is saving grace boundless and all-sufficient. {4Red 57.1}

Through the transforming grace of Christ, the fruits of the Spirit are made manifest in the life of those who were once dead in trespasses and sins. In disposition, in words, and in actions, they are seen to be partakers of the divine nature. This wonderful grace was revealed to Paul, and he worked constantly that others might be brought to a knowledge of these saving truths. {UL 309.4}

The gifts of Jesus are ever fresh and new. . . . Each new gift increases the capacity of the receiver to appreciate and enjoy the blessings of the Lord. He gives grace for grace. There can be no failure of supply. If you abide in Him, the fact that you receive a rich gift today insures the reception of a richer gift tomorrow. . . . {AG 104.2}

With intense interest the unfallen worlds had watched to see Jehovah arise, and sweep away the inhabitants of the earth. And if God should do this, Satan was ready to carry out his plan for securing to himself the allegiance of heavenly beings. He had declared that the principles of God's government make forgiveness impossible. Had the world been destroyed, he would have claimed that his accusations were proved true. He was ready to cast blame upon God, and to spread his rebellion to the worlds above. But instead of destroying the world, God sent His Son to save it. Though corruption and defiance might be seen in every part of the alien province, a way for its recovery was provided. At the very crisis, when Satan seemed about to triumph, the Son of God came with the embassy of divine grace. Through every age, through every hour, the love of God had been exercised toward the fallen race. Notwithstanding the perversity of men, the signals of mercy had been continually exhibited. And when the fullness of the time had come, the Deity was glorified by pouring upon the world a flood of healing grace that was never to be obstructed or withdrawn till the plan of salvation should be fulfilled. {DA 37.2}

Each law of God is an enactment of mercy, love, and saving power. These laws, obeyed, are our life, our salvation, our happiness, our peace [Psalm 119:165 quoted] (Letter 112, 1902). {3BC 1153.6}

It is no part of Christ's mission to compel men to receive Him. It is Satan, and men actuated by his spirit, who seek to compel the conscience. Under a pretense of zeal for righteousness, men who are confederated with evil angels sometimes bring suffering upon their fellow men in order to convert them to their ideas of religion; but Christ is ever showing mercy, ever seeking to win by the revealing of His love. He can admit no rival in the soul, nor accept of partial service; but He desires only voluntary service, the willing surrender of the heart under the constraint of love. {AA 541.1}

Heavenly angels fight our battles for us, and cooperating with them, we may be victorious over the powers of evil. . . {SD 53.3}

In the person of Christ we behold the eternal God engaged in an enterprise of boundless mercy toward fallen man. {FLB 98.3}

He passed by no human being as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. . . . He sought to inspire with hope the roughest and most unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them manifest as the children of God. {FLB 98.6}

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. {COL 35.3}

But the work of human redemption is not all that is accomplished by the cross. The love of God is manifested to the universe. The prince of this world is cast out. The accusations which Satan has brought against God are refuted. The reproach which he has cast upon heaven is forever removed. Angels as well as men are drawn to the Redeemer. “I, if I be lifted up from the earth,” He said, “will draw all unto Me.” {DA 626.1}

By His life and His death, Christ proved that God’s justice did not destroy His mercy, but that sin could be forgiven, and that the law is righteous, and can be perfectly obeyed. Satan’s charges were refuted. God had given man unmistakable evidence of His love. {DA 762.4}

It is the glory of the gospel that it is founded upon the principle of restoring in the fallen race the divine image by a constant manifestation of benevolence. This work began in the heavenly courts. There God gave to human beings an unmistakable evidence of the love with which He regarded them. He “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. The gift of Christ reveals the Father’s heart. It testifies that, having undertaken our redemption, He will spare nothing, however dear, which is necessary to the completion of His work. {9T 254.1}

The spirit of liberality is the spirit of heaven. Christ’s self-sacrificing love is revealed upon the cross. That man might be saved, He gave all that He had and then gave Himself. {9T 254.2}

The meekness and humility that characterized the life of Christ will be made manifest in the life and character of those who “walk even as he walked.” {SD 81.5}

True sanctification unites believers to Christ and to one another in the bonds of tender sympathy. This union causes to flow continually into the heart rich currents of Christlike love, which flows forth again in love for one another. {5BC 1141.2}

When the heavenly principle of eternal love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, not merely because favors are received of them, but because love is the principle of action, and modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and elevates the affections. This love is not contracted, so as merely to include “me and mine,” but is as broad as the world and as high as heaven. It is in harmony with that of the angel workers. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the entire life, and sheds a refining influence on all around. Possessing it, we cannot but be happy, let fortune smile or frown. And if we love God with all the heart, we must love His children also. This love is the spirit of God. It is the heavenly adorning that gives true nobility and dignity to the soul. {OHC 175.2}