

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 1 “The Beginning of the Gospel”

Read for this week’s study

Acts 13:1–5, 13; Acts 15:36–39; Mark 1:1–15; Isaiah 40:3; Daniel 9:24–27.

Memory Text

“Now after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe in the gospel’ ” (Mark 1:14, 15, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Failed Missionary
- III. A Second Chance
- IV. The Messenger
- V. Jesus’ Baptism
- VI. The Gospel According to Jesus
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. From the beginning of Mark, the reader knows who Jesus is (Mark 1:1). The demons know who Jesus is. But the people in the story struggle to make sense of who He is and what He is about. And when the demons move someone to tell who Jesus really is, Jesus forbids them to talk about it. So the identity of Jesus is not expressed in words so much as in Jesus’ actions. It is not until the middle of the book that someone who is not demonic finally declares who He is. After this the focus of the last half of Mark is on the approaching cross. In this story of Jesus, there is very little commentary from the writer. The words and actions of Jesus are allowed to speak for themselves. (Introduction to the Quarter)
2. None of the four Gospels lists the name of its author. But from earliest times the four Gospels were associated either with an apostle (Matthew and John) or with the companion of an apostle (Mark and Luke). The Gospel of Luke was associated with

Paul and the Gospel of Mark with Peter. Mark is first encountered as a companion of Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:2, 5), but later on he is an associate of Peter (1 Peter 5:13). (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)

3. Read Acts 12:12. How is Mark introduced in the Book of Acts? While this is the earliest clear reference to Mark as a person, there is one intriguing possibility of a reference to him much earlier (Mark 14:50-52). Read Acts 13:1-5, 13. How did John get attached to Saul and Barnabas, and what was the outcome? (Sunday's Lesson)
4. Read Acts 15:36-40. Why did Paul reject John Mark (Acts 13:13; 15:38), and why did Barnabas give him a second chance (Colossians 4:10)? Who was Silas and what was he doing in Antioch (Acts 15:22, 32)? Why do you think Paul chose him as a traveling companion? Which of the two apostles proved to be right about Mark? Read Colossians 4:10, 2 Timothy 4:11, Philemon 24, 1 Peter 5:13. (Monday's Lesson)
5. Read Mark 1:1-8. Who are the characters in these verses? What do each of them say or do? Mark states that the passage quoted in verses 2 and 3 is from Isaiah. But the reality is a bit more complicated than that. Read Exodus 23:20, Isaiah 40:3, and Malachi 3:1. How did these three passages together combine to provide an ideal introduction to Mark's Gospel? (Tuesday's Lesson).
6. Read Mark 1:9-13. Who was present at the baptism of Jesus? What happened on that occasion? (Wednesday's Lesson)
7. Read Mark 1:14-15. What are the three parts of the gospel message that Jesus proclaimed? What is the kingdom of God and how did that arrive in Jesus? (Thursday's Lesson)
8. Can you think of a time when you failed at something? How did that experience change you and change the way you related to the failure of others?
9. Compare and contrast the gospel according to Mark 1:14-15 with the first angel's message in Revelation 14:6-7. What relation do you see between Jesus' mission in the First Century and our mission today? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now the tradition is that the gospel of Mark is Peter's gospel, that Mark wrote out for him. An early father by the name of Papias passed on the tradition that it was Peter's gospel. But there's evidence also in the New Testament. In fact, this has been so well accepted that there used to be a translation of Mark into English that was called "The Gospel according to St. Peter," by a Jesuit Father, Father Kleist. Eventually Father Kleist joined up with Father Lilly, two Jesuit scholars, and they produced the whole New Testament. Not many know of that one, but when we get to Romans, if I can remember to bring it, one of the best footnotes on baptism by immersion is in that Roman Catholic translation of the New Testament. I must remember to bring it with me.

Now look at 2 Peter 1 for some of the evidence in scripture that supports this tradition. In 2 Peter 1, starting with verse 12, Peter says:

I intend always to remind you of these things [that he's been describing], though you know them and are established in the truth that you have. I think it right, as long as I am in this body [that is, alive], to arouse you by way of reminder, since I know that the putting off of my body [my death] will be soon, as our Lord Jesus Christ showed me. And I will see to it that after my departure [my death] you may be able at any time to recall these things.

Now what would you have to do so that people could recall these things? Can you think of anything better than to have it written down? Now was Mark with Peter at the end? Look at 1 Peter 5:13, right nearby. 1 Peter 5:13: "She who is at Babylon, [that isn't in Mesopotamia, that's Rome. See, here's the evidence that Rome was called Babylon. She who is in Babylon], who is likewise chosen, sends you greetings, and so does my son Mark." So Mark was with Peter at the end. And he speaks very well of him there, as 'my son Mark'. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Mark, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/53MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/54MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

If in our ignorance we make missteps, the Saviour does not forsake us. We need never feel that we are alone. Angels are our companions. The Comforter that Christ promised to send in His name abides with us. In the way that leads to the City of God there are no difficulties which those who trust in Him may not overcome. There are no dangers which they may not escape. There is not a sorrow, not a grievance, not a human weakness, for which He has not provided a remedy. {MH 249.1}

None need abandon themselves to discouragement and despair. Satan may come to you with the cruel suggestion, "Yours is a hopeless case. You are irredeemable." But there is hope for you in Christ. God does not bid us overcome in our own strength. He asks us to come close to His side. Whatever difficulties we labor under, which weigh down soul and body, He waits to make us free. {MH 249.2}

The tempter can never compel us to do evil. He cannot control minds unless they are yielded to his control. The will must consent, faith must let go its hold upon Christ, before Satan can exercise his power upon us. But every sinful desire we cherish affords him a foothold. Every point in which we fail of meeting the divine standard is an open door by which he can enter to

tempt and destroy us. And every failure or defeat on our part gives occasion for him to reproach Christ. {DA 125.2}

Christ stood at the head of humanity in the garb of humanity. So full of sympathy and love was His attitude that the poorest was not afraid to come to Him. He was kind to all; easily approached by the most lowly. He went from house to house, healing the sick, feeding the hungry, comforting the mourners, soothing the afflicted, speaking peace to the distressed. He took the little children in His arms and blessed them, and spoke words of hope and comfort to the weary mothers. With unfailing tenderness and gentleness He met every form of human woe and affliction. Not for Himself, but for others did He labor. He was willing to humble Himself, to deny Himself. He did not seek to distinguish Himself. He was the servant of all. It was His meat and drink to be a comfort and a consolation to others, to gladden the sad and heavy-laden ones with whom He daily came in contact. {TMK 44.3}

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. {TMK 25.4}

Had God the Father come to our world and dwelt among us, humbling Himself, veiling His glory, that humanity might look upon Him, the history that we have of the life of Christ would not have been changed. . . . In every act of Jesus, in every lesson of His instruction, we are to see and hear and recognize God. In sight, in hearing, in effect, it is the voice and movements of the Father. {TMK 338.4}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 2 “A Day in the Ministry of Jesus”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 1:16–45; John 1:29–42; Mark 5:41; Luke 6:12; Leviticus 13.

Memory Text

“Then Jesus said to them, ‘Follow Me, and I will make you become fishers of men’ ” (Mark 1:17, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. “Follow Me”
- III. An Unforgettable Worship Service
- IV. More Sabbath Ministry
- V. The Secret of Jesus’ Ministry
- VI. Can You Keep a Secret?
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Each Gospel introduces Jesus’ ministry in a different way. In Matthew, Jesus first calls disciples and then preaches the Sermon on the Mount. Luke begins with Jesus’ inaugural sermon in a synagogue of Nazareth. In John, Jesus’ calls some early disciples and then attends the wedding at Cana. Mark begins with the calling of four disciples by the Sea of Galilee and follows with a Sabbath in Capernaum. During this Sabbath in Capernaum Jesus says very little (in contrast with Luke), the emphasis is on action, particularly healing action. Mark constantly uses the word “immediately” to emphasize the rapid movement of Jesus’ ministry. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Mark 1:16-20. Who were the men Jesus called as disciples, and what was their response? Why do you think these four men were so quick to leave everything and follow Jesus? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Read Mark 1:21-28. (Sabbath morning) What happened in the synagogue of Capernaum and what can we learn from the story? When we try to teach with

authority, isn't that a dangerous concept? In verses 23-26, Jesus' rebukes a demon for telling the truth. What is going on there? What did Jesus' mean by the phrase "Kingdom of God"? (Monday's Lesson)

4. Read Mark 1:29-34. (Sabbath Dinner) How did Jesus help Peter's family, and what spiritual lessons can we draw from this account? (Tuesday's Lesson)
5. Read Mark 1:35-39. What important lessons can we take from what Jesus did here? Read Luke 6:12. What does this verse tell us about Jesus' prayer life? How does one even do an all-night prayer session? Is that a model for us? (Wednesday's Lesson)
6. Read Mark 1:40-45. What does this teach us about Jesus and how He related to the marginalized in His society? How can we avoid good things that might end up hampering our ministry? (Thursday's Lesson)
7. The Gospel of John tells us that Jesus' mission on earth was to reveal the character of God to a world that has misunderstood Him. With that in mind, what does this entire chapter tell us about God?
8. Can you think of situations where it might be best NOT to say too much about our faith? How can we be silent in such situations and not compromise our witness? (Friday's Lesson)
9. Who are the lepers in our culture today? What more could we do to reach out to them and show them what God is like? (Friday's Lesson)
10. Many find that sustaining a life of prayer is not easy. What strategies have worked for you and what strategies did not? (Tuesday's Lesson)
11. What have you been called to give up in order to follow Jesus? (Sunday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

That's all! All they argued about was God and his government, and what he wanted of his children. I believe the Great Controversy will end just as it began. The good news is the truth in the Great Controversy, and that is the truth about God. The errors, the opposition, they are all about God. And all the details are just reflections about this basic position that we take. Are we on God's side, or not, in the Great Controversy? Are we so settled into the truth about God "both intellectually and spiritually" that we could not be moved? Could you name anybody in the Bible other than the Lord himself, who was so settled into the truth about God, both intellectually he could talk about it, and spiritually he would stake his life on it, that he could not be moved? That's Job. That's what the whole book is about. And the three theologians came and said, "God is like this." He said, "He is not. He is like this. I can't make sense out of what is happening to me, but he could slay me, and I'd still trust him." I believe Job was fully sealed and settled. If we were as settled as Job was, we'd be ready to pass through the time of trouble and the Lord could come.

But, you see, so often we are trying to settle people on all the other matters. If you settle people on the Sabbath, the sanctuary, the state of the dead, tithe, and health, without settling them on the truth about God they might keep the Sabbath as Jesus' enemies did. They might pay tithe as his enemies did. They might read the Bible as his enemies did. We could be developing enemies who faithfully keep the Sabbath, practice health reform, pay tithe, and read their Bibles. Now that is a horrible thought. But if we are not clear on the picture of God, we might do well not to be in such a hurry. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Revelation, recorded August 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/79MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/80MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

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 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?

Now God is seated there and we are gathered around Him. What should we say? Should we be the first to speak? Once we have started speaking, would we talk all the time? Or would we let God speak for a while? Normally, when we pray we do all the talking, don’t we? And then we say “Amen” and go about our business, or go to sleep. It would be like meeting in the room with our heavenly Father, and talking to Him incessantly for several minutes, and then saying, “Amen, thank You very much,” and then going home. It wouldn’t make sense, would it? It certainly wouldn’t be conversation as with a friend.

Conversation means at least two people speaking. But how do we converse with God when we can’t see Him just now, because of the present emergency? We all understand that emergency and why in mercy He does not reveal Himself visibly to us at this moment. And so, the Bible is called the Word of God—God speaking to us. If we wish to hear God speak, except in most extraordinary occasions, God speaks to us through the Bible. We speak to Him in prayer. Truly, as someone has said, “We commune with God through the study of the Scriptures.” {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

He who called the fishermen of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God. {CC 282.4}

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}

His tender compassion fell with a touch of healing upon weary and troubled hearts. Even amid the turbulence of angry enemies He was surrounded with an atmosphere of peace. The beauty of His countenance, the loveliness of His character, above all, the love expressed in look and tone, drew to Him all who were not hardened in unbelief. Had it not been for the sweet, sympathetic spirit that shone out in every look and word, He would not have attracted the large congregations that He did. The afflicted ones who came to Him felt that He linked His interest with theirs as a faithful and tender friend, and they desired to know more of the truths He taught. Heaven was brought near. They longed to abide in His presence, that the comfort of His love might be with them continually. {DA 254.4}

Every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they can find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart's unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who will consent to enter into covenant relation with the God of heaven are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature. They are invited by the Saviour, "Let him take hold of My strength, that he may make peace with Me; and he shall make peace with Me." Isaiah 27:5. {DA 258.6}

When the grace of God reigns within, the soul will be surrounded with an atmosphere of faith and courage and Christlike love, an atmosphere invigorating to the spiritual life of all who inhale it. . . . Those who are humble in heart the Lord will use to reach souls whom the ordained ministers cannot approach. They will be moved to speak words which reveal the saving grace of Christ. {AG 238.5}

And in blessing others they will themselves be blessed. God gives us the opportunity to impart grace, that He may refill us with increased grace. Hope and faith will strengthen as the agent for God works with the talents and facilities that God has provided. He will have a divine agency to work with him. {AG 238.6}

We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christlike life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls. {DA 347.3}

The gospel which He taught was a message of spiritual life and physical restoration. Deliverance from sin and the healing of disease were linked together. {CT 465.2}

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}

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}

When Jesus was upon the earth, He taught His disciples how to pray. He directed them to present their daily needs before God, and to cast all their care upon Him. And the assurance He gave them that their petitions should be heard, is assurance also to us.—(*Steps to Christ*, 93.) {Pr 8.5}

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}

We may bring Him our little cares and perplexities as well as our greater troubles. Whatever arises to disturb or distress us, we should take it to the Lord in prayer. {FLB 225.5}

If we keep the Lord ever before us, allowing our hearts to go out in thanksgiving and praise to Him, we shall have a continual freshness in our religious life. Our prayers will take the form of a conversation with God as we would talk with a friend. He will speak His mysteries to us personally. Often there will come to us a sweet, joyful sense of the presence of Jesus. . . . Prayer turns aside the attacks of Satan. {FLB 225.7}

The value of man is estimated in heaven according to the capacity of the heart to know God. This knowledge is the spring from which flows all power. God created man that every faculty might be the faculty of the divine mind; and He is ever seeking to bring the human mind into association with the divine. He offers us the privilege of co-operation with Christ in revealing His grace to the world, that we may receive increased knowledge of heavenly things. {COL 354.3}

Looking unto Jesus we obtain brighter and more distinct views of God, and by beholding we become changed. Goodness, love for our fellow men, becomes our natural instinct. We develop a character which is the counterpart of the divine character. Growing into His likeness, we enlarge our capacity for knowing God. More and more we enter into fellowship with the heavenly world, and we have continually increasing power to receive the riches of the knowledge and wisdom of eternity. {COL 355.1}

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}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 3 “Controversies”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 2:1–3:6; Micah 6:6–8; 1 Samuel 21:1–6; Mark 3:20–35; Luke 12:53; Luke 14:26.

Memory Text

“And He said to them, ‘The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath. Therefore the Son of Man is also Lord of the Sabbath’ ” (Mark 2:27, 28, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Healing a Paralytic
- III. Calling Levi and the Question of Fasting
- IV. The Lord of the Sabbath
- V. Sandwich Story: Part 1
- VI. Sandwich Story: Part 2
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. A unique feature of the Gospel of Mark is how Jesus’ conflict with the religious leaders reached all the way back to the beginning of Jesus’ public ministry. The way that Mark structured the story of Jesus, the cross is not just a future event, but casts its shadow over Jesus from the second chapter of Mark all the way to the end. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Mark 2:1 – 3:6 contains a series of five short stories that contrasts Jesus’ teachings with those of the religious leaders of His time. The lesson will explore each of these stories briefly. The lesson also addresses Mark 3:20-35, which the lesson author calls a “Sandwich Story”, where a story about Jesus is interrupted, and then is resumed again. This is a literary feature that occurs six times in the Gospel of Mark. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
3. Read Mark 2:1-12. What was the paralytic looking for when he was brought to Jesus, and what did he receive? What do you make of Jesus acting to heal someone on the

basis of other people's faith? How did Jesus go about demonstrating His divinity?
(Sunday's Lesson)

4. Read Mark 2:13-17. Who was Levi, the son of Alphaeus, and why would there be an objection to him becoming a disciple of Jesus? In this story the Pharisees try to bring disrepute on Jesus with "guilt by association". Why is the guilt by association charge to appealing to people? (Monday's Lesson)
5. Read Mark 2:18-22. What is the key question here and how does Jesus answer it? What are the implications for us today in the statements of Jesus in verses 21 and 22? (Monday's Lesson)
6. Read Mark 2:23-28. What does Jesus see in the David story that is pertinent to the charge being brought against Him? What are the implications? How does the David story relate to the statement of Jesus in verses 27 and 28? In His Sabbath statement does Jesus here undermine the importance of Sabbath rules or even rules in general? (Tuesday's Lesson)
7. Read Mark 3:1-6. How does this story illustrate the point that the Sabbath was made for the benefit of humanity, rather than the other way around? What is the point of Jesus' comparison in verse 4? (Tuesday's Lesson)
8. Read Mark 3:20-35. What connection do you see between the two stories intertwined in this passage? What charges do the scribes and Jesus' family, respectively, bring against Jesus? How does Jesus ultimately defeat Satan? (Wednesday's Lesson)
9. Read Mark 3:28-30. What is the unpardonable sin, and what does that have to do with the previous context (Mark 3:22-27)? (Wednesday's Lesson)
10. Read Mark 3:20-21. What was it that caused His family to consider Jesus out of His mind? Read Mark 3:31-35. What does Jesus' family want, and how does He respond? (Thursday's Lesson)
11. How can a local church become family for those who have been rejected by their genetic family? (Friday's Lesson)
12. Who are the "tax collectors" of today? How can we adjust our thinking about them? (Monday's Lesson)
13. What principles of Sabbath keeping can you take away from these accounts and the challenges we face in keeping the Sabbath in the modern world? (Tuesday's Lesson)
14. What would you say to someone who thinks they've committed the unpardonable sin? (Wednesday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Isn't it significant that after all the answers during creation week, the next day was a rest day, for reflection and celebration? And after all the answers given during crucifixion week, the next day was a rest day, a day for reflection, for remembering, for celebration. To me, that's the whole purpose of the Sabbath. The Sabbath is designed to remind us of the truth about God that is the basis of our trust. It's not a test of obedience. It's not a burden; it's been made one. It was given to man. Remember Mark 2:27? "And he said to them, 'The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath; so the Son of man is lord even of the Sabbath.'" The Sabbath was made for us, to help us, because more than at any other time we need to be reminded of the truth that was not claimed, but revealed and demonstrated during creation week, and during crucifixion week.

Incidentally, was that first Sabbath our seventh day? It was our second day. Sometimes we say we should worship every seventh day because it's built into our system that we need to rest every seventh day. If that's a good argument, then on which day should we rest? Which is our seventh day? Thursday! I don't know anybody who chooses Thursday. Friday yes, Saturday yes, Sunday yes. But this would start a whole new movement. If we're supposed to rest on the seventh day, our seventh day is Thursday. God's seventh day, with the universe watching, their seventh day, earth time, is the one that follows all those revealing events of creation week. That's when God and the universe celebrated. And then God says, "I want you to do the same from here on, not to be a burden and a test of obedience; you need this. The controversy is on; you need to be reminded once a week of the evidence I have presented, and there will be much more coming." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – Genesis*, recorded October 1983, 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/1MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Is there some condition concerning which God would say, "Do not intercede with me for that." How could that possibly be? Have any of us committed that sin? Is this the unpardonable sin, as it were? And that doesn't suggest that God is unwilling to pardon. He's forgiveness personified. But is there a condition that it would make no sense to forgive; because there is no hope, there is no remedy, there's nothing more he can do? It would be like praying that God would heal someone who absolutely will not listen. There's no point to it.

Is it that Israel had reached this point? Remember 2 Chronicles, at the end, when he let them go into captivity, “There was no remedy.” Did Jesus pray any longer over Lucifer when finally he had reached the place where the truth, spoken in love, would not touch him at all? There does come a time when nothing more can be done. Now, I think we need to be very careful in deciding that about each other. I don’t think we’re able to know this. I think we go on anyway. But I think that John and Jeremiah are simply warning us in very serious terms: There is a condition even God cannot remedy. If we finally in our stubborn rebelliousness, reach the place where we have lost both the desire and the capacity to respond to truth, since the truth spoken in love is God’s only means of persuasion, then that’s the end. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Jeremiah & Lamentations, recorded February 1982, Riverside, California}

*Audio links to the West Covina series recorded in 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/35MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/36MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

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}

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}

The Lord will not compel men to deal justly, to love mercy, and to walk humbly with their God; He sets before the human agent good and evil, and makes plain what will be the sure result of following one course or the other. Christ invites us, saying, “Follow Me.” But we are never forced to walk in His footsteps. If we do walk in His footsteps, it is the result of deliberate choice. As we see the life and character of Christ, strong desire is awakened to be like Him in character; and we follow on to know the Lord, and to know His goings forth are prepared as the morning. We then begin to realize that “the path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.”—R. & H., March 31, 1896. {CS 138.1}

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}

Jesus never refused an invitation to such a feast. The object ever before Him was to sow in the hearts of His hearers the seeds of truth, through His winning conversation to draw hearts to Himself. {5BC 1120.3}

Jesus sat as an honored guest at the table of the publicans, by His sympathy and social kindness showing that He recognized the dignity of humanity; and men longed to become worthy of His confidence. Upon their thirsty souls His words fell with blessed, life-giving power. New impulses were awakened, and the possibility of a new life opened to these outcasts of society. {3SM 238.3}

For our sake Jesus emptied Himself of His glory; He clothed His divinity with humanity that He might touch humanity, that His personal presence might be among us, that we might know that He was acquainted with all our trials, and sympathized with our grief, that every son and daughter of Adam might understand that Jesus is the friend of sinners (ST April 18, 1892). {7BC 927.1}

Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. The scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national benefit of all 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. {9T 190.4}

He passed no human being by as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. In whatever company He found Himself, He presented a lesson appropriate to the time and the circumstances. Every neglect or insult shown by men to their fellow men only made Him more conscious of their need of His divine-human sympathy. 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 the children of God. {9T 191.2}

The Saviour had not come to set aside what patriarchs and prophets had spoken; for He Himself had spoken through these representative men. All the truths of God's word came from Him. But these priceless gems had been placed in false settings. Their precious light had been made to minister to error. God desired them to be removed from their settings of error and replaced in the framework of truth. This work only a divine hand could accomplish. By its connection with error, the truth had been serving the cause of the enemy of God and man. Christ had come to place it where it would glorify God, and work the salvation of humanity. {DA 287.4}

To all who receive the Sabbath as a sign of Christ's creative and redeeming power, it will be a delight. Seeing Christ in it, they delight themselves in Him. The Sabbath points them to the works of creation as an evidence of His mighty power in redemption. While it calls to mind the lost peace of Eden, it tells of peace restored through the Saviour. And every object in nature

repeats His invitation, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28. {DA 289.1}

Jesus began His work by breaking Satan’s power over the suffering. He restored the sick to health, gave sight to the blind, and healed the lame, causing them to leap for joy and to glorify God. He restored to health those who had been infirm and bound by Satan’s cruel power many years. With gracious words He comforted the weak, the trembling, and the desponding. The feeble, suffering ones whom Satan held in triumph, Jesus wrenched from his grasp, bringing to them soundness of body and great joy and happiness. He raised the dead to life, and they glorified God for the mighty display of His power. He wrought mightily for all who believed on Him. {EW 159.3}

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}

Varied were the circumstances and needs of those who besought His aid, and none who came to Him went away unhelped. From Him flowed a stream of healing power, and in body and mind and soul men were made whole. {MH 17.2}

In every human being, however fallen, He beheld a son of God, one who might be restored to the privilege of His divine relationship.—*Education*, p. 79. (1903) {Ev 55.3}

The Saviour made each work of healing an occasion for implanting divine principles in the mind and soul. This was the purpose of His work. He imparted earthly blessings, that He might incline the hearts of men to receive the gospel of His grace. {MH 20.1}

The life of Christ was filled with words and acts of benevolence, sympathy, and love. He was ever attentive to listen to and relieve the woes of those who came to Him. {EW 160.1}

Sickness, suffering, and death are work of an antagonistic power. Satan is the destroyer; God is the restorer. {MH 113.1}

God is just as willing to restore the sick to health now as when the Holy Spirit spoke these words through the psalmist [Psalm 107:19, 20]. And Christ is the same compassionate physician now that He was during His earthly ministry. In Him there is healing balm for every disease, restoring power for every infirmity. {MH 226.1}

It is by the Spirit that God works upon the heart; when men willfully reject the Spirit, and declare It to be from Satan, they cut off the channel by which God can communicate with them. When the Spirit is finally rejected, there is no more that God can do for the soul. {DA 321.3}

No soul is ever finally deserted of God, given up to his own ways, so long as there is any hope of his salvation. "Man turns from God, not God from him." Our heavenly Father follows us with appeals and warnings and assurances of compassion, until further opportunities and privileges would be wholly in vain. The responsibility rests with 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. Thus he passes on from one stage of resistance to another, until at last the light will fail to impress, and he will cease to respond in any measure to the Spirit of God. Then even "the light that is in thee" has become darkness. The very truth we do know has become so perverted as to increase the blindness of the soul. {MB 93.1}

It is not God that blinds the eyes of men or hardens their hearts. He sends them light to correct their errors, and to lead them in safe paths; it is by the rejection of this light that the eyes are blinded and the heart hardened. Often the process is gradual, and almost imperceptible. Light comes to the soul through God's word, through His servants, or by the direct agency of His Spirit; but when one ray of light is disregarded, there is a partial benumbing of the spiritual perceptions, and the second revealing of light is less clearly discerned. So the darkness increases, until it is night in the soul. Thus it had been with these Jewish leaders. They were convinced that a divine power attended Christ, but in order to resist the truth, they attributed the work of the Holy Spirit to Satan. In doing this they deliberately chose deception; they yielded themselves to Satan, and henceforth they were controlled by his power. {DA 322.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 4 “Parables”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 4:1–34; James 1:21; Isaiah 6:1–13; Psalm 104:12; Daniel 4:10–12.

Memory Text

“Then He said to them, ‘Take heed what you hear. With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given. For whoever has, to him more will be given; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him’ ” (Mark 4:24, 25, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Parable of the Sower
- III. Jesus’ Interpretation
- IV. The Reason for the Parables
- V. Lamp and Measuring Basket
- VI. Parables of Growing Seed
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. This week’s study is on the series of parables in Mark, chapter 4. Among the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), Mark has the fewest parables. There are only five, and all of them are in this chapter. The Gospel of John has no parables at all, sort of. Half of this lesson focuses on the Parable of the Sower. The rest of the lesson focuses on the four shorter parables in the chapter. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. The memory text for this week is noted above, Mark 4:24-25. It seems to be articulating a principle of “the more you have, the more you get”. What do you think Jesus was trying to communicate in this way? (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)

3. Read Mark 4:1-9. Jesus often didn't explain His parables to the crowd. So as far as possible, ignore for the moment Jesus' interpretation of the parable in 4:14-20. Try to make sense of the parable in its own terms. What are the different soils like, and what happens to the seed that falls on them? (Sunday's Lesson)
4. Later on, Jesus interprets the parable of the sower by identifying things external to the story that the details in the story stand for. Read Mark 4:13-20. How did Jesus interpret the parable of the sower? How does one become the right kind of "soil"? (Monday's Lesson)
5. Read Mark 4:10-12. Why did Jesus teach in parables? What is the purpose of speaking differently to different audiences? What was the purpose of His allusion to Isaiah 6:1-13? How does John 3:18-21 also speak to this issue? (Tuesday's Lesson)
6. Read Mark 4:21-25. What major thing is Jesus trying to say with the parable of the lamp? What secret, in particular, is Jesus talking about in verse 22? How are the comments of verses 24-25 related to the parable of the lamp? (Wednesday's Lesson)
7. Read Mark 4:26-29. This parable is unique to Mark, something that doesn't happen often. What are the major lessons Jesus was trying to teach with this parable? What do plants need in order to grow and what spiritual application can come from that? (Thursday's Lesson)
8. Read Mark 4:30-32. What is the key message of the parable of the mustard seed? How does Jesus use allusions to Psalm 104:12 and Daniel 4:10-12 to make His point? Consider what the church was like when Jesus made this prediction. What does this tell us about Jesus' insights into the ultimate outcome of His efforts on this earth? (Thursday's Lesson)
9. What is "holiness"? (Friday's Lesson)
10. If Jesus is the clearest revelation of God's character, what do all these parables tell us about the character of God?
11. What are some other spiritual lessons we can learn from nature? (Sunday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

As he experienced this separation from his Father, "so great was this agony, that his physical pain was hardly felt. With amazement angels witnessed the Savior's despairing agony." Note the words, agony, fear, consternation. He was really tempted to doubt all that he'd been teaching. He even wondered if he'd rise again."

Maybe he was tempted to believe this legal explanation that the second death is, you die and stay dead forever. And if he was going to pay the price for sin, he would have to die, and stay dead forever. He would never rise again. But he didn't come to pay that penalty. He came to answer the questions, and as soon as he had answered them (he did wait over Sabbath, to add

more meanings to the Sabbath, so that every Sabbath we'd remember the questions he'd answered on Friday) he arose a great while before it was day, and he hastened to heaven. And he said to Mary, "Don't detain me! I have to hasten to heaven." And he appeared before his Father, and the angels, and he said, "Was it enough?" To pay the price of sin? "No," they could have said, "you're supposed to stay dead for eternity. You hurry back! We'll not let anybody know you were out." They never said such a thing! They said, "It is more than enough. You've cleared up all our questions. You've confirmed our trust without fear for eternity." And he came back down to see if the twelve had gotten the message, and they were all in a deep depression. It took him a long time to revive them.

And to this present day, do we really accept what he came to reveal at such infinite cost, that he does not wish to be served from fear? The Father will no more kill us at the end of the millennium than he killed his Son—which leads some to believe that he did kill his Son as he will kill the wicked at the end. How have you worked this out yourself? How did Jesus resolve these questions on the cross? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Luke, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:

<http://pkp.cc/55MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/56MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

So first this evening, let us consider again what has gone wrong, because I believe the way we understand what went wrong helps us to understand the methods God has used to set things right. And particularly then it helps us to understand **why** Jesus had to die. Our God has been accused, specifically, of being arbitrary, and exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe. God sent His Son to reveal the truth about these matters. Why was it not enough for Jesus to come and live among us as He did and tell us the truth about His Father and then demonstrate by His gracious treatment of the worst of sinners that God, indeed, is not the kind of person His enemies have made Him out to be?

Of course, the way He lived and the way He treated people is vital evidence. And we will spend much time on it later, particularly on the evening entitled "How God Treats His Erring Children." But remember that the most serious charge leveled against our God is that God has lied to us. He lied when He said that sin results in death. Worse than that, Satan has turned God's gracious warning to our first parents in the Garden of Eden into a terrifying threat. He pictures God as saying to Adam and Eve, "Either you obey Me, or I'll kill you!" And think of the baleful effect that perversion of the truth about our God has had on the human race. Think how it has poisoned people's attitude toward God and their practice of religion. Think of picturing our gracious God as saying, "You either love and obey Me, or I'll torture and execute you in My

righteous wrath.” How could this satanic view of God win such wide acceptance as it has? And it is still very widely believed.

For thousands of years, men have sacrificed even their own children to win the favor of their offended gods. Even in the Christian world it is suggested, even believed, that if it were not for Christ’s appeasement (sometimes called propitiation), of His Father’s wrath, we would long before now have been destroyed. And were it not for Christ’s constant pleading with the Father, God could not find it in His own heart to forgive and heal His children.

Who could have thought up such perversion? But now, as you know the sixty-six books, does anything need to be done to persuade God to love His children? The testimony of all sixty-six books is that God has always loved even His most wayward child. That is what is summed up in John 3:16: “God so loved the world. . . .” Not just His good children, but all His children, both good and bad.

And those serious words to Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden were no threat. Those words were a gracious warning—because sin actually results in death. Sin so changes the sinner that a natural consequence of this condition is death. Cut off by his own rebellious choice from the source of life, the sinner will die. Now out of harmony with God by his own rebellious rejection, the sinner is so changed that even the life-giving glory of our God becomes a consuming fire. How can this best be clarified? Not by claims, but by evidence and demonstration.

One choice that God had was to allow Adam and Eve to die. And He could have said to the universe, “Who is telling the truth? I said sinners would die! It is the Devil who has lied to you.” Or going back even further, God could have left Satan and his followers to reap the natural results of their sin and they would have perished. And surely then there would have been no question about the truthfulness of God’s warning. Why didn’t God take those—it would seem—easy choices? He could have saved all the painful history since that time.

Of course, had the universe watched Satan and his followers die, they had never seen death before, so there was the hazard that they would assume that God had executed His children who did not please Him. Then there would be the danger that the angels would serve God from fear, and the obedience that springs from fear produces the character of a rebel. And rebelliousness is the essence of sin. And so instead of God taking that easy way, not wanting the obedience and love that springs from fear, totally unacceptable to so gracious a God as we know Him to be, and having such dire consequences; instead of taking those choices, God sent His Son in human form. And He died the death that is the natural result of sin. And the universe watched to see how God was involved in the death of the wicked. {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>*

Further Study with Ellen White

Not by force of arms, not by violent interpositions, was the kingdom of God to prevail, but by the implanting of a new principle in the hearts of men. {COL 34.4}

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}

Christ's favorite theme was the paternal tenderness and abundant grace of God; He dwelt much upon the holiness of His character and His law; He presented Himself to the people as the Way, the Truth, and the Life. {COL 40.2}

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}

Jesus sought an avenue to every heart. By using a variety of illustrations, He not only presented truth in its different phases, but appealed to the different hearers. Their interest was aroused by figures drawn from the surroundings of their daily life. None who listened to the Saviour could feel that they were neglected or forgotten. The humblest, the most sinful, heard in His teaching a voice that spoke to them in sympathy and tenderness. {COL 21.2}

As the heart is opened to the entrance of the Word, light from the throne of God will shine into the soul. That Word, cherished in the heart, will yield to the student a treasure of knowledge that is priceless. Its ennobling principles will stamp the character with honesty and truthfulness, temperance and integrity. {OHC 31.4}

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}

Through His Spirit God makes His word a vivifying power. It is quick and powerful, exerting a strong influence upon minds, not because of the learning or intelligence of the human agent, but because divine power is working with the human power. {8T 55.2}

The creative energy that called the worlds into existence is in the word of God. The word imparts power; it begets life. Every command is a promise; accepted by the will, received into the soul, it brings with it the life of the Infinite One. . . . {FLB 20.6}

The Bible is full of knowledge, and all who come to its study with a heart to understand, will find the mind enlarged and the faculties strengthened to comprehend these precious, far-reaching truths. The Holy Spirit will impress them upon the mind and soul. {FE 449.2}

In the visions given to Isaiah, to Ezekiel, and to John we see how closely heaven is connected with the events taking place upon the earth and how great is the care of God for those who are loyal to Him. The world is not without a ruler. The program of coming events is in the hands of the Lord. The Majesty of heaven has the destiny of nations, as well as the concerns of His church, in His own charge. . . . {5T 753.3}

He who slumbers not, who is continually at work for the accomplishment of His designs, can carry forward His great work harmoniously. That which appears to finite minds entangled and complicated, the Lord's hand can keep in perfect order. He can devise ways and means to thwart the purposes of wicked men, and He will bring to confusion the counsels of them that plot mischief against His people. {5T 754.2}

Jesus employed no miraculous agency to compel men to believe in him. They were left to choose or reject him, of their own free will. No direct power was to force them into obedience, and destroy the free moral agency that God has given to man. {4Red 86.3}

To everyone is given freedom to act, and upon everyone rests the responsibility of their own actions. . . . {CTr 180.5}

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve. In the change that takes place when the soul surrenders to Christ, there is the highest sense of freedom. The expulsion of sin is the act of the soul itself. True, we have no power to free ourselves from Satan's control; but when we desire to be set free from sin, and in our great need cry out for a power out of and above ourselves, the powers of the soul are imbued with the divine energy of the Holy Spirit, and they obey the dictates of the will in fulfilling the will of God. {DA 466.4}

In the very fact that men are free moral agents, God teaches us not to be forced or compelled into any course of action, also that as responsible beings in copartnership with God we are to represent God in character. We are to have an interest in our brother, in our neighbor, in all around (Letter 65, 1895). {5BC 1098.1}

God never forces the will or the conscience, but Satan's constant resort—to gain control of those whom he cannot otherwise seduce—is compulsion by cruelty. Through fear or force he endeavors to rule the conscience and to secure homage to himself.—GC 591 (1888). {1MCP 325.1}

In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience. The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin. {COL 77.1}

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}

Christ’s illustrations were taken from the things of daily life, and although they were simple, they had in them a wonderful depth of meaning. The birds of the air, the lilies of the field, the growing seed, the shepherd and the sheep—with these things Christ illustrated immortal truth; and ever afterward, when His hearers chanced to see these objects, they recalled His words. Thus the truth became a living reality; the scenes of nature and the daily affairs of life were ever repeating to them the Saviour’s teaching. {CT 261.1}

It is the privilege of every Christian not only to look for but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, (2 Peter 3:12, margin). Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain. {COL 69.2}

In His plan of government there is no employment of brute force to compel the conscience. The Jews looked for the kingdom of God to be established in the same way as the kingdoms of the world. To promote righteousness they resorted to external measures. They devised methods and plans. But Christ implants a principle. By implanting truth and righteousness, He counterworks error and sin. {COL 77.1}

Not only is the growth of Christ’s kingdom illustrated by the parable of the mustard seed, but in every stage of its growth the experience represented in the parable is repeated. For His church in every generation God has a special truth and a special work. {COL 78.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 5 “Miracles Around *the Lake*”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 4:35–41; Psalm 104:1–9 Mark 5:1–43; Numbers 27:17.

Memory Text

“However, Jesus did not permit him, but said to him, ‘Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how He has had compassion on you’ ” (Mark 5:19, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Calming a Storm
- III. Can You Hear a Whisper Above a Shout?
- IV. On the Rollercoaster With Jesus
- V. Rejection and Reception
- VI. A Different Kind of Messiah
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Jesus’ earthly ministry was largely focused on the province of Galilee. The lesson for this week starts with the close of Mark, chapter four, where the disciples run into a storm on the Sea of Galilee, and Jesus calms the storm by speaking to the wind and the waves. Mark 6 ends with another storm on the sea, but this time Jesus is not in the boat, He is walking on the water. In between these watery episodes are a series of miracles done on land, and the disciples’ missionary activity. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. In this series of dramatic stories, Jesus calms the sea, heals a demoniac, heals a woman who touches His clothes, raises a girl from the dead, preaches in His hometown, sends disciples out to preach, feeds 5000 people with a few loaves and fishes, and walks on water. What do you think is the main point Mark is trying to

- make in this cluster of stories? Why was it so hard for the religious people of that day to understand who Jesus really is? (Sabbath Afternoon's Lesson)
3. Read Mark 4:35-41. What happens in this story, and what does it tell us about who Jesus is? Read Psalm 104:1-9. How does the picture of Yahweh in this psalm compare with Christ's calming of the storm? What relevance does the great power of God revealed in this story have for everyday life today? (Sunday's Lesson)
 4. Read Mark 5:1-20. When the demoniac fell down in front of Jesus, Mark uses the Greek word for worship. Who was worshiping Jesus at that moment, the man or the demon? Why would Jesus permit the demons to do what they wanted to do (kill a bunch of animals)? What can we learn about the cosmic conflict and the power of Jesus from this dramatic account? (Monday's Lesson)
 5. Read Mark 5:21-24. What do we learn about Jairus and his situation from this passage? Read Mark 5:25-34. This is another Markan interruption of a story (sandwich story). What do you think of Mark's handling of the medical profession in this story? How would Luke have handled this differently? With Jesus so consistently trying to keep His miracles a secret, why does He stop and expose His actions in this situation? Mark 5:35-43. What does Jesus' behavior throughout this situation tell us about God? (Tuesday's Lesson)
 6. Read Mark 6:1-6. Why do you think Jesus' hometown people rejected Him? Why would the people who knew Him best, including His family, have the most difficulty understanding who He really was? Luke 4:23 may give us a further window into this rejection. What do you make of the fact that Jesus was unable to demonstrate His divinity in Nazareth? What does that tell us about God? Why is God dependent on our faith? (Wednesday's Lesson)
 7. Read Mark 6:7-30. How does the mission of the disciples contrast with the beheading of John the Baptist? What do you make of Jesus' instructions in verses 7-11? Do we have power over evil spirits today? What do you make of Herod, and His reaction to John the Baptist? Why is the story of John the Baptist's beheading (Mark 6:21-30) even in the Gospel? (Wednesday's Lesson)
 8. Read Mark 6:30-31. This reference back to the commissioning of the disciples creates another "sandwich story". Note the sequence of events from Mark 6:7 through 6:31. Read Mark 6:32-52. What problems did the disciples confront in these stories and how did each issue get resolved? (Thursday's Lesson)
 9. Why does God allow a good person like John the Baptist to be placed in prison and executed? (Friday's Lesson)
 10. Most nations would be much better off if they embraced the principles of Jesus' teachings. Would Jesus be pleased if a politician tried to make that happen? (Friday's Lesson)
 11. Have you ever been rejected like Jesus and John the Baptist were? What did you learn from that experience? (Wednesday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Mark 5:43, the raising of Jairus' daughter. Now, the whole story is very wonderful, how He resurrected her, and do you notice, in Mark, that the words to the little girl are, "Talitha cumi" in Aramaic. This fits the idea that it was Peter writing this. "Taking her by the hand he said to her, 'Little girl, I say to you, arise.' And immediately the girl got up and walked for she was twelve years old. And they were immediately overcome with amazement. And he strictly charged them that no one should know this and told them to give her something to eat."

And I find the story is often told, omitting that last line. Can you imagine the excitement after the resurrection of this little girl? And when they were all rushing out to dismiss the mourners; of course, good stewardship would require that, for you had to pay them, perhaps, they rushed out to dismiss them, and tell everyone the little girl is alive. Jesus said, "One moment. This little girl is hungry. Somebody get her something to eat." Is that important theology? I think it is very significant that He would do that. You notice when they were hungry, He said, "These folk haven't eaten for a long time. Get them something to eat." "Give the little girl something to eat."

Then you remember later on, He cries at the funeral of His friend, Lazarus. The way He treated people. The infinite One, walking here on this earth, and noting such little matters. I think it is most significant. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Mark, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/53MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/54MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

A little later, when John was in prison, and he heard reports of Jesus' preaching, and you remember Jesus said that if you're a sheep rather than a goat, you'll visit the people in prison, did Jesus ever go and visit His cousin? He never went to see him. And perhaps John began to wonder. And he sent two emissaries to Christ. "Are You the one, or not?" You see, in spite of all that happened at Jordan, "are you the One, or not?" And did Jesus reply, "Yes, I am! And I expect you to believe it if you have faith!" That could have been the devil making that claim. Anybody could make that claim. So, what did the two men do? Run right back to John and say, "He won't answer"? They spent the day with Him. And in the end they went back to John, and he said, "Well, did He say He is or not?"

"No."

"Well, then why didn't you come sooner?"

"Well, we spent the day with Him."

“Well, sit down and tell me what you saw and what you heard.”

And they described what they saw and heard. And the further they went, the more John was convinced that Jesus was the One. On what basis? Scripture, wasn't it? That's the accumulating evidence of the years. The One who came was in harmony with all the predictions before. And that's the better evidence, isn't it? By the way, did Jesus ever go and visit His cousin? He died. It would be interesting to see them meeting in the hereafter. And I can imagine maybe John saying, “Why didn't You come and see me?” And Jesus, saying, “I wanted to so badly, but I don't know whether the reports ever reached you. I was telling the crowds; you were the greatest of all the prophets. You did a marvelous thing. And like Job, you trusted, even though there was no confirmation at the time, other than all the evidence.” And John belongs with Job, I think, as really settled into the truth. He could not be shaken or moved.

Some even wondered if the question to Jesus, “Are you the One?” was maybe in behalf of his followers rather than John himself. Do you get the impression that John was beginning to wonder? It's hard to say. I wouldn't blame him for wondering. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Luke, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/55MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/56MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Whether on the land or on the sea, if we have the Saviour in our hearts, there is no need of fear. Living faith in the Redeemer will smooth the sea of life, and will deliver us from danger in the way that He knows to be best. {DA 336.3}

We may believe that God is with us in every place, and in every trying hour we may hold fast that hand which has all power. {ML 336.3}

In the annals of human history the growth of nations, the rise and fall of empires, appear as 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, behind, above, and through all the play and counterplay of human interests and power and passions, the agencies of the all-merciful One, silently, patiently working out the counsels of His own will. {Ed 173.2}

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}

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. {MH 417.3}

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}

Nothing can happen in any part of the universe without the knowledge of Him who is omnipresent. Not a single event of human life is unknown to our Maker. While Satan is constantly devising evil, the Lord our God overrules all, so that it will not harm His obedient, trusting children. The same power that controls the boisterous waves of the ocean can hold in check all the power of rebellion and of crime. God says to one as to the other, "Thus far shalt thou go, and no farther." {3BC 1141.5}

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}

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}

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}

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}

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}

Faith is not a happy flight of feeling; it is simply taking God at His word—believing that He will fulfill His promises because He said He would.—Lt 49, 1888. (HC 119.) {2MCP 539.5}

It is not our efforts that bring victory. It is seeing God behind the promise, and believing and trusting Him. Grasp by faith the hand of infinite power. The Lord is faithful who hath promised. {UL 133.6}

It is for our own benefit to keep every gift of God fresh in our memory. By this means 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. {MH 100.3}

These things were not written merely that we might read and wonder, but that the same faith which wrought in God's servants of old might work in us. In no less marked a manner than He wrought then will He work now wherever there are hearts of faith to be channels of His power. {CG 43.1}

While the sinner cannot save himself, he still has something to do to secure salvation. "Him that cometh to Me," says Christ, "I will in no wise cast out." John 6:37. But we must come to Him; and when we repent of our sins, we must believe that He accepts and pardons us. Faith is the gift of God, but the power to exercise it is ours. Faith is the hand by which the soul takes hold upon the divine offers of grace and mercy. {PP 431.2}

His presence brought a purer atmosphere into the home, and His life was as leaven working amid the elements of society. Harmless and undefiled, He walked among the thoughtless, the rude, the uncourteous; amid the unjust publicans, the reckless prodigals, the unrighteous Samaritans, the heathen soldiers, the rough peasants, and the mixed multitude. He spoke a word of sympathy here and a word there, as He saw men weary, yet compelled to bear heavy burdens. He shared their burdens, and repeated to them the lessons He had learned from nature, of the love, the kindness, the goodness of God. {DA 90.3}

He taught all to look upon themselves as endowed with precious talents, which if rightly employed would secure for them eternal riches. He weeded all vanity from life, and by His own

example taught that every moment of time is fraught with eternal results; that it is to be cherished as a treasure, and to be employed for holy purposes. He passed by no human being as worthless, but sought to apply the saving remedy to every soul. In whatever company He found Himself, He presented a lesson that was appropriate to the time and the circumstances. He sought to inspire with hope the most rough and 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. Often He met those who had drifted under Satan's control, and who had no power to break from his snare. To such a one, discouraged, sick, tempted, and fallen, Jesus would speak words of tenderest pity, words that were needed and could be understood. Others He met who were fighting a hand-to-hand battle with the adversary of souls. These He encouraged to persevere, assuring them that they would win; for angels of God were on their side, and would give them the victory. Those whom He thus helped were convinced that here was One in whom they could trust with perfect confidence. He would not betray the secrets they poured into His sympathizing ear. {DA 91.1}

To take people right where they are, whatever their position, whatever their condition, and help them in every way possible—this is gospel ministry. {MM 238.1}

During His ministry Jesus devoted more time to healing the sick than to preaching. His miracles testified to the truth of His words, that He came not to destroy but to save. {DA 350.3}

They rejected Him, the Saviour, but He regarded them with pitying tenderness, and sorrow so deep that it broke His heart. Every soul was precious in His eyes. While He always bore Himself with divine dignity, He bowed with tenderest regard to every member of the family of God. In all men He saw fallen souls whom it was His mission to save. {DA 353.1}

It is Satan's work to fill men's hearts with doubt. He leads them to look upon God as a stern judge. He tempts them to sin, and then to regard themselves as too vile to approach their heavenly Father or to excite His pity. The Lord understands all this. Jesus assures His disciples of God's sympathy for them in their needs and weaknesses. Not a sigh is breathed, not a pain felt, not a grief pierces the soul, but the throb vibrates to the Father's heart. {DA 356.2}

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. Not Enoch, who was translated to heaven, not Elijah, who ascended in a chariot of fire, was greater or more honored than John the Baptist, who perished alone in the dungeon. "Unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on Him, but also to suffer for His sake." Philippians 1:29. And of all the gifts that Heaven can bestow upon men, fellowship with Christ in His sufferings is the most weighty trust and the highest honor. {DA 224.5}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 6 “Inside Out”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 7; Isaiah 29:13; Exodus 20:12; Mark 8:11–21.

Memory Text

“ ‘There is nothing that enters a man from outside which can defile him; but the things which come out of him, those are the things that defile a man’ ” (Mark 7:15, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Human Traditions versus God’s Commands
- III. Clean Hands or Clean Heart?
- IV. Crumbs for the Dogs
- V. Tongue Tied
- VI. Watch Out for Bad Bread
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. The lesson for this week is a study of Mark 7:1 – 8:21. This section of Mark contains a number of stories that include lessons about the meaning and practice of a life of faith. (Sabbath Afternoon’s Lesson)
2. Read Mark 7:1-13. Do verses 1-5 mean that children don’t need to do the dishes or wash their hands before they eat? What’s the real issue here? What is the core principle Jesus is getting at in His dispute with the Pharisees (Mark 7:6-8)? According to Mark 7:9-13, what is tradition and what is wrong with it? Do Seventh-day Adventists have traditions that are not based on Scripture? What personal traditions can get in the way of a life based on Scripture? (Sunday’s Lesson)
3. Read Mark 7:14-19. What is the meaning of “defile” in verse 15? Is Jesus doing away with distinctions like clean and unclean meats? What is Jesus actually saying when He “declares all foods clean” (Mark 7:19)? Read Mark 7:20-23. What is it that actually contaminates a person? Jesus speaks of the “heart” in this passage. In your

- understanding, what is the difference between the head and the heart, and how is that difference relevant to what Jesus is saying here? (Monday's Lesson)
4. Read Mark 7:24-30. Why does Jesus seemingly respond so harshly to this woman, in essence calling her a dog? What does her response tell us about how she understood what Jesus was saying? (Tuesday's Lesson)
 5. Read Mark 7:31-37. What does Jesus' route tell us about His intentions? Who was then brought to Jesus and what did Jesus do for him? What do you think of the unusual way Jesus treated the man's disability? Why do you think the treatment includes a sigh on His part? (Wednesday's Lesson)
 6. Read Mark 8:1-10 in light of 7:31. What difference does it make to the interpretation of this passage that the crowd in this instance was probably made up of Gentiles? (Friday's Lesson)
 7. Read Mark 8:11-13. What was it about the approach from the Pharisees that caused Jesus to respond so dismissively? Read Mark 8:14-21. What did the disciples forget and what point does Jesus make from this? What is the meaning of the "leaven" metaphor? (Thursday's Lesson)
 8. Who are the "unclean" people in your community? What can you do to help draw them to the gospel? (Friday's Lesson)

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

"And the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, 'Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with hands defiled [Now, they didn't mean they hadn't washed the dirt off them. They had washed some kind of spiritual defilement off their hands they should have.]?' And he said to them, 'Well did Isaiah prophesy of you hypocrites, as it is written, "This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; in vain do they worship me, teaching as doctrines the precepts of men."'"

Now, do you remember when we discussed this at some length? Because it's such an impressive passage, in Isaiah 29, verse 13:

And the Lord said: "Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips [they have much to say], while their hearts [where a man does his thinking] are far from me, and their fear [or reverence] of me is a commandment of men learned by rote [mere mechanical, unthinking obedience], . . ."

Mark leaves out the "by rote" doesn't he? But he makes the same point, "Teaching as doctrine the precepts of men," and he leaves out the "learned by rote". You'll note often differences in these quotations, and there are various reasons for that. Sometimes the New Testament writer

is not quoting the Hebrew that we know, maybe some Hebrew that we don't know. Sometimes he's quoting the *Greek Septuagint*, which has many variations in it. But you'll notice the meaning comes through. Had God ever given such commandments? That you are spiritually defiled under those circumstances? "And he said to them, 'You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God, in order to keep your tradition! For example, Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother.'"

Moses said, "Honor your father and your mother"; and, "He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die." But you say, "If a man tells his father or his mother, 'What you would have gained from me [and I know you need it] is Corban,'" (that is, given to God)—then you no longer permit him to do anything for his father or mother [because the money has been dedicated, you see. "I've dedicated it to the Lord, so I'm sorry, Mother and Dad, but I cannot look after you."], thus making void the word of God through your tradition which you hand on. And many such things you do." And he called the people to him again, and said to them, "Hear me, all of you, and understand [Now, that's quite a preface. He's going to say something very important.]: There is nothing outside a man which by going into him can defile him; but the things which come out of a man are what defile him [Now obviously, this isn't ordinary dirt, is it, or pollution, or something like that. This is what affects the soul.]" And when he had entered the house, and left the people, his disciples asked him about that brief parable. And he said to them, "Then are you also without understanding [do you mean, nobody got my point?]? Do you not see that whatever goes into a man from outside cannot defile him [It might be indigestible, but it doesn't defile him.], since it enters, not his heart but his stomach, and so passes on [it's gone]?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.)

That's what the Greek says. "Thus he declared all foods clean." He didn't declare all foods digestible. He declared all foods clean, in this sense. That's why Paul says, "The man who is strong in faith may eat anything, while the weak man eats only vegetables." It has nothing to do with health, or the menu. It's talking about eating food offered to idols, which some thought contaminated the food. He declared all foods clean.

And he said, "What comes out of a man is what defiles a man. For from out of the heart of man, come evil [feelings? I thought the heart is where we had feelings. Notice in the New Testament, the heart is where you do your thinking. For from within, out of the heart of man, come evil] thoughts [we think in our hearts in the Bible], fornication, theft, murder, adultery, coveting, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a man."

Now, is that a new teaching? . . . He mentions particularly thoughts, doesn't He? The thoughts are what defile a person. And doesn't the tenth commandment suggest this? It is not so much the acts you perform as the wanting to do it, the contemplation of it. So the tenth

commandment forbids even evil desire. You remember, in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew, Jesus said, “Of old it was said, ‘You shall not murder.’ I say if you hated your brother you are a murderer. Of old it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ I say, if you’ve wanted to do it, you’ve broken the commandment.” So this is an Old Testament teaching, because way back, Moses himself said, “You shall not hate your neighbor in your heart.” All these teachings of Jesus were already there in the Old Testament, but they had missed them, and they had substituted instead these commandments of men. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Mark, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:

<http://pkp.cc/53MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/54MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

There was but one hope for the human race—that into this mass of discordant and corrupting elements might be cast a new leaven; that there might be brought to mankind the power of a new life; that the knowledge of God might be restored to the world. {Ed 76.1}

Christ came to restore this knowledge. He came to set aside the false teaching by which those who claimed to know God had misrepresented Him. He came to manifest the nature of His law, to reveal in His own character the beauty of holiness. {Ed 76.2}

Christ came to the world with the accumulated love of eternity. Sweeping away the exactions which had encumbered the law of God, He showed that the law is a law of love, an expression of the Divine Goodness. He showed that in obedience to its principles is involved the happiness of mankind, and with it the stability, the very foundation and framework, of human society. {Ed 76.3}

All Christ’s miracles were wrought to bless those whom these leading Jews neglected and despised, and refused to help. And He was beloved [by the common people] because He was the Restorer, the Great Physician. All His graces were light from heaven. In every good work He sought to lead them to accept Him as their personal Saviour. His life was fragrant, a savor of life unto life. He brought sunshine into the heart and home. They came to Him mourning, and left Him with songs of praise and glad rejoicing. He offered Himself to them that they might give Him a home in their hearts. {TDG 275.2}

As a Teacher sent from God, Christ’s work was to explain the true significance of the laws of God’s government. His work was important; for He sought to present truth in contrast to the many false theories so destructive to the salvation of all who entertained them. He came, not to abrogate the law, but to be in His life a correct expositor of the character of God, which the

law revealed. To remove the confusion of opinion existing everywhere concerning the meaning of the law, He Himself lived the law in its purity. {ST, May 7, 1902 par. 7}

Christ came as One able to expound the law of God, so long misunderstood and misinterpreted by priests and leaders. He tore away the gloomy framework of error and doubt, tradition and superstition, with which men had surrounded truth and obscured its brightness. Resetting the jewels of truth in the framework of God's law, He caused them to shine in their original, heavenly luster. He taught a religion entirely different from the religion taught by the Pharisees. He showed that true happiness springs from purity of heart. True religion is not a mere theory; it affects the heart, and is expressed in the life by good works. {ST, May 7, 1902 par. 8}

Heaven's law is always merciful, kind, tender, helpful, uplifting to others. {FLB 84.4}

Love to Jesus will be manifested in a desire to work as He worked for the blessing and uplifting of humanity. It will lead to love, tenderness, and sympathy toward all the creatures of our heavenly Father's care. {SC 77.4}

Those who believe in Christ and walk humbly with Him, . . . who watch to see what they can do to help and bless and strengthen the souls of others, cooperate with the angels who minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. Jesus gives them grace, and wisdom, and righteousness, making them a blessing to all with whom they are brought in contact. The more humble they are in their own estimation, the more blessings they receive from God, because receiving does not exalt them. They make a right use of their blessings, for they receive to impart. {TDG 356.5}

The Son of God came to the world as a restorer. He was the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Every word He uttered was spirit and life. He spoke with authority, conscious of His power to bless humanity, and deliver the captives bound by Satan; conscious also that by His presence He could bring to the world fullness of joy. He longed to help every oppressed and suffering member of the human family, and show that it was His prerogative to bless, not to condemn. {LHU 37.2}

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}

The Jews were so exacting in regard to ceremonial purity that their regulations were extremely burdensome. Their minds were occupied with rules and restrictions and the fear of outward defilement, and they did not perceive the stain that selfishness and malice impart to the soul. {MB 24.2}

Among the Jews the question, “Who is my neighbour?” caused endless dispute. They had no doubt as to the heathen and the Samaritans. These were strangers and enemies. But where should the distinction be made among the people of their own nation and among the different classes of society? Whom should the priest, the rabbi, the elder, regard as neighbor? They spent their lives in a round of ceremonies to make themselves pure. Contact with the ignorant and careless multitude, they taught, would cause defilement that would require wearisome effort to remove. Were they to regard the “unclean” as neighbors? {COL 376.1}

This question Christ answered in the parable of the good Samaritan. He showed that our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, color, or class distinction. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help. Our neighbor is every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary. Our neighbor is every one who is the property of God. {COL 376.2}

Jesus began the work of reformation by coming into close sympathy with humanity. While He showed the greatest reverence for the law of God, He rebuked the pretentious piety of the Pharisees, and tried to free the people from the senseless rules that bound them. He was seeking to break down the barriers which separated the different classes of society, that He might bring men together as children of one family. His attendance at the marriage feast was designed to be a step toward effecting this. {DA 150.3}

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. {MH 25.3}

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. {MH 25.4}

He passed by no human being as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. In whatever company He found Himself He presented a lesson appropriate to the time and the circumstances. Every neglect or insult shown by men to their fellow men only made Him more conscious of their need of His divine-human sympathy. 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. {MH 25.5}

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 Holy Spirit will not compel men to take a certain course of action. We are free moral agents; and when sufficient evidence has been given us as to our duty it is left with us to decide our course. {RH, July 17, 1888 par. 4}

All should be intelligent in regard to the agency by which the soul is destroyed. It is not because of any decree that God has sent out against men or women. He does not make them spiritually blind. God gives sufficient light and evidence to enable them to distinguish truth from error. But He does not force them to receive truth. He leaves them free to choose the good or to choose the evil. If people resist evidence that is sufficient to guide their judgment in the right direction and choose evil once, they will do this more readily the second time. The third time they will still more eagerly withdraw from God and choose to stand on the side of Satan. And in this course they will continue until they are confirmed in evil and believe the lie they have cherished as truth.—*Manuscript 126, 1901 (Sermons and Talks, vol. 2, pp. 183, 184).* {CTr 103.4}

The law of love being the foundation of the government of God, the happiness of all created beings depended upon their perfect accord with its great principles of righteousness. God desires from all His creatures the service of love—homage that springs from an intelligent appreciation of His character. He takes no pleasure in a forced allegiance, and to all He grants freedom of will, that they may render Him voluntary service. {GC 493.2}

When Christ took human nature upon Him, He bound humanity to Himself by a tie of love that can never be broken by any power save the choice of man himself. Satan will constantly present allurements to induce us to break this tie—to choose to separate ourselves from Christ. Here is where we need to watch, to strive, to pray, that nothing may entice us to *choose* another master; for we are always free to do this. But let us keep our eyes fixed upon Christ, and He will preserve us. Looking unto Jesus, we are safe. Nothing can pluck us out of His hand. In constantly beholding Him, we "are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." 2 Corinthians 3:18. {SC 72.1}

Through the ministry of the angels the Holy Spirit is enabled to work upon the mind and heart of the human agent and draw him to Christ. . . . But the Spirit of God does not interfere with the freedom of the human agent. The Holy Spirit is given to be a helper, so that man may cooperate with the Divine, and it is given to Him to draw the soul but never to force obedience. {TMK 57.2}

God had power to hold Adam back from touching the forbidden fruit; but had He done this, Satan would have been sustained in his charge against God's arbitrary rule. Man would not have been a free moral agent, but a mere machine (RH June 4, 1901). {1BC 1084.2}

Our will is not to be forced into co-operation with divine agencies, but it must be voluntarily submitted. Were it possible to force upon you with a hundredfold greater intensity the influence of the Spirit of God, it would not make you a Christian, a fit subject for heaven. {MB 142.1}

Every miracle that Christ performed was a sign of His divinity. He was doing the very work that had been foretold of the Messiah; but to the Pharisees these works of mercy were a positive offense. The Jewish leaders looked with heartless indifference on human suffering. In many cases their selfishness and oppression had caused the affliction that Christ relieved. Thus His miracles were to them a reproach. {DA 406.4}

That which led the Jews to reject the Saviour's work was the highest evidence of His divine character. The greatest significance of His miracles is seen in the fact that they were for the blessing of humanity. The highest evidence that He came from God is that His life revealed the character of God. He did the works and spoke the words of God. Such a life is the greatest of all miracles. {DA 406.5}

The change in human hearts, the transformation of human characters, is a miracle that reveals an ever-living Saviour, working to rescue souls. {DA 407.1}

God does not stand toward the sinner as an executioner of the sentence against transgression; but He leaves the rejectors of His mercy to themselves, to reap that which they have sown. Every ray of light rejected, every warning despised or unheeded, every passion indulged, every transgression of the law of God, is a seed sown which yields its unfailing harvest. The Spirit of God, persistently resisted, is at last withdrawn from the sinner, and then there is left no power to control the evil passions of the soul, and no protection from the malice and enmity of Satan. {GC 36.1}

Through persistently cherishing evil, willfully disregarding the pleadings of divine love, the sinner loses the love for good, the desire for God, the very capacity to receive the light of heaven. The invitation of mercy is still full of love, the light is shining as brightly as when it first dawned upon his soul; but the voice falls on deaf ears, the light on blinded eyes. {MB 92.3}

They [the Pharisees] attributed to satanic agencies the holy power of God, manifested in the works of Christ. Thus the Pharisees sinned against the Holy Ghost. Stubborn, sullen, ironhearted, they determined to close their eyes to all evidence, and thus they committed the unpardonable sin (RH Jan. 18, 1898). {5BC 1092.4}

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

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}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 7 “Teaching Disciples: Part I”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 8:22–38; Matthew 20:29–34; John 12:25; Mark 9:1–50; Malachi 4:5, 6; Luke 9:30, 31.

Memory Text

“When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, “Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me” Mark 8:34, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Seeing Clearly
- III. The Cost of Discipleship
- IV. The Mountain and the Multitude
- V. Who Is the Greatest?
- VI. The Healthy Man in Hell
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. In the previous section of the Gospel according to Mark (4:35-8:21), he emphasizes the disciples’ failure – three boat scenes are contrasted with three good responses featuring two women and a sick girl’s concerned father. This whole section can be summarized in Jesus’ words, “Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened?” (8:17)
2. In spite of seeing and hearing Jesus, witnessing and even performing miracles and experiencing the wonders of the kingdom, his disciples stubbornly resist appropriating the good news of God’s remarkable kingdom. In apparent frustration Jesus asks: “Do you have eyes and fail to see? Do you have ears and fail to hear? And do you not remember?” (8:18)

3. Although the disciples have seen, heard and even participated with divine power in God's incipient but growing kingdom, they do not understand. They are blind. Jesus is trying hard to heal them. In the next crucial middle section of the gospel (8:22-10:52), Mark explores what lies at the heart of this blindness – an unwillingness to see. "As Jesus' teachings challenged the twelve disciples 2,000 years ago, so they continue to confront disciples today with the deep cost, and benefit, of following Jesus." (Sabbath afternoon)
4. Why is this miracle of healing the blind so significant in Mark (8:22-30)? Why did it take Jesus two touches to heal the blind man? What lessons can we learn from this story? (Sunday's lesson) "This section of the second Gospel is marked off by the healing of two different blind men, one at the middle of Mark 8 and the other at the end of Mark 10. These miracle 'bookends' illustrate dramatically how discipleship includes spiritual insight regarding who Jesus is and where He is going." (Sabbath afternoon)
5. This central part of the gospel is organized by a pattern of three parallel sequences (8:27-28; 9:30-37; 10:32-45): Jesus is suffering loss, but the disciples are seeking gain. Next comes the need for repentance: Jesus explains to his disciples the evils of the empire way of thinking and the righteousness of God's kingdom.
6. What does the story in Mark 8:31–38 teach us about the cost of following Christ? (Monday's lesson) Where in this section do you see loss, gain and repentance? It is obvious that Jesus is not leading us on a pleasant afternoon walk and that the kingdom of God does not mean merely a few minor adjustments in our ordinary lives!
7. Just like the early Christians, most of us do not experience anything similar to what Peter, James and John shared with Jesus on the mount of transfiguration (9:2-8). What was Jesus trying to achieve with this? (Tuesday's lesson) In what sense is Jesus continuing and completing the task of Moses & Elijah? What does it mean for us today to "listen to Jesus" (9:7)? How do we do that in our own context?
8. In the next sequence, we will again have the pattern of Jesus suffering loss, the disciples seeking gain and the need for repentance (9:30-37). Can you identify them? How does this second round help us to understand what is going on?
9. How does Jesus contrast the way of an empire with the way of God's kingdom? Greatness is not achieved by elevating oneself above others (forcing others to honor and serve), but humbly placing oneself below others, honoring and serving *them*.
10. In this context, how do you understand 9:49-50 (cf. Matthew 5:13)?
11. When God is trying to say something to us, how good are we at listening? In what ways does God speak to you/us today? Are we open to it? Are we prepared to have our earlier ways of understanding things deconstructed in order to experience new ways of understanding? How can we help each other in this regard as a community of faith?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

How do you know for sure? Did Jesus die the death of a sinner? Did God torture His Son to death? In the Garden of Gethsemane, nobody touched Him. He wished somebody would touch Him. He asked the three to come and be with Him, and they slept. Nobody was with Him. All by Himself, He was left to reap the natural results of being a sinner, as if He were. Now we know that He was not a sinner. He had appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration shortly before, hadn't He, in the unveiled glory of God? I used to wonder why that's in the story. If Jesus had been in any respect out of harmony with His Father, what would have happened to Him? When He stood there in the unveiled glory of His Father? He would have been consumed. So the Mount of Transfiguration says, the One who went to Gethsemane and to Calvary was absolutely in harmony with His Father. There was no sin in Him at all. He didn't die because He was a sinner. He was perfect. But He was made to be sin.

In fact, Ellen White says, nobody could make Him to be sin. He made Himself to be sin. He took it on Himself. And nobody could kill Him. He said, "Nobody takes my life from me, but I lay it down of myself." So, in the Garden of Gethsemane, when He fell dying to the ground, the angels saw it. And they saw Gabriel speed down to strengthen Him. And had he not gone, He would have died. And that answers question number two. Yes, death is the result of sin, but it is not torture and execution at the hands of our gracious God. The Father's crying, and the Son is dying, and the Father is not hurting His Son. But He's sadly giving Him up, as if He were a sinner. And He's reaping the natural consequences of this being given up, sadly, as if He were a sinner. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Luke, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:

<http://pkp.cc/55MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/56MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

And I wonder what Moses and Elijah discussed with Him. Did they encourage Him to go on through with that demonstration, to remain "gentle Jesus"? They knew He was the infinitely powerful One. But not to give up on His plan to show that the things God wants the most, love and trust, are not produced by force. And Jesus came to make plainer than ever in the history of the universe what God really wants.

So He didn't talk about an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth, which they had to do in Old Testament times. He said, "Turn the other cheek. Pray for your enemies." He came to express the ideal, and He did it right to the end. He could have come down from the cross and blotted them all out. Wouldn't that have given you satisfaction? You've been down to Forest Lawn and seen that huge picture of the Crucifixion. How about a frame right after that? And Christ would

say, "That is quite enough." And with His divinity flashing forth, He'd step down off the cross, and He'd terminate all those wicked people, but not till they got down on their knees and admitted that He was the powerful One. Wouldn't that give you some satisfaction? Don't you love to see somebody on the right side show his power? And He didn't do it. That was His difficult task. You know Ellen White's comment, that when He was surrounded by people bent on His destruction, insulting and tormenting Him, and yet they were so pretentiously pious, there came to Him the almost overmastering temptation to use His divine power and blot out His tormentors. But it was His difficult task to maintain the position He had assumed when He came to this earth. She even says there was a stirring among the angels who wanted to rescue their Lord from the torment, and the leaders of the angels held them back and said, "No, watch, wait; you've got to see something confirmed for all eternity in the next few hours." And the One who is infinite in power submitted with perfect gentleness and humility to all that abuse, to tell us something about God.

Well, this is the background. Jesus grew up with all this. He read 1 and 2 Kings. And before He went out to the cross and to all that torture, He had talked with Elijah, and He talked with Moses. And I wish it was on the record, what they talked about. I mean, they didn't talk about the weather, or Christmas coming up. They talked about the fact He was going out to die in that awful way. And they came to strengthen Him to go through with what He had come to accomplish. I wish I knew what the subject was. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *The Picture of God in All 66 – 1&2 Kings*, 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/17MMPOGIA66> (1 Kings-Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/18MMPOGIA66> (1 Kings-Part 2)

<http://pkp.cc/19MMPOGIA66> (2 Kings-Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/20MMPOGIA66> (2 Kings-Part 2)

In fact, when He was alone with the twelve offering explanations, they were more concerned with the positions they would hold in the Kingdom. Even in the upper room the night before He died, and they'd never asked Him about any of these things. And a lot of people haven't from that day to this. I think the time has come to really see if the Bible explains all these matters in the Old Testament. Why the killing? Why the descriptions of an ever-burning hell? Is that really the meaning of Scripture? Has this been answered? Does God say, "Love Me, or I'll kill you"? Has that been explained? "In the day that you eat of it you shall die." Has that been explained? Has anybody died that death? Why, it was Jesus Himself who died that death. So we go to watch Him die. Is there an explanation? Did God kill His Son? This is what we're really looking for, aren't we? To find out what God is really like. And on the basis of these explanations, would

we be able to stand with Moses at the foot of Sinai, and hear God raise His voice, and shake the ground with an earthquake, and there's fire, and lightening, and thunder.

Could we stand with Moses, and understand as Moses did, and say, "Yes that's God speaking, but don't misunderstand. There is no need to be afraid." You see, Moses understood, and he said, remember when we read it in Exodus, "There is no need to be afraid." See, he knew why God was raising His voice. He had to. The people were so hard of hearing. Do we accept these explanations? Could we stand with Job, and hear those three friends explaining, and realize that they were wrong? Would we agree with him? I find to this day people saying, "Look how Job needed to repent at the end of the book." Shame on them. When God came into the scene, He said, "Job has said of Me what is right."

Why don't we look at that compliment, and then go back through and say, "How could it be said that Job said of the Father what is right?"

So we have an opportunity now, Mark, Luke, John, to look at Jesus' explanations. And the most important ones are not His words, but the things that He did, for that's evidence. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Intertestament Period & Matthew, recorded March 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/51MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/52MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

And then, picture Jesus in the upper room the night before He was crucified. The record says that the twelve disciples were squabbling as to which one of them was the greatest. If you look in Luke's account, he has it in this order. Jesus said to the twelve, "I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover supper with you. But the one who is to betray Me is sitting with Me at the table." They began to argue as to which one of them would do this terrible thing. But they also were arguing as to which one of them should be thought of as the most important. Can you imagine their arguing about such a subject mixed in with which one of them is going to betray Him?

How did the Son of God treat them? Did He chide them for their childish behavior? Or scold them for their unwillingness to wash each other's feet? Instead, the whole universe watched as their Creator, the One they worshiped, arose, got a basin and a towel, and the supreme Creator got down on His knees and washed a dozen pairs of dirty feet. He even washed the feet of His betrayer, Judas. Think what it says about God that He would treat them in this way. Jesus could have looked up at them and said, "You don't believe My Father would be willing to do this, do you?" {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #13, "How

God Treats His Erring Children” recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/13MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

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}

The plant grows by receiving that which God has provided to sustain its life. So spiritual growth is attained through co-operation with divine agencies. {Ed 106.1}

Sanctification is not the work of a moment, an hour, or a day. It is a continual growth in grace. {7BC 947.5}

Peace comes with dependence on divine power. As fast as the soul resolves to act in accordance with the light given, the Holy Spirit gives more light and strength. {TM 518.1}

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}

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}

God’s law is the law of love. He has surrounded you with beauty to teach you that you are not placed on earth merely to delve for self, to dig and build, to toil and spin, but to make life bright and joyous and beautiful with the love of Christ—like the flowers, to gladden other lives by the ministry of love. {MB 97.3}

When we are faithful in making God known, our impulses will be under divine supervision, and we shall make steady growth, spiritually and intellectually. {UL 81.4}

So Christ expressed His love for His disciples. Their selfish spirit filled Him with sorrow, but He entered into no controversy with them regarding their difficulty. Instead He gave them an example they would never forget. His love for them was not easily disturbed or quenched. He knew that the Father had given all things into His hands, and that He came from God, and went to God. He had a full consciousness of His divinity; but He had laid aside His royal crown and kingly robes, and had taken the form of a servant. One of the last acts of His life on earth was to gird Himself as a servant, and perform a servant’s part. {DA 644.5}

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}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 8 “Teaching Disciples: Part II”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 10; Genesis 1:27; Genesis 2:24; Galatians 4:1, 2; Romans 6:1–11; Isaiah 11:1–16.

Memory Text

“ ‘For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many’ ” (Mark 10:45, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. God’s Plan for Marriage
- III. Jesus and Children
- IV. The Best Investment
- V. Can You Drink My Cup?
- VI. ‘What Do You Want Me to Do for You?’
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This chapter of Mark carries important teachings about what it means to follow Jesus, particularly as it relates to living in the here and now: marriage, children, how to relate to riches, and the reward and cost of following Him. Topping it off is the healing of a second blind man (Mark 10:46–52, compare with Mark 8:22–26), which provides the closing bookend for the section (Mark 8:22–10:52) and a beautiful illustration of what following Jesus both costs and leads to.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. When the pharisees asked Jesus about divorce, why does Mark say they posed the question as a trap (10:1-12)? (Sunday’s lesson) Where is this incident taking place (10:1)? Why does Jesus only give the detailed answer when he is back safely in the house with the disciples (cf. 4:10; 7:17)? Why did John the Baptist get put in prison and finally lose his head? How do we know that the present passage is not designed to give detailed case law for divorce (cf. Matthew 5:32; 1 Corinthians 7)?

3. Jesus does not say that Moses was wrong with the 'permission' in Deuteronomy, but he insists that one should go back to Genesis, to the account of creation itself, to discover the Creator's will. Why is mentioning "hardness of heart" significant here (10:5, cf. 8:17)? The problem was not with the ideal, nor with the law, but with the people. Israel, instead of being the prototype of renewed humanity, was just like everybody else.
4. What cure for "hardness of heart" does Jesus offer (10:13-16)? What did Jesus do for those who brought children to him? (Monday's lesson) How do we model compassion and sensitivity so that those who are truly weak and vulnerable are not hurt?
5. What is the connection between the story of 'the rich man' and children (10:17-31) (Tuesday's lesson) Jesus invites a man with money to join him in serving the poor, who are also portrayed in Mark as "little ones". In the ensuing discussion Jesus shows that with God's assistance one can attain the radical reorientation of attitude and action required in God's kingdom (10:24-27; cf. 1:15; 6:12).
6. This brings us to the third cycle of Jesus foretelling his suffering loss, ridicule and death (and subsequent resurrection). In a shame culture, ridicule should be avoided at all costs. But the Son of Man will experience loss of honor, there is no glory or greatness in what is ahead of him (10:32-45). (Wednesday's lesson)
7. What is the disciples' response? Where do we now see the example of the disciples seeking gain (10:35-45)? How is the repentance couched in Jesus' response to them? Jesus' radical other-regarding service liberates – ransoms – the oppressed and outcasts ushering them into God's compassionate and inclusive kingdom.
8. This section concludes as it began, with a story of a blind man cured, highlighting one more time the disciples' "blindness" (10:46-52). (Thursday's lesson) What question did Jesus ask (10:36.51)? Blind beggars – another of society's "little ones" – have had their concern for status and glory beaten out of them. Jesus makes the beggar whole and liberates him from his exile on the dusty roadside (10:46) and restores him to God's kingdom community (10:52).
9. This entire section is framed by blind men seeing, which highlights by contrast the disciples' lack of seeing properly. How can the disciples, who have eyes, not see, while the blind can see and follow? Their desire to be great prevents the disciples from seeing and following. In the end, they will deny and desert Jesus.
10. How can the disciples' incomprehension assist our comprehension? Their action is not due to ignorance. They have seen Jesus and his power, they themselves have exercised that power, yet failed to understand. How can we avoid their fate? How can our hearts escape being captive to cares of this world? Is our desire for self-glorification, power, even sitting at the right hand of God himself, prohibiting us from seeing the kingdom way of servant love, compassion and self-sacrificial service? How can we follow Jesus in our time and place today? What does it mean to be Jesus' true follower in our contemporary context?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And at a wedding those are very serious words. I always use them if I have the privilege of conducting a wedding. And whenever I speak those words, I don't know why, they are particularly moving. Jesus said this Himself! Whatever God has joined together, let not man put asunder. "So they said to him," all right "why then did Moses command one to give a certificate of divorce, and to put her away?" Haven't we got you there? Is that not in the Bible? We have key texts for it! Moses did that. And if you'll go back and read, at the end of these laws, it says, "These are the laws that God gave Moses and Moses gave the people." So they thought they had Him there.

And Jesus said to them, "Yes, I'm not going to say that My Father and I, through Moses, did not give you permission to divorce your wives. But do you know why? For your hardness of heart Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. And I say to you: whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another, commits adultery." And even the disciples were stunned by this! "And the disciples said to him, 'If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry.'" That is, "If we have to commit ourselves to these women for the rest of our lives—you mean you never can get out of this? It would be best not to marry. I mean, that's too great a commitment!" They couldn't understand. He says, "Well, maybe you can't take it." He said to them, "Not all men can receive this precept, but only those to whom it is given."

But look at the lesson in there! He says, "Not only the divorce laws, but a lot of other things that I gave you in the Old Testament, are not evidence of approval. It's just as far as I was able to lead you at the time. And because of the stiffness of your necks, and the hardness of your hearts, I permitted you to divorce." Remember Malachi? "I hate divorce." Remember in Malachi? "I don't like it." And even if it's for a legal reason, it's always a very difficult situation. There is no nice, clean, easy way out of a marriage. There never is a clear way to handle it afterwards, because the whole thing is an emergency that was not supposed to happen. So the provision for divorce, on any grounds, was not supposed to happen. I mean infidelity was not supposed to happen.

So if we have difficulty with divorce laws, of course, they are an emergency measure. The ideal is that the situation would never prevail that would call for divorce, and the two would remain one forever. That's what God intended. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Intertestament Period & Matthew, recorded March 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/51MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/52MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Isn't it that in God we have all these qualities in one Person, and it takes two persons, a man and a woman, really, to have all of these. But if we live together long enough, some of them will rub off, and if a marriage has been good, it will result in two whole persons. Haven't you noticed people who have been married for a long time how much they seem to be alike? I'll never forget Doctor and Mrs. Caviness walking down the aisle at PUC; you would think they were brother and sister. I think of other couples that walk down the aisle. These things rub off on each other. A happy, prosperous marriage results in two whole people, not in the wife being lost in her husband. Besides, what is the image of God within us? The closest statement I can think of from Ellen White that represents the truth of Scripture, is that every human being, man and woman, created in the image of God, is endowed with a power akin to that of the Creator—individuality, power to think and to do. If marriage means that one member of the partnership gives up his or her individuality, then that marriage has served to destroy the image of God in one or the other, and we wouldn't dare do that. So a good marriage would result in two individuals with power to think and to do.

Now turn back to Paul and other places in the Bible. At weddings, whose writings do we read most, but Paul's! He had lovely things to say about marriage. He also said that husbands should love their wives. And then, lest we misunderstand that, he wrote 1 Corinthians 13 which says "Love is never rude, and is never arrogant, it never boasts. It never even insists on having its own way." Then if a husband loves his wife in terms of 1 Corinthians 13, he never insists on having his own way.

Then he says we should love our wives as we love ourselves. And if we don't really love ourselves, he goes a little further and says we should love our wives as Christ has loved the church and gave His life for the church. So it seems pretty clear, doesn't it? Would you want to live with a God who would say such things about all of us? So, it's another illustration of taking the Bible as a whole, and not "here a little and there a little", and certainly not marginal comments, which might misrepresent Him rather seriously. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from audio series, "Picture Of God In All 66", *Exodus*, recorded October 1981, Riverside CA}

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Exodus, recorded October 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/3MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/4MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Lou: I am struck by a bit of incongruity, it would seem, in the Scripture. Where on the one hand, you are talking about us growing up—and then if you turn to the words of Jesus, over and over again He said we should be as little children. And, if we're not as little children, we can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven. What do you do with those references? For instance, in Luke and in Matthew where He talked about being as little children and seemed to set up a very high priority on that—and you're saying, "Why don't you grow up?"

Graham: When you are putting it especially in the setting of the audience around, and how they were misbehaving, and He takes a little child and says, "Unless you're at least like this, you'll not see the Kingdom." I don't think we should ever lose that: the trust of a little child—the curiosity, the willingness to listen, the willingness to learn. You remember the Laodiceans are not willing to listen to anything, though they're grown up, it would appear. I think that is never to be lost. But Ephesians also says that while we should never lose those precious qualities of childish interest and curiosity and willingness to listen, we should not remain as children, requiring much protection. We should become adults who can stand on their own. I think it's marvelous to see somebody in his seventies, eighties, nineties, who still has the curiosity, interest and trust of a little child.

Lou: We could think of some, couldn't we? So you say he's talking about certain qualities.

Graham: Oh, yes. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #18 with Lou Venden, "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>*

Now, in Ephesians, next time, Paul says, "Now, if all that matters is being reborn, and being restored to a right relationship, why don't we just stay that way?" No, he says little children need too much protection, in an evil world. And it will get worse as the end approaches. We need to grow up, and not be babies any longer. So Paul deplores the condition of those who have just a new heart and a right spirit, and the beginnings of trust and willingness to listen. He said, by now you ought to be teachers, you need milk, not solid food; milk is for those who are unskilled in the word of God.

If we still need lots of protection to be true to what we know to be true, then we're still babes, and we're not ready for the difficult times to come. And the Bible warns us of those before the end comes. The message I get from the remaining books in the Bible is that once we've been reborn, we ought to grow up, without delay, and become mature people who do what's right because it is right, as Job did, even though everything seems to the contrary. And if we do not grow up and have nothing more after fifty years than the faith of a little child, we are all retards. When a person is physically retarded, we get worried. When he's mentally retarded,

we become quite alarmed. When he's spiritually retarded, we say, "Isn't that sweet? The faith of a little child." No, that's the most dangerous respect in which to be retarded. And Ephesians really deals with this next time. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Galatians, recorded May 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/65MMPOGIA66>*

Now not to get too involved here, but Luke doesn't say, "Blessed are the poor in spirit." Luke says, "Blessed are the poor" and that doesn't make much sense because it isn't blessed to be poor, is it? But the reasoning is exactly the same. You see, to the Jew if you were rich they were grateful it was God's blessing. But God only blessed good people. Therefore, rich people were good people. So if a man was wealthy he knew he already had God's approval and Jesus couldn't bring him any help at all. He already had God's approval. And that's why He said it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into the kingdom. And the disciples said, "That's very puzzling because if a rich person can't make it into the kingdom who can?" because you're rich because you're blessed and you're blessed because you're good.

This is the whole argument in the book of Job. The four friends said you must have sinned because now you're poor. And when the rich young ruler was told to sell all that he had and to give it to the poor we sometimes over-simplify that and say the man was greedy. No, that would have been a trivial temptation. The rich young ruler was asked to give up the clearest evidence that he was blessed of God and a virtuous Jew. He was asked to associate with sinners and that was too much for him. It wasn't just greed and selfishness. It was too much for him to give up the evidence of approval, God's approval as accepted by all the Jews and they believe it to this very day. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, We've Camped Around This Mountain Long Enough, #1, recorded July 1989, South Dakota Conference Ministers Meeting} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/1MMCAMPED>*

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}

Christ watched children at their play, and often expressed His approval when they gained an innocent victory over something they were determined to do. He sang to children in sweet and blessed words. They knew that He loved them. He never frowned on them. He shared childish joys and sorrows. Often he would gather flowers, and after pointing out their beauties to the children, would leave them with them as a gift. He had made the flowers, and He delighted to point out their beauties. {LHU 90.5}

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}

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

In Christ's kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner. The angels of heaven do not come to the earth to rule, and to exact homage, but as messengers of mercy, to co-operate with men in uplifting humanity. {DA 550.6}

In His life and lessons Christ has given a perfect exemplification of the unselfish ministry which has its origin in God. God does not live for Himself. By creating the world, and by upholding all things, He is constantly ministering to others. "He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust." Matthew 5:45. This ideal of ministry the Father committed to His Son. Jesus was given to stand at the head of humanity, by His example to teach what it means to minister. His whole life was under a law of service. He served all, ministered to all. {AA 359.1}

The Teacher from heaven, no less a personage than the Son of God, came to earth to reveal the character of the Father to men, that they might worship him in spirit and in truth. Christ revealed to men the fact that the strictest adherence to ceremony and form would not save them; for the kingdom of God was spiritual in its nature. Christ came to the world to sow it with truth. He held the keys to all the treasures of wisdom, and was able to open doors to science, and to reveal undiscovered stores of knowledge, were it essential to salvation. He presented to men that which was exactly contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress upon men the paternal love of the Father, who "so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, enjoining upon them to love, not only those who loved them, but those who hated

them, who treated them despitefully. In this he was revealing to them the character of the Father, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth. Those who accepted his teaching were under the guardian care of angels, who were commissioned to strengthen, to enlighten, that the truth might renew and sanctify the soul. {RH, November 17, 1891 par. 7}

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}

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}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 9 “Jerusalem Controversies”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 11; 1 Kings 1:32–48; Zechariah 9:9, 10; Isaiah 56:7; Jeremiah 7:11; Mark 12:1–34.

Memory Text

“ ‘And whenever you stand praying, if you have anything against anyone, forgive him, that your Father in heaven may also forgive you your trespasses’ ” (Mark 11:25, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. The Triumphal Entry
- III. A Cursed Tree and a Cleansed Temple
- IV. Who Said You Could Do That?
- V. Earthly Duties and Heavenly Outcomes
- VI. The Greatest Commandment
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “In this week’s lesson, when Jesus arrives in Jerusalem, He has a series of six controversies with the religious leaders (while five controversies were recorded in Mark 2 and 3 [see lesson 3]).” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. In this concluding section of Mark (11:1-16:8a), we will see the final responses of the story’s major characters, along with Jesus’ final speech to his disciples and a description of his death and its purpose. Like the cured blind man (10:52), but unlike the blind disciples, Mark’s audience needs the eyes to see and follow the radical way of God’s faithful and passionate kingdom. We will see the final responses to the authoritative power of Jesus by the religious leaders, crowds, and the disciples themselves.
3. What role does the story of Jesus’ triumphal entry to Jerusalem play in Mark’s gospel (Mark 11:1-11; cf. Zechariah 9:9,10)? (Sunday’s lesson) Why do the crowds eagerly welcome Jesus into Jerusalem? What do the following events show about

- this crowd (1:22; 1:27; 1:32,33; 11:18; 15:10, 12:37; 14:43; 15:11-14)? Why does the crowd's initial euphoria turn to rejection (4:5-6, 16-17)?
4. What is the significance of the cursed tree and cleansing of the temple events (11:12-26)? How does the Markan 'Sandwich story' function here (see lesson 3)? (Monday's lesson) Jesus curses the tree but cleanses the temple, two opposite actions. But the irony is that the religious leaders will now react by plotting to kill Jesus. That action will spell the end of the temple services and the nation as God's representatives.
 5. Tuesday's lesson looks at the challenge that the religious leaders bring to Jesus (11:27-33) and his subsequent parable in which the leaders are thinly disguised murderers against a beneficent authority (12:1-11). How does this expose the responses to the values that Jesus represents, and God wants them to reflect?
 6. What is going on in Mark 12:13-27, and what truths does Jesus teach? (Wednesday's lesson) How does Jesus show that his movement represents a revolution much deeper and wider than their attacks on pagan dominion? What are the different levels of meaning in Jesus' saying: "Give back to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is God's" (12:17)?
 7. What deep question did the friendly scribe ask, and what double response did Jesus give (12:28-34)? How does this help us understand the type of religion that is not an empty and showy ritual, but the true essence of God's kingdom and rulership? How solid is our wholehearted love for God and the community?
 8. According to the New Testament, the followers of Jesus, equipped with the Holy Spirit are given authority, under his direction to act in his name in the world. Where can you see the "traffic jams" in our world waiting for people to step in and resolve the problem? Where can you see the "temples" that need to be challenged and warned? Where are the people who will know how to give a wise answer to the question: "Who do you think you are?" How can the community of believers play a prophetic role to the wider world?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

And didn't Jesus usually talk softly? Remember how He sat on the Mount of Olives, and He even cried. Who's going to stay around and listen to a preacher who's crying? But when you realize *why* He was; "Oh", He said, "I've wanted to come close to you for so long, and you would not listen. Like a mother hen gathering its chicks, I've wanted to gather you and help you and heal you and tell you. Yes, I raised My voice on Sinai, but not to make you afraid; but to get you to listen and listen long enough so I could tell you that I don't want to make you afraid. And hardly anybody has believed that through all the years" Jesus could have gone on, "so now I've come in person, and are any of you scared of Me?" Were they scared of Jesus? Only once did they

run. When He cleansed the sanctuary, they ran. But the guilty adults ran. When they came back, they found Him healing the sick and talking to the children. They weren't scared. That was no ordinary anger there. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – 1&2 Kings, 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/17MMPOGIA66> (1 Kings-Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/18MMPOGIA66> (1 Kings-Part 2)

<http://pkp.cc/19MMPOGIA66> (2 Kings-Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/20MMPOGIA66> (2 Kings-Part 2)

Or to read the descriptions of how the children related to Christ—they weren't afraid of Him. In fact, the disciples thought they should be more afraid of Him. But they would climb up in His lap and Ellen White says they used to look up into His face, and she mentions that they loved to kiss that pensive face. They weren't afraid of Him. That says a lot about the kind of person our God is.

Even after the cleansing of the sanctuary—and that's one time most folk rather suppose that Christ got thoroughly angry. It's significant, though, that after He had cleansed the sanctuary not everybody ran away. Who didn't run? The children didn't run. Sick didn't run. When I was a small boy and a big man got angry, I led the way out. But when Jesus said, "Take these things hence. Don't turn my Father's house into an emporium" is the Greek word. The adults ran, but the children saw nothing to be afraid of. It was nothing like our anger.

Won't this be more like the look on the face of Christ when He comes the second time and some of us look at Him and say, "We're not afraid. Lo, this is our God, we've waited for Him." Other people look at the very same face and rush to the mountains and the caves. Is Christ two-faced, and the wicked see one side and the righteous see the other side? It's the same face. The difference is in us. The guilty adults ran as divinity flashed through humanity. But the children weren't scared. And when the adults came back sheepishly embarrassed that they had all run away from one man, they found Jesus sitting in the temple surrounded by the children healing the sick. So don't cite that as an illustration of one time at least He got thoroughly angry—not like our anger. Oh, they were impressed with the seriousness of what He said. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, PUC Teacher's Conference, #5 "Jesus the Perfect Person", recorded April 1974, Angwin, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/5MMPUCTEACH>

A lawyer came to Jesus one time and said, “What would it mean to really keep the law? Sum it up for us.” And Jesus said, “If you love God with all your heart and your neighbor as yourself, you have kept the essential principles of God’s law.” And later Paul said in Romans 13:8 and 10: “He who loves his neighbor has fulfilled all law, wherefore love is the fulfilling of the law.” To really obey God’s commandments as He wants them obeyed is to love. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, PUC Teacher’s Conference, #4 “You Are to Be Perfect”, recorded April 1974, Angwin, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/4MMPUCTEACH>*

Ah, that’s another thing we think Jesus made up. You remember when the lawyer came and asked Jesus to sum up the Decalogue, He said, “To love the Lord your God with all your heart, and your neighbor as yourself.” And later He adds, “And you shall not hate your neighbor in your heart.” That’s all here in Leviticus and Deuteronomy. Jesus learned from the Old Testament. Apparently the picture of God in the Old Testament was not obscure to Jesus or to others. It was to most, unfortunately. It’s just that Jesus didn’t misunderstand. He read the Bible for its original purpose. He told the Jews that many of them, unfortunately, read the Bible as a code book of deeds to be done and sins to be shunned, instead of a revelation of the truth about Him. He said, “The scriptures testify of Me, but you will not come to Me that you may have life.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Numbers, recorded October 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/7MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/8MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

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. {6T 63.3}

We are not to think of God only as a judge and to forget Him as a loving Father. Nothing can do our souls greater harm than this, for our whole spiritual life is molded from our conceptions of God’s character. We have lessons to learn of Jesus’ love. {OHC 176.5}

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}

Through the Jewish nation it was God's purpose to impart rich blessings to all peoples. Through Israel the way was to be prepared for the diffusion of His light to the whole world. The nations of the world, through following corrupt practices, had lost the knowledge of God. Yet in His mercy God did not blot them out of existence. He purposed to give them opportunity for becoming acquainted with Him through His church. He designed that the principles revealed through His people should be the means of restoring the moral image of God in man. {COL 286.1}

God desired to bring all peoples under His merciful rule. He desired that the earth should be filled with joy and peace. He created man for happiness, and He longs to fill human hearts with the peace of heaven. He desires that the families below shall be a symbol of the great family above. {COL 290.2}

Satan seeks to counterwork the work of God, and he is constantly urging men to accept his principles. He represents the chosen people of God as a deluded people. He is an accuser of the brethren, and his accusing power is employed against those who work righteousness. The Lord desires through His people to answer Satan's charges by showing the results of obedience to right principles. {COL 296.4}

The Lord loves us, and we are to love Him with the whole heart. Ask Him to guide you into all truth. He will do this. He longs to do it. He is waiting for you to ask Him with true humility and a firm belief that He will hear and answer you. {TMK 202.5}

Love, the basis of creation and of redemption, is the basis of true education. This is made plain in the law that God has given as the guide of life. The first and great commandment is, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind." Luke 10:27. To love Him, the infinite, the omniscient One, with the whole strength, and mind, and heart, means the highest development of every power. It means that in the whole being—the body, the mind, as well as the soul—the image of God is to be restored. {Ed 16.1}

Like the first is the second commandment, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." The law of love calls for the devotion of body, mind, and soul to the service of God and our fellow men. And this service, while making us a blessing to others, brings the greatest blessing to ourselves. Unselfishness underlies all true development. . . . {RC 51.3}

After Adam's sin and fall nothing was taken from the law of God. The principles of the ten commandments existed before the fall, and were of a character suited to the condition of a

holy order of beings. After the fall, the principles of those precepts were not changed, but additional precepts were given to meet man in his fallen state (3SG 295). {1BC 1104.3}

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}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 10 “The Last Days”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 12:41–44; Mark 13:1–32; Daniel 9:24–27; Daniel 7:25; 1 Thessalonians 4:13–18.

Memory Text

“ ‘Then they will see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then He will send His angels, and gather His elect from the four winds, from the farthest part of earth to the farthest part of heaven’ ” (Mark 13:26, 27, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Two Little Coins in the Offering
- III. Not One Stone on Another
- IV. The Abomination of Desolation
- V. The Great Tribulation
- VI. The Coming of the Son of Man
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Like many teachings of Jesus in Mark, the Lord’s instruction is in response to a question or a misunderstanding by His disciples. These questions or misunderstandings give Jesus the opportunity to teach truths vital to Christian life and experience. Jesus not only predicts the future but also instructs His disciples both then and now in how to prepare for the coming trials.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. In the last story of Chapter 12, Jesus contrasts the rich people who can afford to give plenty to the Temple treasury (and make sure that the others see that they are doing it), with the poor widow who has given “her whole life,” putting in everything she had (Sunday’s lesson).
3. What is the connection between Jesus’ riddle about David’s Lord and David’s son and the sacrifice of the widow? Jesus has no qualms drawing attention to a woman, insignificant by that world’s standards, to teach a spiritual lesson to His disciples and beyond. Why is it significant that Jesus uses women as didactic models of faith for people of His time and the subsequent Christian community?

4. After stopping the temple services from functioning in chapter 11, Jesus predicts that the whole temple will be demolished (13:3-13). No wonder the disciples are astonished. After all, they have just said how impressed they were with the sight of the temple (Monday's lesson). But the fact that they cannot even imagine these things happening does not preclude them from happening within a generation! Are there any lessons for us in all this?
5. What is striking in Mark 13:5–13 is that Jesus spends most of His time not in describing the fall of Jerusalem, but rather in warning His disciples "*beware*" four times, along with similar warnings and encouragements: don't be alarmed (13:7); don't worry (13:11); endure (13:13); understand (13:14), pray that it may not happen (13:18); don't believe false reports (13:21); be alert (13:23,33); be on the watch (13:34), and keep awake (13:35,37). Why is this significant? How does it fit with the overall response of the religious leaders (11:12-15) and the crowds (11:8-10; 14:43)?
6. Until v. 14 the disciples are supposed to stand firm and then they are supposed to run (so much so, that those with small children will have difficulty keeping up). Jesus speaks about the "desolating abomination" from Daniel 11:31 and 12:11 (Tuesday's lesson). How does this fit the theme of the vindication of Jesus: His resurrection, His ascension and His prediction of the destruction of the Temple?
7. Just as the time of Roman-Jewish war (AD 66-70) was a time of many would-be messiahs, false christs, offering rescue, trying to gain a following, promising signs and wonders, so it will be during the Christian era (Wednesday's lesson).
8. Thursday's lesson speaks about the coming of the Son of Man (13:24-32), of which only the Father knows (v. 32). How can we avoid reducing biblical prophecy to the level of a horoscope? The resulting command is not to "sit down and work out the prophetic timetable" – irresistibly exciting for so many people – but to "keep awake and watch". How do we do that?
9. The judgment that fell on the Temple in the first century is a foretaste, according to other New Testament passages, of the judgment that will fall on the whole world. How can we keep faithful to Jesus, rather than compromise with the present age? How can we be doing what we are supposed to do and leave to God what belongs to Him?
10. Don't let go of the good news, Jesus says, because "the one who endures to the end will be saved (13:13). When the Son of Man returns in glory, he will gather his faithful (13:26)."

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Now, Satan cannot use this method—the method of open investigation and inquiry. He would lose if he did. He doesn't dare invite our questions, for the truth is not with him. And so, he has used religion to silence inquiry. And then diabolically, he calls that willingness to believe without inquiry, faith.

Instead of evidence and truth, he has to substitute force, and fear, and ignorance, and miracles, and excitement, and feelings, and pomp and majesty, and ceremony, and mystery, and especially claims upon claims. All these things we must beware and be ready lest we be deceived. Let's not underestimate his cunning. He deceived one third of the brilliant angels.

Of course, if we read the sixty-six books through, we realize how often we have been warned to beware of such things. Jesus Himself warns specifically of Satan's methods. Look at the first passage on the Bible Reference Sheet. The familiar words of Matthew 24:24: "If anyone says to you then, 'Look, here is Christ!', or 'There He is!', don't believe it. False christs and false prophets are going to appear and will produce great signs and wonders to mislead, if it were possible, even God's own people!" (*Phillips*).

Also a little earlier in the same chapter, in Matthew 24:4, 5:

Jesus answered, "Watch out, and do not let anyone fool you. Many men, claiming to speak for me [and how many there are today], will come and say, 'I am the Messiah!' and they will fool many people." (GNT)

Just to show how far that can go, I brought just one book tonight. I think it is the most unusual Bible I have in my whole collection. I almost hesitate to travel with it lest it be found in my briefcase. This is *The New Testament of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ as Revised and Corrected by the Spirits*. It is the Spiritists' Bible. It is absolutely unbelievable. It came out in 1861. What is so remarkable about it, is that it thoroughly rewrites the New Testament in support of Spiritism. Yet, in the end of the Introduction, it claims that Jesus came down from heaven, the medium that He was, and the apostles came down with Him, and they corrected all the errors in the New Testament. And then it says, "Dear Reader, trust in God who made all things after the council of His own will. The Holy Spirits feel much interest in this work and the spirits who corrected this New Testament desire that the world will receive this correction as coming from them directed by God Himself, which is true. Signed, Jesus the Christ." A diabolical fraud! But look at the claim. Anybody can make claims. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #7, "The Question of Authority" recorded February 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/7MMCAG>*

On the other hand, the Second Coming is as near as our last moment of breath. And that's why I think of it at funerals. When a loved one dies, especially if he or she has been ill and in pain, the next moment of consciousness, that person is face to face with the Lord at the Second Coming. And I love that Thessalonians passage which says, "If someone dies before the Lord comes" and they feel maybe they have missed something? No. Thessalonians says, "They will arise first. Then we who are alive and remain will be caught up together with them to meet the Lord."

So the main thing is, more important than knowing when the End comes, is to trust God. And if I should die tonight, I want to die His trusting child, because then I will arise His trusting child. I'll have no complaints. We'll all have lots of questions. We might even say, "I kind of wanted to live through that." I think Paul did. Remember there, Paul said, "I'm torn between staying with you to help you and my desire to depart and be with the Lord." He didn't believe in the immortality of the soul. He knew that as a Roman citizen, when his head was cut off with that sharp sword, the next instant of consciousness he'd be face to face with the One he'd been preaching about with such pride. So he had no complaints.

So the End is really very, very near. Especially in a Medical Center like this when we see folk come to the end of their lives all the time, sometimes very sad. We have good news for them: "You fall asleep tonight; you will wake up the next moment from a dreamless sleep face to face with the Lord." That's how near it is. But I believe the big event is also near. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #19, "How Soon Will The Conflict Be Over?" 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/19MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

Fearful tests and trials await the people of God. The spirit of war is stirring the nations from one end of the earth to the other. But in the midst of the time of trouble that is coming—a time of trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—God's chosen people will stand unmoved. Satan and his angels cannot destroy them; for angels that excel in strength will protect them.—Letter 119, March 1, 1904, to J. J. Wessells. {TDG 69.5}

In the great closing work we shall meet with perplexities that we know not how to deal with, but let us not forget that the three great powers of heaven are working, that a divine hand is on the wheel, and that God will bring His purposes to pass. {Mar 252.2}

From the opening of the great controversy in heaven, Satan has maintained his cause through deception; and Christ has been working to unveil his schemes and to break his power. {DA 210.2}

God calls upon His creatures to turn their attention from the confusion and perplexity around them and admire His handiwork. As we study His works, angels from heaven will be by our side to enlighten our minds and guard them from Satan’s deceptions. {CT 457.1}

In the truths of His word, God has given to men a revelation of Himself; and to all who accept them they are a shield against the deceptions of Satan. {GC 465.1}

The manifestation of God’s love, His mercy and His goodness, and the work of the Holy Spirit upon the heart to enlighten and renew it, place us, through faith, in so close connection with Christ that, having a clear conception of His character, we are able to discern the masterly deceptions of Satan. {5T 744.2}

Then will be the time for us to trust wholly in God, and He will sustain us. I saw that our bread and water will be sure at that time, and that we shall not lack or suffer hunger; for God is able to spread a table for us in the wilderness. If necessary He would send ravens to feed us, as He did to feed Elijah, or rain manna from heaven, as He did for the Israelites. {EW 56.2}

The eye of God, looking down the ages, was fixed upon the crisis which His people are to meet, when earthly powers shall be arrayed against them. Like the captive exile, they will be in fear of death by starvation or by violence. But the Holy One who divided the Red Sea before Israel, will manifest His mighty power and turn their captivity. {GC 634.1}

As in the days of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, so in the closing period of earth’s history the Lord will work mightily in behalf of those who stand steadfastly for the right. He who walked with the Hebrew worthies in the fiery furnace will be with His followers wherever they are. His abiding presence will comfort and sustain. In the midst of the time of trouble—trouble such as has not been since there was a nation—His chosen ones will stand unmoved. Satan with all the hosts of evil cannot destroy the weakest of God’s saints. Angels that excel in strength will protect them, and in their behalf Jehovah will reveal Himself as a “God of gods,” able to save to the uttermost those who have put their trust in Him. {PK 513.1}

In the time of trouble, just previous to the coming of Christ, the lives of the righteous will be preserved through the ministration of holy angels. {3SG 196.1}

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}

The long night of gloom is trying, but the morning is deferred in mercy, because if the Master should come, so many would be found unready. God’s unwillingness to have His people perish, has been the reason of so long delay.—*Testimonies*, vol. 2, p. 194. (1868) {Ev 694.2}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 11 “Taken and Tried”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 14; John 12:4–6; Romans 8:28; Exodus 24:8; Jeremiah 31:31–34; Zechariah 13:7.

Memory Text

“And He said, ‘Abba, Father, all things are possible for you. Take this cup from Me; Nevertheless, not what I will, but what You will’ ” (Mark 14:36, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Unforgettable
- III. The Last Supper
- IV. Gethsemane
- V. Leaving All to Flee From Jesus
- VI. Who Are You?
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “This week’s lesson focuses on Mark 14, beginning with the fifth Sandwich Story, which interlinks two opposite actions in relation to Jesus. This is followed by the Last Supper, followed by His struggle in Gethsemane. There He is arrested and taken before the leaders to be tried. The trial scene is linked with Peter’s denial of Jesus, forming the sixth and last of the Sandwich Stories in Mark. (Sabbath afternoon)
2. What is a Markan Sandwich (or Intercalation)? Mark starts off with one partial story or event (A1), inserts another complete event (B) and then finally concludes the original story (A2) in an A1-B-A2 format. So, two opposite actions occur, but by an ironic twist, they affirm the same truth. According to the lesson author, there are six of these sandwiches (which most theologians agree on), others see 9, or 12, even 20.
3. Sunday’s lesson (14:1-11) discusses the fifth sandwich: “Killer Sandwich.”
A1: Plot to Kill Jesus 14:1-2
B: Anointing at Bethany 14:3-9
A2: Plot to Kill Jesus 14:10-11 (Judas agrees to betray him.)

4. A woman *generously* anoints Jesus with a very expensive perfume worth a year's wages. Judas *greedily* betrays Him for money, but for how much? Mark does not even say. Judas' greed is so great and his valuation of Jesus so low that he is not worth even a *set sum* of money. Disciples must be givers, not takers.
5. By using the two contrasting stories Mark sets before the readers two clashing plots while revealing the triumph of Jesus. "The plot of men to destroy the Messiah will actually become part of the gospel story because it brings to fruition the will of God in giving His Son for the salvation of humanity." (Sunday's lesson)
6. Monday's lesson focuses on the Last Supper (14:22-31) How is Mark's version of it different from Luke's? (Exodus 24:3-4; 6-8) Why is it significant that we hear Mark and do not read two thousand years of interpretation back into the text?
7. Tuesday's lesson discusses the experience of Jesus in Gethsemane (14:32-42). Why does Jesus ask Peter, James and John to "stay awake" (14:34,38 cf. 13:35, 37)? If even Jesus received "No!" as an answer to one of His most heartfelt prayers, should we be surprised if sometimes we receive the same answer?
8. Wednesday's lesson concentrates on Judas' betrayal (14:43-52) and that at the end "everyone deserted him and fled." When the disciples are not behaving as disciples, Mark refuses them the title. Why is Mark the only one who includes the story of a young man who runs away (14:51.52 cf. Genesis 39:12; Mark 16:5)?
9. Another Markan sandwich can be found in 14:53-72 which contrasts Jesus' trial with Peter's denial (Thursday's lesson). Peter is questioned by a *servant girl* and Jesus by the *high priest*. The chief priests and Sanhedrin testify *falsely* about Jesus (Mark 14:56), the servant girl *correctly* identifies Peter as being a follower of Jesus (Mark 14:67). Jesus *affirms* His identify (Mark 14:62), while Peter *denies* his own (Mark 14:68). As the result, Jesus affirms His identity and is sentenced to death, Peter denies his identity and lives. Consequently, even in denying Jesus, Peter demonstrates that Jesus is the Messiah.
10. Peter's elusiveness before the servant girl is the first open denial of Jesus' time in Mark. The disciples have misunderstood Jesus (8:14-21), Judas has secretly betrayed Him (14:10-11), but the repudiation coming from the chief apostle makes it all the more bitter. By contrast, Jesus' confession before the chief priest, "I am [the Christ, the Son of the Most Blessed]" (v 62), is the first time in Mark that Jesus drops the veil of silence and openly confesses His identity. Jesus' identity is thus revealed at the moment of His deepest humiliation and weakness. Peter's sinful behavior serves to magnify the faithful behavior of Jesus and shows how grace "abounds all the more" in such cases.
11. What lessons can we take from the ancient literary technique of Markan sandwiches? They obviously have a theological purpose. How do we convey the major theological themes of faithfulness, discipleship, commitment, compassion and self-sacrificing love in the context and culture in which we live so that people can see God's character more clearly?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: There's another phrase in here that raises questions many times. I've wondered about this myself. When we pray, "Lead us not into temptation," what are we really praying? Does that imply, have you ever wondered about this, "God, be careful; please don't get me into temptation"? That God would really want to do that?

Graham: One thing that helps is the word "temptation" means trial or testing. Some versions have, "Lead us not into hard testing." The idea that God would tempt is unthinkable, as our heavenly Father. Remember James deals with this. That when we're tempted, don't even blame the Devil. He says, "You are led away by your own lusts and enticements." Certainly don't blame God. He wouldn't do any such thing. So "lead us not into temptation" cannot mean, "Please, don't You tempt us," but, "Lead us not into testing." Jesus prayed that in Gethsemane. He said, "Remove this cup from Me, if possible." I don't think we should pray, "Lord, I'm ready for it. Bring on the trials; I feel very strong today." I believe we should say, "Lord, in all humility, I mean bring me not into trial; nevertheless, Thy will be done."

I think, "Lead us not into testing" must be coupled with, "Nevertheless, Thy will be done." Jesus did it in Gethsemane, and we do it in the Lord's Prayer. You know, the Lord's Prayer and the prayer in Gethsemane are very similar in a number of respects. "Lead us not into testing, Remove this cup from Me. Nevertheless, Thy will be done." So I think the prayer in Gethsemane helps us to understand the Lord's Prayer. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #15 with Lou Venden, "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>*

Just a few hours later Peter was cursing and swearing to prove that he didn't even know this Christ. Then the cock crowed, just as Jesus had said it would, right after Peter's bold speech in the upper room, "Though all the others would desert You, I give my life." You remember, after Peter had done this, he wondered if Jesus had noticed. And though Jesus was on trial for His life and had suffered so, He was more concerned about His erring disciple out there in the courtyard than He was about Himself. Luke says that Jesus turned and looked straight at Peter. Imagine yourself standing there. As Peter knew God up to that time, he may well have expected to see indignation, he deserved it, and disapproval in Christ's face. Instead, he saw sorrow to be sure, disappointment, and pity. Why, it was the face of the One who had washed his dirty feet the night before. When Peter saw that look on Jesus' face, he ran out of the courtyard and wept bitterly.

Look at the account as written by three of the gospel writers, Matthew, Mark, and Luke; beginning with Mark 14, on the reference sheet: "Jesus said to them [in the upper room], 'You

will all fall away. . . .’ Peter said to him, ‘Even though they all fall away, I will not . . . if I must die with you, I will not deny you.’” (RSV) That’s Mark. Then Matthew adds in Matthew 26:69, 70, 72, 74:

And a maid came up to him in the courtyard, and said, “You also were with Jesus the Galilean.” But he denied it before them all, saying, “I do not know what you mean . . . I do not know the man. . . .” Then he began to invoke a curse on himself and to swear, “I do not know the man.” (RSV)

Then Luke adds in Luke 22:61, 62:

The Lord turned around and looked straight at Peter, and Peter remembered that the Lord had said to him, “Before the rooster crows tonight, you will say three times that you do not know me.” Peter went out and wept bitterly.” (GNT)

Later, Judas came in to the same court and threw the thirty pieces of silver on the ground, and confessed that he had betrayed innocent blood. He, too, looked at Jesus. Do you think he saw a different look on Jesus’ face? Was there anger? Was there wrath? Was there rejection? He deserved it. But no, Judas was one of Jesus’ children, and He was about to lose him. Jesus looked at Judas just as He had looked at Peter. There was the same sorrow, the same disappointment, the same pity. Again, it was the face of the One who had just the night before knelt down and washed Judas’ dirty feet. Overcome with it all, Judas ran out and committed suicide. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #13, “How God Treats His Erring Children” recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link: <http://pkp.cc/13MMCAG>*

Further Study with Ellen White

The Lord God is profuse in His gifts to our world. The question may be asked, Why does the Lord show such waste, such extravagance in the multitude of His gifts that cannot be enumerated? The Lord would be so bountiful toward His human family that it cannot be said of Him that He could do more. When He gave Jesus to our world, He gave all heaven. His love is without a parallel. It did not stop short of anything. . . . {5BC 1101.3}

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. {FLB 64.3}

All that has perplexed us in the providences of God will in the world to come be made plain. The things hard to be understood will then find explanation. The mysteries of grace will unfold before us. Where our finite minds discovered only confusion and broken promises, we shall see the most perfect and beautiful harmony. {FLB 64.4}

“All things work together for good to them that love God” (Romans 8:28). Could your eyes be opened, you would see your heavenly Father bending over you in love; and could you hear His voice it would be in tones of compassion to you who are prostrate with suffering and affliction. Stand fast in His strength; there is rest *for you*. {HP 272.5}

Our God is an ever-present help in every time of need. He is perfectly acquainted with the most secret thoughts of our heart, with all the intents and purposes of our souls. When we are in perplexity, even before we open to Him our distress, He is making arrangements for our deliverance. Our sorrow is not unnoticed. He always knows much better than we do, just what is necessary for the good of His children, and He leads us as we would choose to be led if we could discern our own hearts and see our necessities and perils, as God sees them. But finite beings seldom know themselves. They do not understand their own weakness. . . . God knows them better than they know themselves, and He understands how to lead them. . . . {OHC 316.4}

Wonderful had been the long-suffering of Jesus in His dealing with this tempted soul. Nothing that could be done to save Judas had been left undone. After he had twice covenanted to betray his Lord, Jesus still gave him opportunity for repentance. By reading the secret purpose of the traitor’s heart, Christ gave to Judas the final, convincing evidence of His divinity. This was to the false disciple the last call to repentance. No appeal that the divine-human heart of Christ could make had been spared. The waves of mercy, beaten back by stubborn pride, returned in a stronger tide of subduing love. But although surprised and alarmed at the discovery of his guilt, Judas became only the more determined. From the sacramental supper he went out to complete the work of betrayal. {DA 655.1}

Man gains everything by obeying the covenant-keeping God. God’s attributes are imparted to man, enabling him to exercise mercy and compassion. God’s covenant assures us of His unchangeable character. {7BC 932.2}

God could have destroyed Satan and his sympathizers as easily as one can cast a pebble to the earth; but He did not do this. Rebellion was not to be overcome by force. Compelling power is found only under Satan’s government. The Lord’s principles are not of this order. His authority rests upon goodness, mercy, and love; and the presentation of these principles is the means to be used. God’s government is moral, and truth and love are to be the prevailing power. {DA 759.1}

It was God’s purpose to place things on an eternal basis of security, and in the councils of heaven it was decided that time must be given for Satan to develop the principles which were the foundation of his system of government. He had claimed that these were superior to God’s principles. Time was given for the working of Satan’s principles, that they might be seen by the heavenly universe. {DA 759.2}

Satan led men into sin, and the plan of redemption was put in operation. For four thousand years, Christ was working for man's uplifting, and Satan for his ruin and degradation. And the heavenly universe beheld it all. {DA 759.3}

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}

God has made ample provision for His people; and if they rely upon His strength, they will never become the sport of circumstances. . . . It is not in the power of earth or hell to compel anyone to do evil. Satan attacks us at our weak points, but we need not be overcome. However severe or unexpected the assault, God has provided help for us, and in His strength we may conquer. {PP 421.2}

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}

Prayer is heaven's ordained means of success in the conflict with sin and the development of Christian character. The divine influences that come in answer to the prayer of faith will accomplish in the soul of the suppliant all for which he pleads. For the pardon of sin, for the Holy Spirit, for a Christlike temper, for wisdom and strength to do His work, for any gift He has promised, we may ask; and the promise is, "Ye shall receive." {AA 564.1}

The precious Saviour will send help just when we need it. The way to heaven is consecrated by His footprints. Every thorn that wounds our feet has wounded His. Every cross that we are called to bear He has borne before us. The Lord permits conflicts, to prepare the soul for peace. The time of trouble is a fearful ordeal for God's people; but it is the time for every true believer to look up, and by faith he may see the bow of promise encircling him. {GC 633.1}

[T]he prayer that comes from an earnest heart, when the simple wants of the soul are expressed just as we would ask an earthly friend for a favor, expecting that it would be granted—this is the prayer of faith. {ML 19.2}

He is able and willing to bestow upon His servants all the help they need. He will give them the wisdom which their varied necessities demand. {MH 482.2}

The enemy cannot overcome the humble learner of Christ, the one who walks prayerfully before the Lord. Christ interposes Himself as a shelter, a retreat, from the assaults of the wicked one. The promise is given, "When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him." . . . {ML 316.2}

Heaven has a never-failing supply of help for all who are needy. {OHC 117.4}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 12 “Tried *and* Crucified”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 15; Luke 13:1; Psalm 22:18; John 20:24–29; John 1:1–3; Daniel 9:24–27.

Memory Text

“And at the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachthani?’ which is translated, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ ” (Mark 15:34, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. “Are You the King of the Jews?”
- III. Hail, King of the Jews!
- IV. The Crucifixion
- V. Forsaken by God
- VI. Laid to Rest
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Mark [chapter] 15 is the heart of the Passion Narrative. It presents the trial of Jesus, His condemnation, the mockery by the soldiers, His crucifixion, and then His death and burial. . . . This week’s chapter is filled with painful ironies that nevertheless reveal powerful truths about the death of Jesus and what it means.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Sunday’s lesson concentrates on Mark 15:1-15 and the irony is that Jesus is both the Messiah and the King of the Jews. What can we learn from the fact that the pagan governor wanted to release the Messiah, while the religious leaders wanted Jesus crucified?
3. The Roman soldiers do to Jesus what they always wanted to do to a King of the Jews and now they have a chance to do it (without worrying about press reports or an international court of justice). The result is the humiliation and degradation of Jesus (15:15-20). How is the irony played out in this scene? (Monday’s lesson)

4. Mark builds up the story of Jesus' crucifixion through one detail after another, moving from scene to scene that together tells the story. (Tuesday's lesson) Why is Simon, from Cyrene in North Africa mentioned (and his two sons)? (15:21 cf. Romans 16:13) How does the mocking statement of the crowd, "He saved others; he cannot save himself" (15:31) reveal the irony of the whole situation?
5. What are Jesus' only words on the cross in Mark (15:33–41)? (Wednesday's lesson) Why does Mark mention the darkness, calling Elijah, the temple veil, and the extraordinary remark of the centurion? How do they contribute to the irony?
6. What is the significance of Joseph of Arimathea's intervention (15:42–47)? (Thursday's lesson) Why are the disciples not burying Jesus? Why are the three women mentioned? This brings us to the last Markan sandwich:
A1: Women 15:40-41
B: Burial of Jesus 15:42-46
A2: Women 15:47-16:1
7. Joseph was treating Jesus as if He was a close member of his own family. This, of course, would make him ritually unclean and unable to engage in the Passover Sabbath activities. Joseph appears here for the first time in Mark and is never mentioned as a disciple. The fact that he is prepared to face uncleanness, and possible charges of association with Jesus, makes his change very remarkable.
8. Those, who were closest to Jesus, who heard him teach with authority and serve with power, betrayed him. Those who shared his authority and power proved unwilling to share his suffering, to drink from his cup. Those he most deeply served refused to become servants of others. What lessons can we take from all this?
9. Mark wants to be sure that we think of Jesus' death in terms of his messiahship, confronting the power of Rome which was built on the power of violence and death. But within this *political* meaning, Mark wants us to also discover the *theological* meaning: What was happening to God's kingdom, God's rescue operation, to the work Jesus had begun in Galilee? But the story of Barabbas (15:6-9) also brings a deeply personal meaning: Barabbas deserves to die. Instead, Jesus dies, and Barabbas goes free. How does reading the story of a guilty man freed and an innocent man crucified lead us to say, "There, but for the grace of God go I?"
10. How can we learn to read the story of Jesus and see it as the story of God's love doing for us what we could not do for ourselves?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: It's part of our problem, then, that we are taking models from our legal system here and trying to apply them to God.

Graham: That's a very good point, very much so.

Lou: The "substitutionary," that comes in, say more about that. The "vicarious."

Graham: Ah. He died in our stead. He died as the substitution. In a way, it's very true. I mean, either He dies or we die. However, that's where the comparison ends, because if God has let you and me and all other sinners die, all it would have done is prove the truthfulness of His warning, "If you sin, you will die." And God could say to the universe, "Was I right? I said sinners would die, and look, they're dead." But the universe would not have had answers to questions two and three that I just mentioned. When Jesus died, there was no doubt in the minds of the universe that God was not killing His Son. They were clear about that. And the death of Christ answers all those three questions. So it's not either us or Him. His death was infinitely more significant than ours. But had He not died, then what else could God do but leave us to reap the consequences and we all would have died. So in a sense, yes. He died in our stead, but beyond that there's no comparison.

Lou: But not as a payoff. It's not one or the other.

Graham: It's not His death is equal to all of ours. His death is infinitely more significant than the death of every sinful man or angel who has ever lived. The death of angels and men would not have answered the questions.

Lou: What you're saying then, is that just a simple satisfaction idea doesn't encompass what's involved at all, does it?

Graham: Oh, it makes it much too small. I think it puts God in a very bad light, and it doesn't answer the questions of the Great Controversy. Many folk who prefer those understandings of the plan of salvation do not understand there has been a universe-wide great controversy over the character and government of God. And do you remember at our first meeting, I brought along the evidence that even Luther, hero of the Christian world that he is, could not conceive of these larger issues because he couldn't include the book of Revelation—let alone Hebrews, James and Jude. And this has been the pattern through the years. Not many have seen the sixty-sixth book picture of a universe-wide controversy over the character and government of God. And so they have seen the death of Christ as primarily a plan just to save you and me, for which we are very grateful. It's just that the larger view makes the cross much more significant.

{Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8 with Lou Venden, "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>

Is there a verse in the Bible that says that when Jesus died, He was given up? Romans 4:25 says Christ was given up for our transgressions. And many versions, with their reformation influence, translate this “Christ was put to death.” There is nothing in there about being put to death. It says He was given up. To tie that in with the issue in the Great Controversy, God gave up His Son as if He were a sinner. Just as He will give us up, if we are real sinners at the end. Because you can’t force people to trust you, in a free universe, what can you do but give people up? When Jesus was given up, yes, He died.

So I believe there were three questions answered by Gethsemane and the cross. One: who is right, God or the devil? Is God a liar when He says sin results in death? The devil says, “Yes, God has lied to you.” “You will not die” is the teaching of the devil. God says, “You will die. But, it is not torture and execution at My hands.” The devil developed the whole doctrine of hell to turn the universe against God. And God says that is not true. And I say, “Well, how do I know how the wicked are going to die?” He says, “Only one person has ever died the death as a result of sin. It’s only happened once in all eternity. I died that death. I wouldn’t ask any of you to prove the truthfulness of My word. This is the meaning of substitutionary death.” Yes, He died in our place, but not for legal reasons. He died because He wouldn’t think of asking anybody else to go through that painful experience to demonstrate the truth. Besides, our death wouldn’t have answered it anyway. Because if our dying would have answered the question, then He might as well have let Lucifer die in the beginning.

But you remember the explanation. Had He left Lucifer to die, the universe would have misunderstood and assumed God had put him to death. So only by God coming; He said, “No one takes My life from Me. Nobody can kill Me. I’m going through this Myself. I have arranged this with my Father.” And the universe looking on said the Father isn’t killing the Son. God isn’t killing God. And it was clear enough to them that they could say, “Our questions are answered.

One: sin does result in death. Two: it is not torture and execution at the hands of our gracious God. Only one thing left. “God, why were You so concerned that we understand this?” God says, “Because if you serve Me from fear, it will turn you into rebels—holy rebels.” He says, “come to Calvary.” On Calvary, Jesus was tortured to death. By whom? The most devout, blueprinting Adventists the world has ever known. Absolutely dedicated to God, the scriptures, creation, Sabbath, the Ten Commandments, you name it. Jesus said you even strain gnats out of your goat’s milk. Real health reformers. You couldn’t fault them for a thing. You couldn’t have disfellowshipped one of the people who crucified Christ. Their lives were apparently without blemish.

But they hated Him. They hated His picture of God. They killed Him to silence His unbiblical heresy. And the angels looking on said, “We thought, by sending Your Son to Palestine, You did that to get a good running start with people who already agreed with You. We didn’t realize You sent Him there to prove this costly point, that if we obey You for the wrong reason,

because we don't really know You, we could turn into Your worst enemies in the middle of our Sabbath keeping and our tithe-paying and our health-reforming." And that's why I think the biggest mistake the Adventist church could make in these last days is to have one tremendous revival in reformation, get out the blueprint, straighten out our lives, without spending much more time on the picture of God. Because if we do the right things for the wrong reason, we'll do what some of the Jews did, and become His enemies.

So I believe the cross was the only way to answer the questions. Without answers to the questions, there would be no peace, no freedom, no security throughout the universe. So it was for these specific reasons. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio presentation, Questions People are Asking About the Plan of Salvation, recorded April 1983, Redlands, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/1MMQUESTP> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/2MMQUESTP> (Part 2)

Lou: But what about some of these others, though? The "satisfying of justice," and "the demands of the law"?

Graham: Ah, he died to satisfy the demands of the law. Now, what does the law demand? Well, the law seems to demand our love, which can't be demanded anyway. There's no way you can command love. And yet as Paul says, "Love is the fulfilling of the law." Jesus said the same. Moses said the same. So does the law say, "You either love God, and love each other, or you will be executed in the most painful way known to our heavenly Father"?

Some of our good Christian friends live under the awful weight of believing that God has said, "You either love and obey Me, or you will be tortured in sulfurous flames for eternity." That such good folk can still love God is a real tribute to them, not to God. I mean this is an awesome burden to live under! And yet because they love Jesus, they still love and are still faithful. And they will be in the Kingdom. And I think Jesus will love to introduce such people to the Father. He'll say, "Would you like to meet the Father?" And they'll say, "Well, if You will go with us." He says, "There's no need, but I'll go with you." And what a marvelous surprise to millions of these people, to meet the Father in the Kingdom, and discover that He is just as loving and gracious as the Son. This is what we want to deal with next week, "There Is No Need to Be Afraid of God."

But "under the demands of law," that belongs to a very legal conception of what has gone wrong in the universe, which we discussed in our second conversation. That what has gone wrong is that we have "broken the rules," and the law demands that God execute us for breaking the rules. And Jesus died so that somehow God could justly forgive us even though we have broken the rules. I don't think we have been able to make too much sense out of that. But it goes along with the other one, "satisfying justice." Whose justice? I have friends who say, "If

God does not give Idi Amin several days in the fire, I will not regard Him as a just God.” They have that feeling about the satisfaction of justice. And I think they really mean it, and I would respect them for that. I would love to relieve them of that burden. If I want to know why Jesus died, I should go right to the cross and watch Him die and hear His cry, and see how the Father is involved, and then fit that back into Scripture. I don’t see Him fulfilling the requirements of a legal model.

Lou: It’s part of our problem, then, that we are taking models from our legal system here and trying to apply them to God.

Graham: That’s a very good point, very much so. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8 with Lou Venden, “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>*

Further Study with Ellen White

Our Redeemer met insult and mockery with uncomplaining silence. All the cruel taunts of the murderous throng who exulted in His humiliation and trial in the judgment hall could not bring from Him one look or word of resentment or impatience. He was the Majesty of heaven, and in His pure breast there dwelt no room for the spirit of retaliation, but only for pity and love. {TMK 139.2}

With sorrow and indignation the angels heard the choice made by the people and the sentence passed upon Christ. But they could not interfere; for in the great controversy between good and evil, Satan must be given every opportunity to develop his true character, that the heavenly universe and the race for whom Christ was giving His life might see the righteousness of God’s purposes. Those under the control of the enemy must be allowed to reveal the principles of his government (MS 136, 1899). {5BC 1107.5}

The Saviour trod the winepress alone, and of all the people there was none with him. And yet he was not alone. He had said, “I and my Father are one.” God suffered with his Son. Man cannot comprehend the sacrifice made by the infinite God in giving up his Son to reproach, agony, and death. This is the evidence of the Father’s boundless love to man. {5Red 20.1}

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}

Not until the death of Christ was the character of Satan clearly revealed to the angels or to the unfallen worlds. Then the prevarications and accusations of him who had once been an exalted angel were seen in their true light. It was seen that his professedly spotless character was deceptive. His deeply laid scheme to exalt himself to supremacy was fully discerned. His falsehoods were apparent to all. God's authority was forever established. Truth triumphed over falsehood. {RC 60.3}

Not merely in the minds of a few finite creatures in this world, but in the minds of all the inhabitants of the heavenly universe, has the immutability of God's law been established. Satan's course against Christ was heralded to every world. When the issue was finally determined, every unfallen being expressed indignation at the rebellion. With one voice they extolled God as righteous, merciful, self-denying, just. . . . {RC 60.4}

The death of Christ upon the cross made sure the destruction of him who has the power of death, who was the originator of sin. When Satan is destroyed, there will be none to tempt to evil; the atonement will never need to be repeated; and there will be no danger of another rebellion in the universe of God. That which alone can effectually restrain from sin in this world of darkness, will prevent sin in heaven. {TA 205.2}

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}

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2024: *The Book of Mark*

Lesson 13 “The Risen Lord”

Read for this week’s study

Mark 15:42–47; Mark 16; Colossians 2:10–12; 1 Corinthians 15:1–8; Daniel 9:24–27; John 20:11–18.

Memory Text

“But he said to them, ‘Do not be alarmed. You seek Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He is risen! He is not here. See the place where they laid Him’ ” (Mark 16:6, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Rejoicing in the Resurrection
- III. The Stone was Rolled Away
- IV. The Women at the Tomb
- V. Appearing to Mary and Others
- VI. Go Into All the World
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “First, we will look at the timing of Jesus’ resurrection and why the women came to the tomb on that Sunday morning. [...] Second, the lesson explains the first verses of Mark 16, linking these words to a theme that runs through the entire book. [...] Third, we will examine the rest of Mark 16 and consider the mission it sets before us.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. We would expect a story of burial to be a sad and not particularly interesting appendix to the story of Jesus’ death, yet Mark proceeds to show the excitement of what follows [15:42-16:6]. (Sunday’s lesson) Mark introduces the three women and Joseph of Arimathea, a prominent member of the Jewish Council. How is this significant for the story of the Gospel?
3. The three women go to the tomb early Sunday morning to complete the primary burial (versus the secondary burial when the bones are collected and put into an ossuary). (Monday’s lesson) They are in for the shock of their lives: A young man in white sat where Jesus’ body had been and he calmly explained to them that Jesus

had been raised from the dead and would see them again in Galilee. Why is the specific mention of Peter significant? (16:7)?

4. What happened at the tomb and how did the women respond (16:1–8)? (Tuesday’s lesson) According to the two of our best manuscripts of Mark, both from the fourth century, the gospel ends in 16:8a. The alternative ending (16:9-20) in several other manuscripts was added later by copyists and is a clear summary of the endings of Matthew, Luke and John.
5. We do not know if Mark intended this abrupt ending, or if the last page, or the last column of the scroll simply was torn off by accident. That’s not to say that we cannot learn anything from verses 9-20. It tells us how early Christians saw the events of Easter and their significance.
6. Great emphasis is laid on the initial unbelief of the disciples, in spite of the evidence of witnesses (Wednesday’s lesson). In what ways do you think Jesus might chide us today for our unbelief and hardheartedness? In today’s world, how would we apply the instruction to “preach the gospel to all *creation*” (rather than to every *creature*)? (Thursday’s lesson)
7. The ending of the Gospel according to Mark focuses on betrayal, denial and desertion. Thus, the conclusion serves Mark’s purpose to deliver the message: Beware! Wake up! Listen! – as a warning not only to the disciples but to today’s readers as well.
8. Those who were closest to Jesus, those who heard him teach with authority and serve with power, betrayed him. Those who shared his authority and power proved unwilling to share his suffering. Those that Jesus served most deeply, refused to become servants of others. Those who glimpsed his glory wanted to keep it to themselves. It teaches us that if we refuse to drink the cup of suffering, we will not share in the cup of glory. We follow Jesus on his terms, not ours.
9. Yet a Roman centurion stands at the foot of the cross and proclaims, “Surely this man was the Son of God!” (15:39). The presumed enemy of the Jews joins the unlikely cast of minor characters, mostly social outcasts, who respond positively to the Son of Man in Mark.
10. The children flock to Jesus, blind beggar Bartimaeus believes and follows. As do the demon-possessed man, the bleeding woman, the Syrophenician woman and the deaf man. Jesus came to serve the least in the society, healing them to health and life and flourishing within a compassionate community. What about us? How can we be instruments of healing, flourishing and blessings for our communities?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Lou: But what about the death of Jesus that we have been talking about this evening? Which death did He die? Did He die the first or the second death?

Graham: The first death is the death we all die if we live long enough and from which there is a resurrection, whether righteous or unrighteous.

Lou: Isn't that a consequence of sin or of living in a world of sin?

Graham: Well, of living in a world of sin, but one might be a saint. Look at Elisha and others, and Isaiah. People like that, they died. The second death is the one the Bible warns us of, as being so serious, and Jesus personally died that death. The death from which there is no resurrection.

Which death did Jesus die? Had He died of crucifixion alone, He would have died the first death. But He died to demonstrate the awful second death. But He rose on Sunday. I thought the awfulness of the second death is that one does not rise again? I don't think Jesus came to show that you die and stay dead forever. How could you demonstrate that? We would have to live forever to see it. There's no way you could answer that. He came to demonstrate how His Father is involved in that death. And even before He was dead, He said, "It is finished, it is finished." And on Resurrection Sunday He went up to heaven to see if the heavenly council, the heavenly court agreed. And He heard them say, "Yes, it's finished. You've cleared up all our questions." So I think He answered all the questions that needed to be answered in the only way that they could be answered, and we don't need to ask more of the cross. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #8 with Lou Venden, "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>

Imagine how Peter felt all that Sabbath. During the last twenty-four hours he had made a fool of himself repeatedly, twice with his impetuous statements in the upper room. Then twice he had disgraced himself in the Garden of Gethsemane. Now the cowardly behavior in the courtyard, denying that he had even known Christ. Now Christ was dead, and there was no way he could make it up to Him, no way he could make it right.

No wonder when he heard that the tomb was empty, he was the first one down there on Sunday morning. But it wasn't Peter—it was Mary who had the privilege of seeing Jesus first and taking the good news to the disciples. Why do you suppose it would be Mary, of all people—Mary, who was known for living an immoral life in the town? Mary, out of whom Christ had cast seven devils? Would **we** have elected her for that high honor? **God** chose Mary.

I have enjoyed my wife's comment, that if Mary hadn't cared enough to be there, God could not have so honored her. That is true too, isn't it?

Then later, when Mary turned and recognized Jesus and fell at His feet to worship Him, Jesus didn't say, "Don't touch Me! Don't touch Me, Mary! If you touch Me, I can't go to heaven." What would that say about our God? No, in the language of the day, look at the next reference on the sheet, John 20:17. This is what He said:

Jesus said to her [kindly, graciously], "Do not detain me [Mary, literally, do not go on holding me or clinging to me—greetings took a little time in those days. Do not detain me], for I have not yet ascended to my Father. But go to my brethren [my brothers] and tell them that I am going up to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."
(*Noli*)

Listen to Jesus calling the disciples His brothers—the men who had let Him down so seriously when He needed them so much. And then when the angels confirmed Jesus' command to go and tell the disciples, they added something that must have overwhelmed Peter when he heard it. Look at Mark 16:7. They said: "Now go and give this message to His disciples, including Peter. He is going to Galilee ahead of you." (GNT) How very God-like of the angels to add, "especially tell Peter." The angels admire and worship God for the incredibly gracious way in which He has handled sinners in His family. How much those angels must have enjoyed adding the words, "And especially tell Peter." {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, *Conversations About God*, #13, "How God Treats His Erring Children" recorded April 1984, Loma Linda, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct link:* <http://pkp.cc/13MMCAG>

For example, when Jesus suffered and died, and rose again, Satan knew that the great weight of evidence was against him. Therefore, something must be done to destroy the evidence. One of his most diabolical successes, very early in the first century, was in leading some to believe that Jesus did not really come in the flesh. He did not **really** suffer and **really** die. He had actually faked it all. There goes all the evidence. The group of people who believed that were known as the Docetists. It comes from a Greek word that means "it seemed." They taught that Jesus only seemed to do those things. See how Satan sought to destroy the evidence. Yet this idea was spreading in John's later years. He warned against the teachers of this heresy. Look at 1 John 4:1, 2:

Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world. This is how you can recognize the Spirit of God [the Spirit who tells the truth]: Every spirit that acknowledges that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is from God. (NIV)

You might wonder why he would choose to mention that, except that we know historically that people were going around saying that Jesus had not really come in the flesh. John mentions this in many places. He even writes his whole gospel to show that the One who came was really God.

But even before Christ came, Satan was at work to undermine and confuse the evidence by even counterfeiting the first coming of Christ. He accomplished this most notably in what is known as the mystery religions. It is almost unbelievable unless you've read about them. Some of these began long before Christ came. The central figure was a dying, rising savior who had been supernaturally born, died a cruel and violent death, and then was exalted up to heaven, there to mediate supernatural help to his followers on earth. Later he would return and resurrect them and annihilate all the forces of evil. Does that sound familiar? That isn't all. In those mystery religions they had Lord Suppers. They had baptism and washing in the blood and many other things I could list if there were time. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #17, "Satan's Final Effort to Deceive" 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/17MMCAG>*

My understanding of Revelation is that its primary function at the present time is the function that it had when the early Christians read it. Not to get us too involved in working out the schedule which we have to revise from time to time. I believe the purpose of the book of Revelation is to encourage Christians who care enough to be concerned about the fact that the church isn't doing as well as it should, Christians who are concerned about the long delay since those old, old signs. And they wonder why. The answer is, look a little higher, realize we are all caught up in this great controversy that has involved the whole vast universe, and realize that as far as heaven and the rest of the universe are concerned, they are celebrating the fact that God has won his case. That he won it all 2000 years ago. Therefore for those of us who claim to be his representatives on this earth to be dragging our weary way along as if God might lose; we've really missed the good news—that he won it 2000 years ago.

Even if all Seventh-day Adventists should let God down, he will not lose his case. He's won it already. And the majority of beings in the universe agree. Therefore, I understand our assignment to be, once we're convinced of this, convinced of what the war is about, what the issue is, how it was settled, and whether or not we like the answers, that we have the privilege of joining with the loyal members of the universe in celebrating even now that God has won his case and then spreading the word around. The good news is, not only that he is like this, but he has proven it to the universe, and they agree. Read Revelation. Notice in heaven they are always celebrating. For us to be on the defensive is a real denial of all that God has done. He has won his case, and we should sound more like members of the winning team. We are really

going out to invite people to join in the final celebration which has been going on in heaven for 2000 years. We are privileged to join in this if we wish. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Revelation, recorded August 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/79MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/80MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

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}

When Jesus was laid in the grave, Satan triumphed. He dared to hope that the Saviour would not take up His life again. He claimed the Lord's body, and set his guard about the tomb, seeking to hold Christ a prisoner. He was bitterly angry when his angels fled at the approach of the heavenly messenger. When he saw Christ come forth in triumph, he knew that his kingdom would have an end, and that he must finally die. {DA 782.4}

Beginning at Moses, the very Alpha of Bible history, Christ expounded in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Had He first made Himself known to them, their hearts would have been satisfied. In the fullness of their joy they would have hungered for nothing more. But it was necessary for them to understand the witness borne to Him by the types and prophecies of the Old Testament. Upon these their faith must be established. Christ performed no miracle to convince them, but it was His first work to explain the Scriptures. They had looked upon His death as the destruction of all their hopes. Now He showed from the prophets that this was the very strongest evidence for their faith. {DA 796.4}

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. {SC 109.3}

In order to arrive at truth, we must have a sincere desire to know the truth and a willingness of heart to obey it. And all who come in this spirit to the study of the Bible will find abundant evidence that it is God's word, and they may gain an understanding of its truths that will make them wise unto salvation. {SC 111.1}

There is an evidence that is open to all,—the most highly educated, and the most illiterate,—the evidence of experience. God invites us to prove for ourselves the reality of His word, the truth of His promises. He bids us “taste and see that the Lord is good.” Psalm 34:8. Instead of

depending upon the word of another, we are to taste for ourselves. He declares, "Ask, and ye shall receive." John 16:24. His promises will be fulfilled. They have never failed; they never can fail. And as we draw near to Jesus, and rejoice in the fullness of His love, our doubt and darkness will disappear in the light of His presence. {SC 111.3}

God never asks us to believe, without giving sufficient evidence upon which to base our faith. His existence, His character, the truthfulness of His word, are all established by testimony that appeals to our reason; and this testimony is abundant. Yet God has never removed the possibility of doubt. Our faith must rest upon evidence, not demonstration. Those who wish to doubt will have opportunity; while those who really desire to know the truth will find plenty of evidence on which to rest their faith. {SC 105.2}

Satan has ability to suggest doubts and devise objections to the pointed testimony that God sends, and many think it a virtue and mark of intelligence in them to be unbelieving and questioning, and quibbling. Those who desire to doubt will have plenty of room. God does not propose to remove all occasion for unbelief. He gives evidence, which must be carefully investigated with a humble mind and teachable spirit. All should decide from the weight of evidence. {RH, September 16, 1873 par. 10}

Jesus did not first reveal himself in his true character to them, and then open the Scriptures to their minds; for he knew that they would be so overjoyed to see him again, risen from the dead, that their souls would be satisfied. They would not hunger for the sacred truths which he wished to indelibly impress upon their minds, that they might impart them to others, who should in their turn spread the precious knowledge, until thousands of people should receive the light given that day to the despairing disciples as they journeyed to Emmaus. {6Red 32.2}

He maintained his disguise till he had interpreted the Scriptures, and had led them to an intelligent faith in his life, his character, his mission to earth, and his death and resurrection. He wished the truth to take firm root in their minds, not because it was supported by his personal testimony, but because the typical law, and the prophets of the Old Testament, agreeing with the facts of his life and death, presented unquestionable evidence of that truth. When the object of his labors with the two disciples was gained, he revealed himself to them that their joy might be full, and then vanished from their sight. {6Red 32.3}

God does not compel men to give up their unbelief. Before them are light and darkness, truth and error. It is for them to decide which they will accept. The human mind is endowed with power to discriminate between right and wrong. God designs that men shall not decide from impulse, but from weight of evidence, carefully comparing scripture with scripture. {DA 458.3}

Christ made full provision for the prosecution of the work entrusted to the disciples, and took upon Himself the responsibility of its success. So long as they obeyed His word, and worked in connection with Him, they could not fail. Go to all nations, He bade them. Go to the farthest

part of the habitable globe, but know that My presence will be there. Labor in faith and confidence, for the time will never come when I will forsake you. {8T 16.3}

To us also the promise of Christ's abiding presence is given. The lapse of time has wrought no change in His parting promise. He is with us today as truly as He was with the disciplines, and He will be with us "even unto the end." {8T 17.1}

With almost impatient eagerness the angels wait for our co-operation; for man must be the channel to communicate with man. And when we give ourselves to Christ in whole-hearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God's love.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 297. {ChS 9.1}

We must be laborers together with God; for God will not complete His work without human agencies.—*Review and Herald*, March 1, 1887. {ChS 9.2}

God makes no requirement without making provision for its fulfillment. Through the grace of Christ we may accomplish everything that God requires. All the riches of heaven are to be revealed through God's people. "Herein is My Father glorified," Christ says, "that ye bear much fruit; so shall ye be My disciples." John 15:8. {COL 301.2}

All who consecrate soul, body, and spirit to God will be constantly receiving a new endowment of physical and mental power. The inexhaustible supplies of heaven are at their command. Christ gives them the breath of His own spirit, the life of His own life. The Holy Spirit puts forth its highest energies to work in heart and mind. The grace of God enlarges and multiplies their faculties, and every perfection of the divine nature comes to their assistance in the work of saving souls. Through co-operation with Christ they are complete in Him, and in their human weakness they are enabled to do the deeds of Omnipotence. {DA 827.3}

It is a wonderful thought that human beings can speak the Word of God, in simple words of comfort and encouragement. The humblest instruments will be used of God to sow the seeds of truth, which may spring up and bear fruit, because the one in whose heart they were sown needed help—a kind thought, a kind word, made effective by the One who has said, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."—Letter 329a, Nov. 16, 1905, to her 19-year-old granddaughter Mabel. {TDG 329.6}