

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes
Fourth Quarter 2023: *God's Mission—My Mission*
Lesson 11 “Mission to the Unreached: Part 2”

Read for this week's study

1 Kings 11:1–6; Matthew 4:23–25; Matthew 15:22–28; Mark 7:24–30; Acts 10:34, 35; Matthew 8:10.

Memory Text

“Then Jesus answered and said to her, ‘O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire.’ And her daughter was healed from that very hour” (Matthew 15:28, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Mission to Regions Beyond
- III. Seeking the Multitudes
- IV. In Tyre and Sidon
- V. “Send Her Away!”
- VI. Faith on Earth?
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Jesus ministered not only to those in the cities of Israel but to those in foreign regions as well; that is, to those outside of the Jewish nation and the chosen people. This week we will study the Bible story of Christ’s mission to Tyre and Sidon and draw lessons to apply to our lives today.” (Sabbath Afternoon)
2. From reading Judges 3:1–6, 1 Kings 5:1–12, and 1 Kings 11:1–6, it could be easy to conclude that God did not want the Israelites to have anything to do with these pagans. “Yet, despite the history of paganism and idolatry, and their negative influence on the chosen nation, Jesus still brought His disciples to these places. In this way He initiated them in cross-cultural urban mission, confronting their bias and bigotry, and modeled for His followers wholistic urban mission to all cultures and nationalities.” (Sunday’s lesson) What lessons can we learn from these choices in Jesus’ ministry?

3. Two possible ways of addressing relational problems are attack and withdrawal. Both had been practiced by God's people in the Old Testament. How does Jesus balance their understanding of what is God's will for them in this regard?
4. What can we learn about Jesus from his early ministry (Matthew 4:23-25; 9:35-38)? (Monday's lesson) Which regions are included, and which are missing? What does it tell us about God that "when Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them"? What are the lessons for us?
5. Why would Jesus take his disciples to the region of Tyre and Sidon (Matthew 4:25, cf. Jeremiah 29:4-11)? What differences do you see in how the woman was depicted in Matthew 15:22-28 and Mark 7:24-30? (Tuesday's lesson) Why is considering your audience an indispensable factor in reaching them?
6. In her desperation, the Syro-Phoenician woman crosses the boundaries of ethnicity, gender and religion that were not crossed in her day. Yet, Jesus does not say a word. This woman's daughter is suffering terribly, so she appeals to Jesus with humility and reverence, but he acts as if he did not hear her. He responds with apparent silence, indifference, and rejection. And notice that Matthew does not hide this. He deliberately draws our attention to this behavior of Jesus. What can we learn from this? (Wednesday's lesson)
7. The disciples say to Jesus: "Send Her Away!" How does this compare with the attitude of Peter in Acts 10:9-35? How can Holy Spirit help us to overcome our prejudice and biases so that God's mission is finally completed?
8. Jesus commends the faith of this woman (Matt 15:28, cf. 8:26), just as he highlighted other pagan people who expressed their faith (8:10-13). In our world today, how can we see that faith is often found in unexpected places?
9. Robert Putnam says that sociologists distinguish between two kinds of connections: *bonding* and *bridging*. Bonding happens when people who perceive themselves to be similar develop deeper connections; bridging activities involve people who have been separated. Bonding activities usually involve people in the same ethnic group or economic status. Bridging connections, by definition, are outward looking and encompass people across diverse social cleavages.
10. Jesus names *exclusion* as sin, though it often passes for virtue, especially in religious circles. The righteous, at that time, believed that the essence of spiritual maturity lay in *excluding* people. Jesus, who was sinless and innocent, nevertheless *embraced* the outcasts. By embracing the outcast, Jesus underscored the sinfulness of the persons and systems that cast them out. How can we be true followers of Jesus and be involved in "bridging" activities or relationships?
11. Often fear, pride, ignorance, or a desire to feel superior is what lies behind excluding people. How can we learn to recognize the existence of those issues? What steps and actions can we take to create a more inclusive community? Where can we see God at work in unexpected places in our time and place?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

Let's look first, when he was on the roof there, and he had the dream, and the sheet came down, and the voice from heaven said, "Rise Peter. Kill and eat." What should a man of faith do when heaven tells him to do something? Should he check his bumper sticker to see if it's still there? "God has said it. I believe it. That's all there is to it!" And Peter should have said, "I don't understand it, but I don't have to understand. Who am I to question God's inscrutable ways? Hand me a knife and fork!" But he didn't.

Now, on what authority could he say, "God, I can't do it." Did he not cite scripture, and say, "What you've once said is this; and I don't make sense out of what you are asking now." Does God just say, coming up in Romans next time, "I don't have to make sense; I'm the Potter; I can do whatever I like"? And so the sheet came down again, and again Peter says no. And the third time. Can you imagine the quiver in Peter's voice when he said, "No, I won't do it. And I'm puzzled. I don't know what's going on here." And a knock came on the door. And he went downstairs, and there were some contaminating people. Just a moment before he was about to be contaminated by the creeping things in the sheet, and now he's about to be contaminated by these Gentiles. You see, they treated them about the same. And I think he got the message. "Peter, you're right about the things in the sheet, but you're wrong to treat people created in my image like the things in the sheets." And he got the message, and he went with them. He was right in saying no. As he thought that through, he was prepared to meet those folk at the door.

"Oh! When I think what I've been doing! I've been treating you as if you could contaminate me, just like those things in the sheets." We're going to get into that in Romans and in Corinthians. Paul discusses this a little later. Well, Jesus did in Mark, remember? When you come in from the marketplace, where you've met these Gentiles, unless you wash in a peculiar way, you will not eat. Lots of rules, to avoid contamination. And he went, I'm sure quite uncertain inside, into a new adventure. And he ate with the Gentiles, with Cornelius. And he was enjoying, I'm sure, this breath-taking experience. Until some brethren came down from the General Conference. And he was scared. And he withdrew. You remember? And Saul said, "You cheat! You dissembler!" And he really leaned into him, and he criticized him to his face, and in public. Remember? It's in Galatians. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Acts, recorded April 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/59MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/60MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

Man's need for a divine teacher was known in heaven. The pity and sympathy of God were aroused in behalf of human beings, fallen and bound to Satan's chariot car; and when the fullness of time was come, He sent forth His Son. The One appointed in the councils of heaven came to this earth as man's instructor. The rich benevolence of God gave Him to our world, and to meet the necessities of human nature He took humanity upon Himself. To the astonishment of the heavenly host the eternal Word came to this world as a helpless babe. Fully prepared, He left the royal courts and mysteriously allied Himself with fallen human beings. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." John 1:14. {CT 259.2}

The Son of man came to seek and to save that which was lost. A lost sheep never finds its way back to the fold of itself. If it is not sought for and saved by the watchful shepherd, it wanders until it perishes. What a representation of the Saviour is this! Unless Jesus, the Good Shepherd, had come to seek and to save the wandering, we should have perished. The Pharisees had taught that none but the Jewish nation would be saved, and they treated all other nationalities with contempt. But Jesus attracted the attention of those that the Pharisees despised, and He treated them with consideration and courtesy. . . . {LHU 212.3}

He came as an expression of the perfect love of God, not to crush, not to judge and condemn, but to heal every weak, defective character, to save men and woman from Satan's power. {MM 20.1}

Evidences of Christ's divine power attended his ministry. He was ever touched with human woe. He was ever watching and waiting to do the works of mercy and righteousness which he came to perform. {1Red 63.1}

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}

Caste is hateful to God. He ignores everything of this character. In His sight the souls of all men are of equal value. . . . Without distinction of age, or rank, or nationality, or religious privilege, all are invited to come unto Him and live. {DA 403.3}

Neither life nor death, height nor depth, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus; not because we hold Him so firmly, but because He holds us so fast. If our salvation depended on our own efforts, we could not be saved; but it depends on the One who is behind

all the promises. Our grasp on Him may seem feeble, but His love is that of an elder brother; so long as we maintain our union with Him, no one can pluck us out of His hand. {AA 552.2}

Christ invites us to draw near to Him, and promises that He will draw nigh to us. Looking upon Him, we behold the invisible God, who clothed His divinity with humanity in order that through humanity He might shed forth a subdued and softened glory, so that our eyes might be enabled to rest upon Him, and our souls not be extinguished by His undimmed splendor. We behold God through Christ, our Creator and Redeemer. {7BC 925.2}

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

Christ might, because of our guilt, have moved far from us. But instead of moving farther away from us, He came and dwelt among us, filled with all the fullness of the Godhead, to be one with us, that through His grace we might attain to perfection. {UL 191.2}

The angels of heaven are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation. We know not now who they are; it is not yet made manifest who shall overcome, and share the inheritance of the saints in light; but angels of heaven are passing throughout the length and breadth of the earth, seeking to comfort the sorrowing, to protect the imperiled, to win the hearts of men to Christ. Not one is neglected or passed by. God is no respecter of persons, and He has an equal care for all the souls He has created. {DA 639.1}

How carefully the Lord worked to overcome the prejudice against the Gentiles that had been so firmly fixed in Peter's mind by his Jewish training! By the vision of the sheet and its contents He sought to divest the apostle's mind of this prejudice and to teach the important truth that in heaven there is no respect of persons; that Jew and Gentile are alike precious in God's sight; that through Christ the heathen may be made partakers of the blessings and privileges of the gospel. {CC 335.4}

We are to be laborers together with the heavenly angels in presenting Jesus to the world. 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 wholehearted devotion, angels rejoice that they may speak through our voices to reveal God's love. {DA 297.3}

If He had seen that angels, who are perfect, would have done the work for the fallen race better than men, He would have committed it to them. But instead of this He sent the needed assistance by poor, weak, erring mortals, who, having like infirmities as their fellowmen, are best prepared to help them. {LHU 225.6}

The very angels who when Satan was seeking the supremacy fought the battle in the heavenly courts, and triumphed on the side of God; the very angels who from their exalted position shouted for joy over the creation of our world, and over the creation of our first parents, who were to inhabit the earth . . . are most intensely interested to work in union with the fallen, redeemed race in the development of that power which God gives to help every man who will unite with heavenly intelligences to seek and save human beings who are perishing in their sins. . . . {ML 305.3}

Divine wisdom has appointed, in the plan of salvation, the law of action and reaction, making the work of benevolence, in all its branches, twice blessed. God could have accomplished His object in saving sinners without the help of man, but He knew that man could not be happy without acting a part in the great work of redemption. That man might not lose the blessed results of benevolence, our Redeemer formed the plan of enlisting him as His coworker. —R. & H., March 23, 1897. {CS 346.1}

With the trusting faith of a little child, we are to come to our heavenly Father, telling Him of all our needs. He is always ready to pardon and help. The supply of divine wisdom is inexhaustible, and the Lord encourages us to draw largely from it. {3BC 1146.8}

God is ever seeking to instruct finite men that they may exercise faith in Him and trust themselves wholly in His hands. Every drop of rain or flake of snow, every spire of grass, every leaf and flower and shrub, testifies of God. These little things so common around us, teach the lesson that nothing is beneath the notice of the infinite God, nothing too small for His attention (GCB Feb. 18, 1897). {3BC 1141.3}

The Christian always has a strong helper in the Lord. The way of the Lord's helping we may not know; but this we do know: He will never fail those who put their trust in Him. {PK 576.1}

The Lord will not disappoint any who put their trust in Him. He will be first and last and best in everything to us. He will be a present help in every time of need. In these last days of service we shall ... be held, and led, and protected, by the power of Christ. {RY 112.1}

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

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