

Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

Third Quarter 2019: *“The Least of These”*: Ministering to Those in Need

Lesson 13 “A Community of Servants”

Read for this week’s study

2 Corinthians 2:14–16; Exodus 32:1–14; 1 Peter 2:12; Philippians 2:15; Ephesians 2:19; Hebrews 10:23–25.

Memory Text

“Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for He who promised is faithful. And let us consider one another in order to stir up love and good works” (Hebrews 10:23, 24, NKJV).

Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Agents of Change
- III. A Servant Remnant
- IV. Reaching Souls
- V. Grace Within the Church
- VI. Encourage Each Other to Good Works
- VII. Further Study

Questions and Notes for Consideration

Facilitator: Daniel Duda

1. “Together as a church community and organization, we are the body of Christ (see 1 Corinthians 12:12–20). As such, we as a community should walk as Jesus walked, reach out as Jesus did, and serve as the hands, feet, voice, and heart of Jesus in the world today.” (Sabbath afternoon)
2. To what extent did the movement that had the attributes of a “re-thinking movement” written in its “birth certificate,” become merely an institution that replicates itself and its traditions?
3. Sunday’s lesson reminds us that church members need to be agents of change, using the biblical metaphors of salt, light, sacrifice, Christ’s body, ambassadors and perfume.
4. What kind of change does God want us to experience? Why has religion throughout history been associated more with preserving the status quo rather than with bringing change?

5. What changes have you seen in your current environment in the last 10-20 years? In what ways do these challenges require a new response? What does our attitude toward these changes tell people around us?
6. Monday's lesson discusses a favorite Adventist metaphor for the church – the remnant. What are the advantages of applying this biblical metaphor to the community of God's people? What are the dangers and simplifications of using it as an almost exclusive picture of God's church?
7. What lessons can we learn from the story of Moses in Exodus 32:1-14 that are helpful to our role in society at large today? What kind of "remnant" is he in the story?
8. "Church discussions sometimes seem to get stuck on the apparent need to choose between a focus on social work or gospel work, either charity or witnessing, either justice or evangelism. But when we better understand each of these concepts and observe the ministry of Jesus, the difference breaks down, and we realize that preaching the gospel and working to help others are closely linked." (Tuesday's lesson) How can we keep the two aspects of our mission in balance?
9. In Ephesians 2:19 the church community is described as the "household" of God. How does this description influence how the organized church can operate and treat its members, employees, etc.?
10. In February 2017 Mark Zuckerberg published an audacious manifesto on the need to build a global community and Facebook's role in it. He explained that the sociopolitical upheavals of our time – from rampant drug addiction to murderous totalitarian regimes – result to a large extent from the disintegration of human communities. He lamented the fact that "for decades, membership in all kinds of groups has declined as much as one quarter. That's a lot of people who now need to find a sense of purpose and support somewhere else." His ultimate goal is "to help 1 billion people join meaningful communities. If we can do this, it will not only turn around the whole decline in community membership we've seen for decades, it will start to strengthen our social fabric and bring the world closer together." This is such an important goal that Zuckerberg vowed "to change Facebook's whole mission to take this on". Is he right in his assessment of our world? Everyone from feminist activists to Islamic fundamentalists is in the business of community-building. What makes Facebook's strategy unique is its global scope, its corporate backing and its deep faith that technology can 'bring the world closer together'.
11. Is it significant that Jesus had more to say about serving the poor than about prayer and being born-again together? If yes, what?
12. What kind of change does God want to implement in our personal and corporate lives? What step(s) or action(s) discussed in this quarter's study would you like to take in your life and community? How can you make it happen?

Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

That magnificent story of Moses being resurrected by the Lord himself, which we have to tie in with Numbers. And you remember all through there, where God had to say to his friend, “You broke faith with me at the rock. You misrepresented me. I love you just the same, but I must go on record. The most damaging sin a person can ever commit is to have great influence as a friend of God, and misrepresent God to those trusting people. And you have done that, Moses. That’s what Lucifer did in the beginning. So I will not let you go into the Promised Land.” And Moses begged, and begged, and God said, “Speak to me no more of this matter.” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – 1, 2, and 3 John, and Jude, recorded August, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

<http://pkp.cc/77MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/78MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Do you remember when God said to Moses, “I’m tired of these people. Step aside; let me destroy them, and I’ll make a great nation of you”? Who said, “God, but think about your name; think about your reputation?” See, Moses understood. Some people suggest he didn’t understand too well. The knowledge of God was barely evolving in those days. Oh, how well he knew God! God could talk face-to-face with him as with who else in history? And the first mark of a really knowledgeable friend is jealousy for your reputation. And Moses says, “God, but what about your name?” And you remember Moses’ argument? “The heathen will say you brought your people out into the wilderness but then you couldn’t get them into the Promised Land. You’ll lose ground, God; don’t do it. Destroy me if that would help.” He offered. It wouldn’t have helped. But that’s the feeling Moses had for the people. And God could have said, “Moses, who else knows me the way you do?” {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in All 66 – Ezekiel recorded February, 1982, 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 1984:

<http://pkp.cc/37MMPOGIA66> (Part 1) <http://pkp.cc/38MMPOGIA66> (Part 2)

Further Study with Ellen White

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}

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}

Some are seen to come forth from their daily communion with God clothed with the meekness of Christ. Their words are not like a desolating hail, crushing everything before it; they come forth sweetly from their lips. They scatter seeds of love and kindness all along their path, and that all unconsciously, because Christ lives in their heart. Their influence is felt more than it is seen. {SD 180.6}

Christ does not bid His followers strive to shine. He says, Let your light shine. If you have received the grace of God, the light is in you. Remove the obstructions, and the Lord's glory will be revealed. The light will shine forth to penetrate and dispel the darkness. You cannot help shining within the range of your influence. {COL 420.1}

The work of Christ in the heart does not destroy man's powers. Christ directs, strengthens, ennobles, and sanctifies the faculties of the soul. It is through personal acquaintance with Him that we become qualified to represent His character to the world. John says, "As many as receive him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name" (John 1:12). And again, "Of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace" (verse 16). {TDG 219.3}

We may never know until the judgment the influence of a kind, considerate course of action to the inconsistent, the unreasonable, and unworthy. If after a course of provocation and injustice on their part, you treat them as you would an innocent person, you even take pains to show them special acts of kindness, then you have acted the part of a Christian; and they become surprised and ashamed, and see their course of action and meanness more clearly than if you

plainly stated their aggravated acts to rebuke them.—Lt 20, 1892. (MM 209, 210.)
{2MCP 432.3}

One part of the ministry of heavenly angels is to visit our world and oversee the work of the Lord in the hands of His stewards. In every time of necessity they minister to those who as co-workers with God are striving to carry forward His work in the earth. These heavenly intelligences are represented as desiring to look into the plan of redemption, and they rejoice whenever any part of God's work prospers. {6T 456.1}

Angels are interested in the spiritual welfare of all who are seeking to restore God's moral image in man; and the earthly family are to connect with the heavenly family in binding up the wounds and bruises that sin has made. Angelic agencies, though invisible, are co-operating with visible human agencies, forming a relief association with men. 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 shouted for joy over the creation of our world and its sinless inhabitants, the angels who witnessed the fall of man and his expulsion from his Eden home—these very heavenly messengers are most intensely interested to work in union with the fallen, redeemed race for the salvation of human beings perishing in their sins. {6T 456.2}

Through the grace of Christ our efforts to bless others are not only the means of our growth in grace, but they will enhance our future, eternal happiness. To those who have been coworkers with Christ it will be said, "Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." — R. & H., June 27, 1893. {CS 165.2}

To take people right where they are, whatever their position, whatever their condition, and help them in every way possible—this is gospel ministry. . . . Those who are sick in body are nearly always sick in soul, and when the soul is sick, the body is made sick.—MS. 62, 1900.
{MM 238.1}

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

Christ did not deal in abstract theories, but in that which is essential to the development of character, that which will enlarge man's capacity for knowing God, and increase his efficiency to do good. He spoke to men of those truths that relate to the conduct of life, and that take hold upon eternity. {COL 23.1}

The prince of teachers, He sought access to the people by the pathway of their most familiar associations. He presented the truth in such a way that ever after it was to His hearers

intertwined with their most hallowed recollections and sympathies. He taught in a way that made them feel the completeness of His identification with their interests and happiness. His instruction was so direct, His illustrations were so appropriate, His words so sympathetic and cheerful, that His hearers were charmed. The simplicity and earnestness with which He addressed the needy, hallowed every word. {MH 23.1}

In parables and comparisons He found the best method of communicating divine truth. In simple language, using figures and illustrations drawn from the natural world, He opened spiritual truth to His hearers, and gave expression to precious principles that would have passed from their minds, and left scarcely a trace, had He not connected His words with stirring scenes of life, experience, or nature. In this way He called forth their interest, aroused inquiry, and when He had fully secured their attention, He decidedly impressed upon them the testimony of truth. In this way He was able to make sufficient impression upon the heart so that afterward His hearers could look upon the thing with which He connected His lesson, and recall the words of the divine Teacher. {FE 236.1}

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

Look at the flowers in a carpet, and notice the different colored threads. All are not pink, all are not green, all are not blue. A variety of colors are woven together to perfect the pattern. So it is in the design of God. He has a purpose in placing us where we must learn to live as individuals. We are not all fitted to do the same kind of work, but each man's work is designed by God to help make up His plan (RH July 4, 1899). {6BC 1083.4}

The Creator of all ideas may impress different minds with the same thought, but each may express it in a different way, yet without contradiction. The fact that this difference exists should not perplex or confuse us. It is seldom that two persons will view and express truth in the very same way. Each dwells on particular points which his constitution and education have fitted him to appreciate. The sunlight falling upon the different objects gives those objects a different hue. {1SM 22.1}

Through the inspiration of His Spirit the Lord gave His apostles truth, to be expressed according to the development of their minds by the Holy Spirit. But the mind is not cramped, as if forced into a certain mold.—Letter 53, 1900. {1SM 22.2}