

## Pine Knoll Sabbath School Study Notes

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

#### Lesson 8 *“The Least of These”*

#### Read for this week’s study

Matthew 5:2–16, 38–48; Romans 12:20, 21; Luke 16:19–31; 12:13–21; Matthew 25:31–46.

#### Memory Text

“ ‘And the King will answer and say to them, “Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me” ’ ” (Matthew 25:40, NKJV).

#### Lesson Outline from Adult Sabbath School Study Guide

- I. Introduction
- II. Introducing the Sermon on the Mount
- III. Overcoming Evil With Good
- IV. The Good Samaritan
- V. The Rich Man and Lazarus
- VI. The Least of These
- VII. Further Study

#### Questions and Notes for Consideration

##### Facilitator: Jon Paulien

1. Read Matthew 25:40. When Jesus speaks about “my brethren” who is He talking about, believers, unbelievers, or everyone? What evidence for your answer is in the in the context of chapter 25? How is the term “brethren” or “brothers” used elsewhere in Matthew? (Sabbath afternoon)
2. Read Matthew 5:2-16. What does it mean to be “blessed”? What do all or most of the values expressed in this passage have in common? How do they compare with the fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22-23)? Describe the church’s role as salt and light in the community. Read Luke 6:17-26. How are some of these values different than those in Matthew 5? What does that tell you about how Matthew and Luke viewed the ministry of Jesus? The picture of God? (Sunday’s lesson)
3. Compare Matthew 5:38-48 with Romans 12:20-21. What does it mean to be perfect as our Father in heaven is perfect? How do you live out such radical principles in the real world? (Monday’s lesson)
4. Read Luke 10:25-27. The lawyer who questioned Jesus offered a standard summary of the Old Testament commands for living a life acceptable to God. How are these

- two core commands linked together? Read Luke 10:30-37. What is the meaning of Jesus' contrast among the three characters in His story? (Tuesday's lesson)
5. Compare Luke 16:19-31 with 12:13-21. What are the similarities and differences between the two stories? What are they both designed to teach? How can we avoid letting money or the love of money distort our thinking about what really matters in the Christian life? (Wednesday's lesson)
  6. Read Matthew 25:31-46. How is this different from salvation by works? What does it truly mean to have saving faith? If Jesus equates Himself with the hungry, the naked and the imprisoned, what does that tell us about God? How should that affect our day to day lives? (Thursday's lesson)
  7. Of all the passages above, which is your favorite and why? (Friday's lesson)
  8. What is the relationship between faith and human need? If an accurate perception of truth is important, how would that impact the way you treat the suffering and the marginalized? How would we need to understand the word "truth" differently in light of this lesson? (Friday's lesson)

### Thoughts from Graham Maxwell

What impresses me in the Old Testament is how well people did know him. His best friends in the Bible are in the Old Testament. The man that Paul uses to suggest what God wants most in us was Abraham, in the Old Testament. And Moses is called a friend of God. And look at Job, Hosea, and Amos, and the others, Jeremiah, Isaiah. Apparently the message in the Old Testament is that clear. In fact, Jesus grew up with it and learned the truth about his Father. So I think the Old Testament is magnificently clear but only when it is read as a whole. I find no break between the Old and the New, except that now Christ is here in human form to give confirmation to everything that has been described and anticipated in the Old. Even his Sermon on the Mount; it's all in the Old Testament, already there. So the Bible is a unit, the whole thing, all sixty-six books. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #6, "Evaluating the Evidence" 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/6MMCAG>

It was in the Sermon on the Mount that Christ uttered those memorable words that have continued to trouble saints and sinners alike ever since. "You therefore must be perfect." Or should it be translated, "You therefore *will* be perfect." Is it a promise or is it a command? The best known version of these words is one in the *King James Version*, now more than 300 years

old. Matthew 5:48: “Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.” (KJV)

Whether those words are encouraging or forbidding, depends, as with so many of the other of our beliefs, upon the kind of person we believe our God to be—and our understanding of what he wants for his children throughout the universe—especially us who live on this planet and therefore have been particularly caught up in the damaging consequences of the great controversy. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, Conversations About God, #14, “God Can Completely Heal the Damage Done” 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/14MMCAG>

And I’m impressed; I’ve never worked out the percentage, but the overwhelming proportion of scripture is in terms of pictures and stories and demonstrations and examples rather than in statements. Here and there the statements are sprinkled through, like little subheadings. And we pluck out the sub-headings and then argue over the words, to our loss, I believe. And the word “perfect” in there can mean so many things. So the Bible says be whatever that word means to you as God is. And in the context, what is said about God? Read the whole Sermon on the Mount. That’s what God says he wants of us. And how gracious he is. His sun and his rain falling on the just and on the unjust. And I say, “Well, that’s clear to me. I’d like to be like that.” But it brings it within reach, more. It’s another way of reading the Bible, I think. It’s what’s between the key texts, to me, that is much more important than the key texts. It really is. Like the statement, “God is love,” coming up in 1 John 4:8. Yes, but what does that mean? It means so many, many things. I don’t think that’s one of the most important statements in the Bible. That’s just a nice little summary. Where’s the evidence? {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – Hebrews, recorded July, 1982, Riverside, California} *To listen to the entire audio of the above reference, click on the following direct links:*

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

COMMENT: Who is our brother?

That’s a good question! Because that was asked of Jesus, you remember. “Who is my neighbor? Who is my brother?” And his answer was to tell the story of the Good Samaritan. Now, who is our brother? Anybody in need. Anyone else created in the image of God. Everybody. The angels are our brothers. Everybody else is our brother.

Are only good people our brothers? We’ve discussed this before. Are only good children members of the family? Is this the way you report the number of children you have? It depends on the latest check into their virtue. You have six children, and currently four are good, so you

say, "I have four children this week." Next week, "I have five." Next week you have only two. No, we own up to all our children, don't we? God owns up to all his children. Lucifer is one of his children. {Graham Maxwell. Excerpt from the audio series, The Picture of God in all 66 – 1, 2, 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)

### **Further Study with Ellen White**

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

The loveliness of the character of Christ will be seen in His followers. It was His delight to do the will of God. Love to God, zeal for His glory, was the controlling power in our Saviour's life. Love beautified and ennobled all His actions. Love is of God. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. It is found only in the heart where Jesus reigns. "We love, because He first loved us." 1 John 4:19, R.V. In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around. {SC 59.3}

When love fills the heart, it will flow out to others, not because of favors received from them, but because love is the principle of action. Love modifies the character, governs the impulses, subdues enmity, and ennobles the affections. This love is as broad as the universe, and is in harmony with that of the angel workers. Cherished in the heart, it sweetens the entire life and sheds its blessing upon all around. It is this, and this only, that can make us the salt of the earth. {MB 38.1}

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}

God's ideal for His children is higher than the highest human thought can reach. "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." This command is a

promise. The plan of redemption contemplates our complete recovery from the power of Satan. Christ always separates the contrite soul from sin. He came to destroy the works of the devil, and He has made provision that the Holy Spirit shall be imparted to every repentant soul, to keep him from sinning. {DA 311.2}

“God sent not His Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through Him might be saved.” John 3:17. Looking upon men in their suffering and degradation, Christ perceived ground for hope where appeared only despair and ruin. Wherever there existed a sense of need, there He saw opportunity for uplifting. Souls tempted, defeated, feeling themselves lost, ready to perish, He met, not with denunciation, but with blessing. {Ed 79.2}

Christ longed to fill the world with a peace and joy that would be a similitude of that found in the heavenly world. [Matthew 5:1-12 quoted.] . . . {5BC 1084.2}

The Great Teacher brought His hearers in contact with nature, that they might listen to the voice which speaks in all created things; and as their hearts became tender and their minds receptive, He helped them to interpret the spiritual teaching of the scenes upon which their eyes rested. The parables, by means of which He loved to teach lessons of truth, show how open His spirit was to the influences of nature and how He delighted to gather the spiritual teaching from the surroundings of daily life. {Ed 102.1}

The birds of the air, the lilies of the field, the sower and the seed, the shepherd and the sheep—with these Christ illustrated immortal truth. He drew illustrations also from the events of life, facts of experience familiar to the hearers—the leaven, the hid treasure, the pearl, the fishing net, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the houses on the rock and the sand. In His lessons there was something to interest every mind, to appeal to every heart. Thus the daily task, instead of being a mere round of toil, bereft of higher thoughts, was brightened and uplifted by constant reminders of the spiritual and the unseen. {Ed 102.2}

Christ came to preach the gospel to the poor. He reached the people where they were. He brought plain, simple truth to their comprehension. How simple his language! Even the poorest, the unlearned and ignorant, could understand him. Not one needed go to a dictionary to obtain the meaning of the high-sounding titles or words that fell from the lips of the greatest Teacher the world ever knew. {RH, July 19, 1887 par. 13}

He dined and lodged with the rich and the poor, and made Himself familiar with the interests and occupations of men, that He might gain access to their hearts. The learned and the most intellectual were gratified and charmed with His discourses, and yet they were so plain and simple as to be comprehended by the humblest minds. {3T 214.2}

Christ reached the people where they were. He presented the plain truth to their minds in the most forcible and simple language. The humble poor, the most unlearned, could comprehend, through faith in him, the most exalted truths of God. No one needed to consult the learned

doctors as to his meaning. He did not perplex the ignorant with mysterious inferences, or use unaccustomed and learned words, of which they had no knowledge. The greatest teacher the world has ever known, was the most definite, simple, and practical in his instruction.

{RH, April 17, 1888 par. 7}

The teachings of Christ were marked with a simplicity, dignity, and power heretofore unknown to them, and their involuntary exclamation was: "Never man spake like this Man." {5T 746.3}

His lessons were impressive, beautiful and weighty with importance, and yet so simple that a child could understand them. {SD 266.2}

As we partake of the divine nature, hereditary and cultivated tendencies to wrong are cut away from the character, and we are made a living power for good. Ever learning of the divine Teacher, daily partaking of His nature, we cooperate with God in overcoming Satan's temptations. God works, and man works, that man may be one with Christ as Christ is one with God. Then we sit together with Christ in heavenly places. The mind rests with peace and assurance in Jesus (RH April 24, 1900). {7BC 943.2}

As the will of man co-operates with the will of God, it becomes omnipotent. Whatever is to be done at His command may be accomplished in His strength. All His biddings are enablings. {COL 333.1}

Jesus came to restore in man the image of his Maker. None but Christ can fashion anew the character that has been ruined by sin. He came to expel the demons that had controlled the will. {FLB 142.2}

Supreme love for God and unselfish love for one another—this is the best gift that our heavenly Father can bestow. This love is not an impulse, but a divine principle, a permanent power. The unconsecrated heart cannot originate or produce it. Only in the heart where Jesus reigns is it found. "We love Him, because He first loved us." In the heart renewed by divine grace, love is the ruling principle of action. It modifies the character, governs the impulses, controls the passions, and ennobles the affections. This love, cherished in the soul, sweetens the life and sheds a refining influence on all around. {AA 551.2}

Wherever there is an impulse of love and sympathy, wherever the heart reaches out to bless and uplift others, there is revealed the working of God's Holy Spirit. In the depths of heathenism, men who have had no knowledge of the written law of God, who have never even heard the name of Christ, have been kind to His servants, protecting them at the risk of their own lives. Their acts show the working of a divine power. The Holy Spirit has implanted the grace of Christ in the heart of the savage, quickening his sympathies contrary to his nature, contrary to his education. The "Light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world" (John 1:9), is shining in his soul; and this light, if heeded, will guide his feet to the kingdom of God. {COL 385.1}

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}

No distinction on account of nationality, race, or caste, is recognized by God. He is the Maker of all mankind. All men are of one family by creation, and all are one through redemption. Christ came to demolish every wall of partition, to throw open every compartment of the temple, that every soul may have free access to God. His love is so broad, so deep, so full, that it penetrates everywhere. It lifts out of Satan's circle the poor souls who have been deluded by his deceptions. It places them within reach of the throne of God, the throne encircled by the rainbow of promise. {COL 386.2}

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

Wherever there is union with Christ there is love. Whatever other fruits we may bear, if love be missing, they profit nothing. Love to God and our neighbor is the very essence of our religion. No one can love Christ and not love His children. When we are united to Christ, we have the mind of Christ. Purity and love shine forth in the character, meekness and truth control the life. The very expression of the countenance is changed. {RC 104.2}

Christ abiding in the soul exerts a transforming power, and the outward aspect bears witness to the peace and joy that reign within. We drink in the love of Christ, as the branch draws nourishment from the vine. If we are grafted in Christ, if fiber by fiber we have been united with the Living Vine, we shall give evidence of the fact by bearing rich clusters of living fruit. If we are connected with the Light, we shall be channels of light, and in our words and works we shall reflect light to the world. {RC 104.3}

To love as Christ loved means to manifest unselfishness at all times and in all places, by kind words and pleasant looks. These cost those who give them nothing, but they leave behind a fragrance that surrounds the soul. Their effect can never be estimated. Not only are they a blessing to the receiver, but to the giver; for they react upon him. Genuine love is a precious attribute of heavenly origin, which increases in fragrance in proportion as it is dispensed to others. . . . {5BC 1140.4}

Christ's love is deep and earnest, flowing like an irrepressible stream to all who will accept it. There is no selfishness in His love. If this heaven-born love is an abiding principle in the heart, it will make itself known, not only to those we hold most dear in sacred relationship, but to all with whom we come in contact. It will lead us to bestow little acts of attention, to make concessions, to perform deeds of kindness, to speak tender, true, encouraging words. It will

lead us to sympathize with those whose hearts hunger for sympathy (MS 17, 1899).  
{5BC 1140.5}

As His representatives among men, Christ does not choose angels who have never fallen, but human beings, men of like passions with those they seek to save. Christ took upon Himself humanity, that He might reach humanity. Divinity needed humanity; for it required both the divine and the human to bring salvation to the world. Divinity needed humanity, that humanity might afford a channel of communication between God and man. So with the servants and messengers of Christ. Man needs a power outside of and beyond himself, to restore him to the likeness of God, and enable him to do the work of God; but this does not make the human agency unessential. Humanity lays hold upon divine power, Christ dwells in the heart by faith; and through co-operation with the divine, the power of man becomes efficient for good.  
{DA 296.4}

He who called the fisherman 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. {DA 297.1}

True sanctification unites believers to Christ and to one another in bonds of tender sympathy. This union causes to flow continually into the heart rich currents of Christlike love, which flows forth again in love for one another. {SD 102.2}

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

True courtesy blended with truth and justice makes the life not only useful but beautiful and fragrant. Kind words, pleasant looks, a cheerful countenance, throw a charm about the Christian that makes his influence almost irresistible. In forgetfulness of self, in the light and peace and happiness that he is constantly bestowing on others, he finds true joy. {HP 180.5}

It should be our aim to bring all the pleasantness possible into our lives, and to do all the kindness possible to those around us. Kind words are never lost. Jesus records them as if



spoken to Himself. Sow the seeds of kindness, of love, and of tenderness, and they will blossom and bear fruit. {OHC 293.5}

A kind, courteous Christian is the most powerful argument that can be produced in favor of Christianity. {GW 122.1}

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 alway, even unto the end of the world.” —Letter 329a, Nov. 16, 1905, to her 19-year-old granddaughter Mabel. {TDG 329.6}

Christ presented to men that which was entirely contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress upon men the 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.” John 3:16. 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 and treated them despitefully. In all 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. {CT 29.3}

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

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. {9T 191.1}

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}