

Discipleship

Mission and Commission

Lesson #12 for March 22, 2008

Scriptures: Matthew 25:31-46, 28:19,20; Mark 16:14-21; Luke 24:36-53; John 3:14-19; Romans 5:6-10; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 15:3,4; Galatians 1:4; 1 Peter 2:22-25.

1. This lesson is designed to show the relationship among 1) "justification by faith alone"; 2) the commissioning of the disciples in Matthew, Mark, and Luke; and 3) the third angel's message as understood by the Seventh-day Adventist Church.

Several have written to me, inquiring if the message of justification by faith is the third angel's message, and I have answered, "It is the third angel's message in verity." -- Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890, par. 8.

2. What does "justification by faith alone" mean to you? What does the "gospel" mean to you? When Jesus told His disciples to travel throughout the world and tell people the "good news," what did He have in mind? Can you explain the linkage that Ellen White saw between "justification by faith" and the third angel's message? (Revelation 14:9-11)
3. Read Matthew 28:16-20; Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-23; and Acts 1:6-8. What do these passages tell us about the work Christ has left for us to do?
4. Notice that Jesus began His "final commission" to His disciples by scolding them for not believing the women that they had been associated with for so long! Then He told them to go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel to all people. If they did that, He said that He would be with them always. He assured them that unbelievers would be lost, but believers would be saved, and their work would be accompanied by many miracles. They were to baptize and make disciples by teaching people to obey Him. Should that be the work of the church today?
5. Why do you suppose God does not support the work of His church today with miracles? Or does He? Wouldn't that attract the world and get people's attention? If God used a lot of miracles in our day, likely, the Devil would demand equal time! Some of that will take place as a part of the final events of this world's history. It will be very confusing to many. In order to be prepared, we need to learn how to distinguish between truth and error so we will not be deceived.
6. On Tuesday evening of passion week, Jesus told them in Matthew 25:31-46 that the final judgment would hinge upon how each one of us treats Jesus Himself in the form of the poor and needy around us.
7. How are we supposed to carry out that commission in our day? How is it related to our personal testimony?
8. If Jesus were to appear in person to us today, would He scold us for our "hardness of heart"? What are we doing each day to "strengthen our faith"? To whom does God expect us to witness each week? Our neighbors? Family? Co-workers? Acquaintances? Friends?
9. Read Revelation 14:6,7. Was the first angel speaking about the same "gospel" or "good news" that Jesus and His disciples preached? In Revelation it is referred to as the "eternal" or "everlasting" gospel? What is implied by that adjective, "eternal"? If the gospel is primarily about how God saves you and me, that message was not known until the life and death of Jesus. How then could it be called "eternal"? Has the good news about the character of God and His government really changed over time?
10. In the teacher's edition of the Bible study guide, the gospel is defined as follows:
 - 1) It is the good news that Jesus has done for us what we could never do for ourselves.
 - 2) It means that the penalty for our sins has been paid in full.
 - 3) It means that no matter what happened in our past, we can stand perfect before

God right now.

- 4) It means that God will forgive us anything that we have ever done wrong, no matter what.
- 5) It means that we can have a whole new start in God.
- 6) It means that the perfect life of Jesus is now credited to us, as if we, ourselves, lived as sinlessly as did Christ.
- 7) It means that we can now be connected with the Lord, who will give us the power to live a life of faith and obedience.
- 8) It means that we are no longer cut off from God and aliens from His eternal kingdom.
- 9) It means that we are now the “children of God.”
- 10) It means that we are now part of His heavenly family. (See *Adult Teacher’s Bible Study Guide*, p. 143)

What do you think about this list? Would you want to change it? Delete portions of it? Add some important things to it?

11. **Is the “good news” primarily about how God saves you and me? Or is the good news the truth about the character of God and His government and the fact that He is not the kind of Person His enemies have made Him out to be? If God were the kind of Person—arbitrary, exacting, vengeful, unforgiving, and severe—that the Devil has always claimed, would you even *want* to be “saved” to live with Him in a capricious universe forever?**
12. Read Luke 24:36-53. This is an account of Jesus’s first visit to the disciples after His resurrection. It follows the report of the two disciples who walked with Him on the road to Emmaus.
13. What did Jesus say to those disciples on the road that moved them so powerfully? Notice the words of Ellen White about that occasion:

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 impress indelibly 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.

He (Jesus) 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.” *The Spirit of Prophecy*, vol. 3 p. 214; *The Signs of the Times* October 6, 1909; *4ST* 492:3:2 (*SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1125; *SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 7a, p. 245); *6Red* 32 (Emphasis supplied) [capitalization and wording as per *5SDABC* p. 1125 (1956 edition)]
14. When the two disciples were reunited with the others in the upper room, Jesus suddenly appeared and demonstrated that He was “real.” Then He told them to review what the Old Testament had said about His life. How much can you find in the Old Testament that clearly refers to the life and death of Jesus?
15. Much more powerful evidence than any miracle is the testimony of the Old Testament being fulfilled

by the events of the life and death of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament. Then Jesus promised that He would send the Holy Spirit to continue to teach them and to guide them into all truth. (John 16)

16. Why is the story of Christ's life, sufferings, and death considered "good news"? In what sense did Jesus "bear" or "carry" "our sins" to the cross?
17. Read Romans 5:6-10; 1 Corinthians 5:7; 15:3,4; Galatians 1:4; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 2:22-25. Notice some of the things that God said were accomplished by the life and death of Jesus: it shows us God's love; we are put right by His blood; we are saved from God's anger; He makes us His friends so we can be saved by His life; He sets us free; our sins are forgiven; our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed; Christ—having died for our sins—was buried and rose to life according to the Scripture to set us free from this evil age.
18. The lesson attempts to make it very clear that there is nothing we can do to earn or merit our own salvation. We are saved by faith in Jesus Christ alone—by His merits imputed to us. Is that the main reason why Jesus had to die?
19. The death of Christ demonstrated some other very important things:
 - a. Jesus proved that as a human being, without using His divine power, He could live a perfect life here on earth. Satan had claimed that was impossible.
 - b. He demonstrated the full, complete results of sin—separation from God—on Calvary. God had told the truth in Genesis 2:17!
 - c. By rising from the dead in His own power, He proved that He was a Divine Being and not a created being like Lucifer/Satan.
 - d. He showed us what God is like so we can have an Example to follow.
 - e. He showed us the superiority of God's way of running the universe. Love always wins over selfishness. By winning the allegiance of His disciples and many others later, He proved that Satan was wrong in his claim that, given the opportunity, every created being would choose to act selfishly instead of following the example of God.
20. What does the death of Jesus say to the universe in the setting of the great controversy? What is the relationship between Christ "answering" the great questions in the great controversy and my personal salvation? Or are those two important but unrelated issues?

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