

The Book of Luke

Following Jesus in Everyday Life

Lesson #10 for June 6, 2015

Scriptures: Luke 8:4-15; 11:37-54; 12:4-21,35-53; 22:24-27; Amos 6:1.

1. In lesson number eight of this series, we discussed in some detail the mission of Jesus. Did He also “pay the penalty for sin” so that human beings, despite their fallen nature, could be redeemed? Isn’t that what we have been taught for generations? What is the penalty for sin? Who paid it? To whom was it paid? How does that payment impact us individually? Would it be more nearly correct to say that Jesus died to demonstrate the results of sin?
2. By living and dying as He did, Jesus intended to create a new family of faith. This Christian community will be filled with individuals who choose to live Christ-like lives. Jesus Christ calls us not to a show of our goodness or doctrinal perfection but to a life totally dedicated to Him. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, Christ plans to transform us to become truly Christ-like in our daily lives. Is our church reaching a place where it could split? Or, are we becoming more like Jesus?

All true obedience comes from the heart. It was heart work with Christ. And if we consent, He will so identify Himself with our thoughts and aims, so blend our hearts and minds into conformity to His will, that when obeying Him we shall be but carrying out our own impulses. The will, refined and sanctified, will find its highest delight in doing His service. When we know God as it is our privilege to know Him, our life will be a life of continual obedience. Through an appreciation of the character of Christ, through communion with God, sin will become hateful to us.—Ellen G. White, *The Desire of Age*, p. 668.3. [Bold type is added.]

3. Clearly, when we have that kind of relationship with Jesus, all other matters become secondary.
4. As we know, the Pharisees were opposed to the teachings of Jesus almost from day one. The Pharisees were a very conservative religious group of Jews who were extreme legalists. While professing to believe in God’s goodness and grace, they lived as if their salvation depended entirely upon keeping the law. What about the prophets Jonah or Balaam? Or, even Elijah?
5. Read Luke 11:37-54. Was Jesus being rude by condemning the host who had invited Him home for a meal? Look at the accusations He made against the Pharisees and the teachers of the law:
 - 1) You look good from the outside, but you are full of violence and evil inside. (Luke 11:39)
 - 2) You tithe even the seasoning herbs such as mint and rue, but you neglect justice and love for God. [But, I am not suggesting that you should ignore tithing.] (Luke 11:42)
 - 3) You love to sit in the reserved seats in the synagogues to be seen by other people, but you are like unmarked graves which people walk on without knowing it. (Luke 11:43-44)
 - 4) You put heavy loads on people’s backs, but you are not willing to lift a finger to help them.
 - 5) You build fine tombs for the prophets that your ancestors murdered, but you choose to ignore their teachings. By doing that, you make yourselves responsible for the deaths of all the righteous people from Abel to Zechariah. (Luke 11:47-51)
 - 6) You have the key to the door of knowledge; but, you refuse to go in, and you refuse to let others in who want to enter. [Obeying their rules was for the purpose of show.] (v. 52)
6. Do any of these woes apply to us? Do we love to be praised by men and women and to put on an appearance of righteousness while inside we are as selfish as ever? Do we sometimes think that going to church on Sabbath is all that is required for entering the kingdom of God?
7. Read Revelation 14:7. What does it mean to “fear, honor, or reverence” God? Is there a relationship between fearing God and having faith in Him?

8. Based on all of Scripture, a biblical definition of *faith* stated so well so many times by one of God's best modern friends, Dr. A. Graham Maxwell, is as follows:

Faith is just a word we use to describe a relationship with God as with a Person well known. The better we know Him, the better the relationship may be.

Faith implies an attitude toward God of love, trust, and deepest admiration. It means having enough confidence in God based on the more-than-adequate evidence revealed to be willing to believe what He says as soon as we are sure He is the One saying it, to accept what He offers as soon as we are sure He is the One offering it, and to do what He wishes as soon as we are sure He is the One wishing it without reservation for the rest of eternity. Anyone who has such faith would be perfectly safe to save. This is why faith is the only requirement for heaven.

Faith also means that, like Abraham, Job, and Moses, God's friends, we know God well enough to reverently ask Him, "Why?"

9. As used in the Bible, what does the word *fear* mean? Read Job 28:28; Proverbs 1:7; 3:7; 9:10; Psalm 111:10; and Luke 12:4-12. Could you read, understand, and explain the third angel's message as recorded in Revelation 14:9-12 without producing fear in anyone? One can do so only after clearly understanding the meanings of each term in that passage—the meanings as used in the Bible.
10. Read Luke 12:4-12. These verses can be read in a very wrong way. Jesus was not talking about an ever-burning hell. He was talking about reverence, respect, and love for the God who can reward us with eternal life. God cares so much about us that He has even numbered the hairs on our heads. (Luke 12:7) If we want to know how we should respond to His care for us, think of the changes that took place in Peter from his statements at the trial of Jesus (See Mark 14:66-72.) and then his speech before the Sanhedrin as recorded in Acts 4.
11. Read Luke 12:13-21. How much time do we spend preparing for and dealing with matters of this life rather than matters that involve the future life? Those of us who choose to live self-centered lives here, would never fit into heaven. Life is not made up of earthly possessions. (Luke 12:15)
12. Why does God make some people wealthy and other people poor? Or, is God involved?
13. Material things are given to us to use for the benefit of others as well as ourselves. Do we live lives that show that? Is there any way to compare a short time of "happiness" or "pleasure" here on this earth with the eternal bliss in heaven and the earth made new? What should be our response to all of this?

Vigilance and fidelity have been required of Christ's followers in every age; but now that we are standing upon the very verge of the eternal world, holding the truths we do, having so great light, so important a work, we must double our diligence.—Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 460.3-461.0.

14. Are we always keeping our eyes focused on the kingdom of God? Are we making sure that no earthly attraction will ever take our eyes off Jesus? We must not allow our Christianity to become lax or lethargic. We have been warned repeatedly that He will show up like a thief in the night. The only safety is to be constantly ready. But, there is a greater motive that should affect all of us.

The shortness of time is urged as an incentive for us to seek righteousness and to make Christ our friend. This is not the great motive. It savors of selfishness. Is it necessary that the terrors of the day of God be held before us to compel us through fear to right action? This ought not to be. Jesus is attractive. He is full of love, mercy, and compassion.—Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, August 2, 1881 par. 6; *TMK* 320.3.

15. Could we work and live here and now as if we were already in the kingdom of God? Are we reaching out to and caring for others in ways that ensure that we are developing Christ-like love

in our everyday actions? (Matthew 25:31-46)

16. We are the most privileged generation and church in this world's history. The wealth of inspired material that we have available to us is almost beyond belief. Are we taking advantage of all that? Are we living as if we recognize that we are in the midst of an all-out spiritual warfare? (Ephesians 6:12) Remember that God holds us responsible for all that He has given us. (Luke 12:48)
17. Read Matthew 28:19-20 and Acts 1:8. The final words of Jesus to His disciples also challenge us in the 21st century to be true witnesses for Him.
18. Read Luke 8:4-15. It is never our responsibility to judge who might respond or who might not respond to God's message given through us. We must scatter the seed even though we do not know which part of it will be successful.
19. Read Luke 18:24-30. Are there any questions about how we will be rewarded in the future life? What about in this life? In what ways will we be rewarded in this life?
20. Read Luke 19:11-27. Don't you suppose it will be true that when we get to heaven our reward will be in proportion to the number of people we have helped to get there? Try to imagine the pleasure of meeting someone you have helped personally?
21. In the kingdom of heaven, all will be loving. Each one of us will be looking for opportunities to serve others. We must begin practicing that kind of love here and now. Selfish people would be totally unhappy in heaven! So, what are the pleasures of sin? Trying to escape God?

Satan sees that his voluntary rebellion has unfitted him for heaven. He has trained his powers to war against God; **the purity, peace, and harmony of heaven would be to him supreme torture.** His accusations against the mercy and justice of God are now silenced. The reproach which he has endeavored to cast upon Jehovah rests wholly upon himself. And now Satan bows down and confesses the justice of his sentence.—Ellen G. White, *Great Controversy*, p. 670.2; *DD* 58.1; *FLB* 356.5; *Hvn* 127.2; *Mar* 345.6; *4SP* 486.1; *SR* 427.2. [Bold type is added.]

22. By contrast, Jesus said that true leadership involves servanthood. If we want to be great in His kingdom, we must serve others. (Luke 22:26) What a contrast that is with the attitudes of other famous individuals from the past such as Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Alexander the Great, Julius Caesar, Napoleon, and Genghis Khan. By defining leadership in a Christian sense as servanthood and self-denial, Jesus was suggesting a total change in the way we relate to other human beings. Our greatest happiness and fulfillment should come from service to others.
23. Why was it so difficult for Jesus to teach this principle to His disciples? What was it that they were constantly arguing about? (Luke 9:46-48; 22:24-27) Even as they were entering the upper room for their final supper with Jesus before His crucifixion, they were arguing about who was going to be prime minister in the earthly kingdom of Jesus. So, how will it be with us? Are we living lives according to Satan's principle of selfishness? Or, according to God's principle of love? Could we survive in a totally selfish world living by Christ-like principles?
24. Can we be certain whether we are on Christ's side or on Satan's side?

Who has the heart? With whom are our thoughts? Of whom do we love to converse? Who has our warmest affections and our best energies? If we are Christ's, our thoughts are with Him, and our sweetest thoughts are of Him. All we have and are is consecrated to Him. We long to bear His image, breathe His spirit, do His will, and please Him in all things.—Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, p. 58.2.

In our life here, earthly, sin-restricted though it is, the greatest joy and the highest education are in service. And in the future state, untrammled by the limitations of sinful humanity, it is in service that our greatest joy and our highest education

will be found—witnessing, and ever as we witness learning anew “the riches of the glory of this mystery;” “which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.” Colossians 1:27.—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 309.1.

25. How do we treat the other members of our church group? Are there different classes of people there? Do the professionals, business executives, community leaders, etc. keep themselves separate from others whom they consider to be beneath them or their notice?
26. Have we come to fully comprehend what it means to really follow Jesus? Read Luke 17:5. What was it that the disciples expected Jesus to do for them? No doubt, Jesus had suggested to them on many occasions that His actions and even His miracles came as a result of His faith. Did they want more of His power? Look at the examples of some of the disciples. Peter needed the courage of his convictions. Thomas needed to accept the testimony of his fellow disciples. Judas could not get over his selfishness. They all claimed to be followers of Jesus. Which one of these disciples most closely represents each of us?
27. Is there a difference between having faith in Jesus and just believing in Him? Does your faith in Jesus affect your business, your ethics, even the way you live in your family? How does a true faith relationship with Jesus affect your life—spiritually, socially, physically, even mentally?
28. Is it true that being a Christian involves total commitment to Jesus Christ? Are His requirements optional? Would it be true to say that we either belong to Him completely, “24/7,” or we do not belong to Him?
29. Read Luke 12:16-21. What should we learn from the story of that rich fool? Do we truly accept the idea that however great our possessions, they are given to us in trust to be used for God’s kingdom? How would you compare this rich man with the one in Luke 18:18-23? Why did Jesus suggest it would be so hard for rich people to enter the kingdom of heaven?
30. Read Luke 9:23. What does it really mean to deny self and take up the cross and follow Jesus? What are we supposed to give up? We need to give up self. We need to give up our Pharisaical attitudes. (Luke 11:37-54) Paul believed that he needed to “die daily.” (1 Corinthians 15:31) Could we come close to that level of commitment? How close do we come to having the attitudes of the Pharisees? Is our Christian life full of minutiae? Do we overlook the real issues of faith, love, and living Christ-like lives?
31. Is your life full of worry? Read Luke 12:22-34. Worry is sin’s gift to humanity! Don’t we believe that God is capable of taking care of us? So much of our thinking is limited to the minute details of this life. God’s thinking considers all of eternity. Would it be true to say that having a reverent and trusting relationship with God means we can forget all of our fears?
32. When Jesus entrusted the spread of the gospel to a small group of human beings, what were the risks? Have we forgotten how to witness for Jesus?
33. We are so accustomed to trying to keep up with the Joneses. Human beings always seem to be enamored with the biggest, the best, the greatest, and the highest. How does that fit with our living the Christian life? What would happen if everyone in your church lived a truly Christian life?
34. In our day and age, one of Satan’s most successful plans is to get us to just delay our preparation. **He does not have to get us to deny God or God’s existence or to believe in hell. All he has to do is to get us to delay our preparation so that when our time comes, we are not ready.** How successful has he been with us?

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