

Rebellion and Redemption ***Comrades in Arms***

Lesson #8 for February 20, 2016

Scriptures: Luke 5:1-11; Mark 3:14; 4:35-41; 9:33-37; Matthew 8:23-27; 20:20-28.

1. This lesson will focus on the experiences of Jesus with His disciples. How many disciples did Jesus choose? Were there other disciples besides the twelve? What do we know about those “other disciples”?
2. The first followers of Jesus were Peter, Andrew, James, John, Philip, and Bartholomew who was also called Nathaniel. (John 1:35-50) They either were first disciples of John the Baptist and then heard about Jesus, or they were told about Jesus by friends or brothers. During the next 1½ years, Jesus worked primarily in Judea. During some of that time, He had disciples following Him; and during some of the time, He apparently worked alone. He knew how difficult things could become in Judea; so, He was working as far as possible “under the radar.” We have very little information about what happened during that period of time, and what we do have is mostly from the Gospel of John.
3. When John the Baptist was arrested and the authorities were looking for Jesus to arrest Him, He moved His center of operations to Galilee. Matthew, Mark, and Luke—the three synoptic Gospels—are primarily the story of Jesus’s work among the people of Galilee during that time. Luke 9-18 talk about His final six months of ministry, mostly in Perea on the east side of the Jordan River. The Gospel of John focuses primarily on Jesus’s experiences in and around Jerusalem. It was not until early in His Galilean ministry—about halfway through His ministry—that He officially called His disciples. (Matthew 10; Mark 3:13-19; Luke 6:12-16)
4. Read Luke 6:12. Before choosing His disciples, Jesus spent the entire night in prayer. What do you think He was doing during those nighttime hours? Don’t you suppose He was discussing the choice of disciples with the Father and the Holy Spirit? That morning when it came time to choose His disciples, He picked them out from among the much larger group who had been following Him. He actually chose eleven; and then, another sought to join them.

While Jesus was preparing the disciples for their ordination, one who had not been summoned urged his presence among them. It was Judas Iscariot, a man who professed to be a follower of Christ. He now came forward, soliciting a place in this inner circle of disciples.... By joining the apostles, he hoped to secure a high position in the new kingdom. This hope Jesus designed to cut off by the statement of His poverty. [Matthew 8:20; Luke 9:58]

The disciples were anxious that Judas should become one of their number. He was of commanding appearance, a man of keen discernment and executive ability, and they commended him to Jesus as one who would greatly assist Him in His work. They were surprised that Jesus received him so coolly.—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages*, 294.1-2. [Content in brackets is added.]

5. But, we should not forget that there were many other followers of Jesus—some of whom served a very important role in His ministry and some were women including some rich women. How many disciples followed Jesus? Who were they? What do we know about

those other disciples? See **Luke 8:1-3**; 10:1-24; 24:13-35; and Mark 16:12-13.

Luke 8:1-3 (GNB): ¹ Some time later Jesus traveled through towns and villages, preaching the Good News about the Kingdom of God. The twelve disciples went with him, ²and so did some women who had been healed of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (who was called Magdalene), from whom seven demons had been driven out; ³Joanna, whose husband Chuza was an officer in Herod's court; and Susanna, and **many other women who used their own resources to help Jesus and his disciples.** [Bold type is added.]

6. Clearly, there were many other followers who wished they could be a part of that inner circle who traveled with Jesus. How would you feel about a young pastor who was traveling around with a former demon-possessed prostitute, the wife of a high government official, and many other women?
7. Try to imagine yourself in God's position when it came time to choose Jesus's disciples. Every possible choice had numerous foibles. What do we know about the characteristics of the ones that Jesus did choose?

Jesus chose unlearned fishermen because they had not been schooled in the traditions and erroneous customs of their time. They were men of native ability, and they were humble and teachable,—men whom He could educate for His work. In the common walks of life there is many a man patiently treading the round of daily toil, unconscious that he possesses powers which, if called into action, would raise him to an equality with the world's most honored men. The touch of a skillful hand is needed to arouse those dormant faculties. It was such men that Jesus called to be His colaborers; and He gave them the advantage of association with Himself. Never had the world's great men such a teacher. When the disciples came forth from the Saviour's training, they were no longer ignorant and uncultured. They had become like Him in mind and character, and men took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus. [Acts 4:13]—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* 250.1. [Bold type and content in brackets are added.]

8. Read Luke 5:1-11. Try to imagine yourself following Jesus along the beach that day as larger and larger crowds were trying to get near Him. He stepped into Peter's boat and pushed out into the water so He could address that larger group of people. Peter, Andrew, James, John, and probably others had spent the night fishing without success. When Jesus finished His discourse, He asked Peter and Andrew to push the boat out and drop their nets into the lake—in the middle of broad daylight—to see if they could catch some fish. Try to imagine what must have been going through Peter's head—the lifelong fisherman as a young Carpenter was instructing him about when and how to catch fish! All night, Peter and his companions had been struggling with what they were going to do with their lives. As much as they wanted to follow Jesus, they had many questions.

The discourse ended, Jesus turned to Peter, and bade him launch out into the sea, and let down his net for a draft; but Peter was disheartened. All night he had taken nothing. During the lonely hours he had thought of the fate of John the Baptist, who was languishing alone in his dungeon. He had thought of the prospect before Jesus and His followers, and of the ill-success of the mission to Judea, and the malice of the priests and

rabbis. Even his own occupation had failed him; and as he watched by the empty nets, the future had seemed dark with discouragement. “Master,” he said, “we have toiled all night, and have taken nothing; nevertheless at Thy word I will let down the net.” [Luke 5:5]—Ellen G. White, *Signs of the Times*, May 6, 1908 par. 2. [Content in brackets is added.]

9. They had seen Jesus perform amazing miracles. They had heard Him preach incredible sermons. They had seen Him cast out devils. How do you think Satan reacted in each of those situations? What did Satan try to get the disciples to believe?
10. Read Luke 5:6-8. Hopefully, the rest of the disciples, like Peter, realized their weaknesses—at least to some extent—and were ready to recognize Jesus as their Leader/Mentor and Savior. Luke 5:11 tells us that they forsook all and followed Him. What do you think they said to their families, especially their wives and their children? Did it seem like they were going off on a “wild goose chase”?
11. Read Mark 3:14. Notice that Jesus recognized that before they could become real representatives of God here on planet earth, they must spend a significant amount of time with Him. There have been many people down through the ages since that who have claimed to be faithful followers of Jesus but who, in fact, were not.

There is, however, a large class who do not deal dishonestly, and who still profess to be followers of the dear Redeemer. They claim to be representatives of Christ, but, in character, they represent the worst and greatest enemy of our Lord.—Ellen G. White, *RH*, September 18, 1888 par. 13.

12. But, how are we to spend time with Jesus when we cannot see Him or hear Him physically among us?

It is a law both of the intellectual and the spiritual nature that by beholding we become changed. The mind gradually adapts itself to the subjects upon which it is allowed to dwell. It becomes assimilated to that which it is accustomed to love and reverence.—Ellen G. White, *Great Controversy* 555.1. [Bold type is added.]

13. One of the most incredible experiences that helped to convince the disciples that following Jesus was the right thing to do is recorded in Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; and Luke 8:22-25.

The sun had set, and the blackness of night settled down upon the stormy sea. The waves, lashed into fury by the howling winds, dashed fiercely over the disciples’ boat, and threatened to engulf it. **Those hardy fishermen had spent their lives upon the lake, and had guided their craft safely through many a storm; but now their strength and skill availed nothing.** They were helpless in the grasp of the tempest, and hope failed them as they saw that their boat was filling.

Absorbed in their efforts to save themselves, they had forgotten that Jesus was on board. **Now, seeing their labor vain and only death before them, they remembered at whose command they had set out to cross the sea. In Jesus was their only hope. In their helplessness and despair they cried, “Master, Master!” But the dense darkness hid Him from their sight. Their voices were drowned by the roaring of the**

tempest, and there was no reply. Doubt and fear assailed them. Had Jesus forsaken them? Was He who had conquered disease and demons, and even death, powerless to help His disciples now? Was He unmindful of them in their distress?

Again they call, but there is no answer except the shrieking of the angry blast. Already their boat is sinking. A moment, and apparently they will be swallowed up by the hungry waters.

Suddenly a flash of lightning pierces the darkness, and they see Jesus lying asleep, undisturbed by the tumult. In amazement and despair they exclaim, "Master, carest Thou not that we perish?" How can He rest so peacefully, while they are in danger and battling with death?

Their cry arouses Jesus. As the lightning's glare reveals Him, they see the peace of heaven in His face; they read in His glance self-forgetful, tender love, and, their hearts turning to Him, cry, "Lord, save us: we perish."

Never did a soul utter that cry unheeded. As the disciples grasp their oars to make a last effort, Jesus rises. He stands in the midst of His disciples, while the tempest rages, the waves break over them, and the lightning illuminates His countenance. **He lifts His hand, so often employed in deeds of mercy, and says to the angry sea, "Peace, be still."**

The storm ceases. The billows sink to rest. The clouds roll away, and the stars shine forth. The boat rests upon a quiet sea. Then turning to His disciples, Jesus asks sorrowfully, "Why are ye fearful? have ye not yet faith?" Mark 4:40, R.V.

A hush fell upon the disciples. Even Peter did not attempt to express the awe that filled his heart. The boats that had set out to accompany Jesus had been in the same peril with that of the disciples. Terror and despair had seized their occupants; but the command of Jesus brought quiet to the scene of tumult. The fury of the storm had driven the boats into close proximity, and all on board beheld the miracle. In the calm that followed, fear was forgotten. The people whispered among themselves, "What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?"—Ellen G. White, *Desire of Ages* 334.3-335.4. [Bold type is added.]

14. What or who do you think was responsible for that sudden storm? Who would have loved to wipe out Jesus and all of His chosen disciples at one time? Read Job 1:18-19, and recognize that Satan is fully capable of causing storms.

Satan is even now seeking by disasters upon sea and land to seal the fate of as many as possible.—Ellen G. White, *Historical Sketches of the Foreign Missions of the Seventh-day Adventists* 155.2; *In Heavenly Places* 348.4.

15. Is God's spirit being withdrawn? Is Satan being allowed more and more to take control of the elements? What about global warming? How do you think you would have responded if you have been in one of those boats that was caught in that terrible storm and then, all of a sudden, the sea became quiet and calm?

16. What weapons does the Devil use in the great controversy? Can you name some? What weapons does God use? Satan's weapons clearly include lying, deceit, force, "natural disasters," even disease, and murder—whenever God allows. God's weapons are limited to truth, love, gentle persuasion, and teaching. Does that seem like a fair battle? Jesus seemed to suggest that if the disciples had had enough faith, they could have stopped that storm on the Sea of Galilee. If we had enough faith, could we stop some of the natural disasters affecting our world today?
17. Read Matthew 13:1-9 and Mark 4:1-9. This parable is very familiar to knowledgeable Christians. Does this parable help us to understand something about how and why Jesus chose the disciples that He did? Satan found it impossible to get Jesus to sin. From the time of His birth, Jesus was beset by every temptation possible, but when Satan saw that he was failing to get Jesus to sin, he tried to make the life of Jesus so difficult that Jesus would give up and go back to heaven. After Jesus was dead and Satan had failed in both of those objectives, Satan and his followers were determined to keep the body of Jesus in the tomb. They failed to do that as well! But, the disciples were much easier targets. They seemed to be full of pride, doubt, stubbornness, self-importance, even petty rivalries! They had a lot to learn; but then, so do we!
18. Read Mark 9:33-37 and Matthew 18:3-5. Compare Luke 9:46-48; Luke 22:24-30; and John 13. Clearly, Jesus had an incredible time trying to persuade His disciples that His kingdom was not of this earth. How can one convince proud, selfish human beings to love and serve others?
19. Read Matthew 20:20-28 and Mark 10:35-45. Who do you think was behind this request? See Isaiah 14:14. Jesus had repeatedly told His disciples that He would end up going to Jerusalem, being arrested, being handed over to the Romans, and finally, being crucified. But, they could not comprehend what He could possibly be talking about! (Matthew 20:18-19; Luke 18:31-34) Remember that those were the disciples specifically chosen by Jesus because they would be teachable. They had spent years with Jesus—the greatest Teacher the world has ever known—and still, they were so attached to their delusion that Jesus would be an earthly king that they could not comprehend what Jesus was saying to them because it was foreign to their paradigm.
20. Read Luke 24. The incredible experiences of the followers of Jesus on resurrection Sunday are almost impossible to imagine. The walk of Jesus with those two disciples on the way to Emmaus was incredible. Why do you think the two disciples were not able to recognize Jesus? Had Satan blinded their eyes? Or, did God send them temporary blindness? Or, was it just natural? Might Jesus have actually caused the temporary blindness in order to get them to think clearly through His arguments from the Old Testament before He revealed to them who He was? What should we learn from that experience? Ellen White suggested that they were so absorbed in their gloom and disappointment that they did not observe Him closely. (*DA* 795.2) When the disciples reached their destination—presumably their homes—at Emmaus, they urged Jesus to stay with them. Once again, Ellen White said: "Had the disciples failed to press their invitation, they would not have known that their traveling companion was the risen Lord." (*DA* 800.3)
21. When they discovered that Jesus was the One who had been speaking to them, they jumped up, left their food behind, and raced back to Jerusalem, repeating over and over again the words recorded in Luke 24:32 (*GNB*): "Wasn't it like a fire burning in us when he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?" Is that how you feel

about the truths of Scripture?

When here in the flesh, Jesus cast out demons (*Luke 6:18*), gave hope to the hopeless (*Luke 6:20-23*), showed people how to live out God's *agape* love (*Luke 6:27-49*), healed the centurion's servant (*Luke 7:2-10*), raised a widow's dead son (*Luke 7:12-16*), stilled a storm (*Luke 8:22-25*), freed the demoniac at Gadara of his demons (*Luke 8:26-39*), healed a woman who had been bleeding for 12 years (*Luke 8:43-48*), raised Jairus's dead daughter (*Luke 8:41, 42, 49-56*), and even raised Lazarus from the dead after he had been dead for four days (*John 11:39-44*). All that He did, and so much more, and yet people still struggled to believe in Him.—*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide* for Friday, February 19, 2016.

Even Christ's own disciples were slow to learn and to understand. Notwithstanding their love for Him and their reverence of His character, their faith in His being the Son of God wavered. Their frequent reference to the traditions of the fathers, and their continual misunderstanding of His discourses, show how difficult it was for them to free themselves from superstition.—Ellen G. White, *Ms 132*, 1902; *Manuscript Releases*, vol. 18, p. 116.3.

22. Think of the different ways in which people responded when discovering that Jesus, in fact, was and is the Messiah and the "Son of God." Consider the stories of: 1) The Samaritan woman recorded in John 4; 2) Nicodemus recorded in John 3; and 3) The disciples after the resurrection, ascension, and Pentecost.
23. God does not ask us to follow Him blindly. Faith is not a leap in the dark. Jesus asked His disciples to spend time with Him before they went out as apostles. We also are asked to spend time with Jesus; but, we are given the opportunity to exercise our freedom of choice. Will we do so in the light of the compelling evidence which is available to us? How can we make sure that we are being receptive?
24. It is very clear from the Gospel accounts that the Pharisees and Sadducees opposed Jesus almost from the first day of His ministry. So, how do we explain Acts 6:7 and 15:5? Were those Pharisees and Sadducees, who apparently later joined the Christians, truly converted? Or, were they trying to turn Christianity into another Jewish sect?
25. As we noted above, Jesus chose primarily unlearned/unschooled men to be His disciples. Is that because it is so much harder to unlearn something than it is to learn it, especially if it has become a part of one's paradigm of life? During His ministry, do you think Jesus ever despaired of working with His disciples? Even in John 14:8-9, we see an incredible interchange between Philip and Jesus on the night of His betrayal and arrest.
26. Are we prepared to accept Jesus as a true representative of His heavenly Father? Have we thought of all the implications of that? What should that teach us about the great controversy?

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