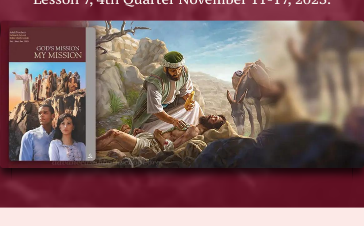
Mission to My Neighbor

Lesson 7, 4th Quarter November 11-17, 2023.



Sabbath Afternoon, November 11

Memory Text:

"And he answering said, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." KJV — Luke 10:27

"In order to be candidates for heaven we must meet the requirement of the law: 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself' (Luke 10:27). We can do this only as we grasp by faith the righteousness of Christ. By beholding Jesus we receive a living, expanding principle in the heart, and the Holy Spirit carries on the work, and the believer advances from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from character to character. He conforms to the image of Christ, until in spiritual growth he attains unto the measure of the full stature in Christ Jesus. Thus Christ makes an end of the curse of sin, and sets the believing soul free from its action and effect." 1SM 395.1

'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself' (Luke 10:27). These words sum up the whole duty of man. They mean the consecration of the whole being, body, soul, and spirit, to God's service. How can men obey these words, and at the same time pledge themselves to support that which deprives their neighbors of freedom of action? And how can men obey these words, and form combinations that rob the poorer classes of the advantages which justly belong to them, preventing them from buying or selling, except under certain conditions?' Letter 26, 1903." 2SM 143.4

Sunday, November 12

The Question of Questions

Read Luke 10:25. What did this lawyer ask and why did he ask it?

"When this young ruler came to Jesus, his sincerity and earnestness won the Saviour's heart. He "beholding him loved him." In this young man He saw one who might do service as a preacher of righteousness. He would have received this talented and noble youth as readily as He received the poor fishermen who followed Him. Had the young man devoted his ability to the work of saving souls, he might have become a diligent and successful laborer for Christ. COL 392.2

"But first he must accept the conditions of discipleship. He must give himself unreservedly to God. At the Saviour's call, John, Peter, Matthew, and their companions "left all, rose up, and followed Him." Luke 5:28. The same consecration was required of the young ruler. And in this Christ did not ask a greater sacrifice than He Himself had made. "He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." 2 Corinthians 8:9. The young man had only to follow where Christ led the way." COL 393.1

"Zacchaeus had been overwhelmed, amazed, and silenced at the love and condescension of Christ in stooping to him, so unworthy. Now love and loyalty to his new-found Master unseal his lips. He will make public his confession and his repentance. DA 554.2

"In the presence of the multitude, "Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken anything from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold. DA 555.1

"'Jesus said unto him, This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham.' DA 555.2

"When the rich young ruler had turned away from Jesus, the disciples had marveled at their Master's saying, "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God!" They had exclaimed one to another, "Who then can be saved?" Now they had a demonstration of the truth of Christ's words, "The things which are impossible with men are possible with God." Mark 10:24, 26; Luke 18:27. They saw how, through the grace of God, a man could enter into the kingdom." DA 555.3

Monday, November 13

Jesus' Method and Response

Read Matthew 26:56, Acts 17:11, 1 Corinthians 15:3, and 2 Timothy 3:16. How do these verses help us understand Jesus' response to the layer in Luke 10:26?

Remember, too, that when the rich young ruler asked what he must do to have eternal life, Jesus' answer was: "Keep the commandments." And His answer today is the same. (See Rev. 22:14) When the ruler inquired which commandments he should keep, the Lord plainly told him: "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matt. 19:18, 19.

Here you see that the moral "law" and the "commandment" are synonymous. "Think not," He declared, "that I am come to destroy [or to put away] the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill [the prophecies concerning Me and My work]. For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass [and they still stand],one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled. Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven....Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the Judgment: but I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire." Matt. 5:17-19, 21, 22.

Let us note carefully that the commandments were written by God Himself on two tables of stone. The first one contained the first four commandments -- those which demand love to God -- and the second table contained the last six commandments -- those which demand love to our fellow men. These two tables with their ten precepts -- four on the one and six on the other, the Lord summarizes them in two commandments and declares that they are the great commandments. All of the ten commandments, therefore, are great, there is no distinction between one and the other. So it is that on these commandments hang the law and the prophets -- the whole Bible -- that if these commandments fail then the whole Bible fails, that since the Bible cannot fail neither can the commandments fail, but he who does not repent for having broken them, and does not stop breaking them, will certainly fall to the bottom of the pit.

"Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God, and keep His commandments: for this is the whole duty of man. For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil." Eccles. 12:13, 14.

Tuesday, November 14

To Inherit Eternal Life

Read Luke 10:27 28. What was the lawyer's answer to his own question?

"Millions of people in our world are making the choice made by the young ruler. They have intelligence, but they cannot decide to be honest stewards of their Lord's goods. Many say, "I will bless and glorify myself; I will be honored as a man above his fellows." Jesus paid the price for their redemption; for their sake he became poor, that they might be rich; and yet, though wholly dependent on him for all their earthly possessions, they refuse to do his will by showing love to their fellow men. They are not willing to relieve the necessities of those around them with the means which the Lord has placed in their hands for this purpose. They refuse to appropriate the Lord's capital for the benefit of others, and hold fast to their possessions. Like the ruler, they refuse the heavenly treasure, and choose that which is agreeable to themselves. By such selfishness they prove themselves unworthy of the eternal riches. They show that they are unfit for a place in the kingdom of God; if they were allowed to enter there, they would, like the great apostate, claim everything as if they had created it, and would spoil heaven by their covetousness. RH December 14, 1897, par. 7

"Moses was called upon to choose between the world and God. Two conflicting objects were placed before him. The treasures of Egypt, the honor of a temporal crown, and all the worldly benefits involved in this choice, were presented by the prince of this world. The opposite side was presented by the Prince of Light, the world's Redeemer. He held out the recompense of reward, the unsearchable riches of Christ, and showed also the path of affliction, self-denial, and self-sacrifice, that must be traveled by all who gain this reward." RH December 14, 1897, par. 8

"The decision was left with Moses. As a free moral agent he was at liberty to choose. All heaven was interested in the matter. What would be his choice?—obedience to God, with the eternal recompense of reward, or obedience to that most agreeable to his own will? 'By faith Moses, when he was come to years, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter; choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season; esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt: for he had respect unto the recompense of the reward.'" RH December 14, 1897, par. 9

Wednesday, November 15

Loving Others as we love Ourselves.

Read Matthew 22:37-40. How does what Jesus himself said here compare to His answer to the lawyer, in Luke 19: 27, 28?

"The lawyer said, "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength, and with all thy mind; and thy neighbour as thyself." "Thou hast answered right," Christ said; "this do, and thou shalt live." COL 377.2

"The lawyer was not satisfied with the position and works of the Pharisees. He had been studying the scriptures with a desire to learn their real meaning. He had a vital interest in the matter, and he asked in sincerity, "What shall I do?" In his answer as to the requirements of the law, he passed by all the mass of ceremonial and ritualistic precepts. For these he claimed no value, but presented the two great principles on which hang all the law and the prophets. The Saviour's commendation of this answer placed Him on vantage ground with the rabbis. They could not condemn Him for sanctioning that which had been advanced by an expositor of the law. COL 377.3

"'This do, and thou shalt live,' Christ said. In His teaching He ever presented the law as a divine unity, showing that it is impossible to keep one precept and break another; for the same principle runs through all. Man's destiny will be determined by his obedience to the whole law. COL 377.4

"Christ knew that no one could obey the law in his own strength. He desired to lead the lawyer to clearer and more critical research that he might find the truth. Only by accepting the virtue and grace of Christ can we keep the law. Belief in the propitiation for sin enables fallen man to love God with his whole heart and his neighbor as himself. COL 378.1

"The lawyer knew that he had kept neither the first four nor the last six commandments. He was convicted under Christ's searching words, but instead of confessing his sin he tried to excuse it. Rather than acknowledge the truth, he endeavored to show how difficult of fulfillment the commandment is. Thus he hoped both to parry conviction and to vindicate himself in the eyes of the people. The Saviour's words had shown that his question was needless, since he was able to answer it himself. Yet he put another question, saying, "Who is my neighbour?" COL 378.2

Thursday, November 16

The God Samaritan Story Today

Read Luke 10:30-37. How would you summarize Jesus' meaning in the story today?

"In giving this lesson, Christ presented the principles of the law in a direct, forcible way, showing His hearers that they had neglected to carry out these principles. His words were so definite and pointed that the listeners could find no opportunity to cavil. The lawyer found in the lesson nothing that he could criticize. His prejudice in regard to Christ was removed. But he had not overcome his national dislike sufficiently to give credit to the Samaritan by name. When Christ asked, "Which now of these three, thinkest thou, was neighbour unto him that fell among the thieves?" he answered, "He that showed mercy on him." COL 380.1

"'Then said Jesus unto him, Go, and do thou likewise.' Show the same tender kindness to those in need. Thus you will give evidence that you keep the whole law." COL 380.2

"Many today are making a similar mistake. They separate their duties into two distinct classes. The one class is made up of great things, to be regulated by the law of God; the other class is made up of so-called little things, in which the command, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," is ignored. This sphere of work is left to caprice, subject to inclination or impulse. Thus the character is marred, and the religion of Christ misrepresented. COL 382.2

"There are those who would think it lowering to their dignity to minister to suffering humanity. Many look with indifference and contempt upon those who have laid the temple of the soul in ruins. Others neglect the poor from a different motive. They are working, as they believe, in the cause of Christ, seeking to build up some worthy enterprise. They feel that they are doing a great work, and they cannot stop to notice the wants of the needy and distressed. In advancing their supposedly great work they may even oppress the poor. They may place them in hard and trying circumstances, deprive them of their rights, or neglect their needs. Yet they feel that all this is justifiable because they are, as they think, advancing the cause of Christ. COL 382.3

"Many will allow a brother or a neighbor to struggle unaided under adverse circumstances. Because they profess to be Christians he may be led to think that in their cold selfishness they are representing Christ. Because the Lord's professed servants are not in co-operation with Him, the love of God, which should flow forth from them, is in great degree cut off from their fellow men. And a large revenue of praise and thanksgiving from human hearts and human lips is prevented from flowing back to God. He is robbed of the glory due to His holy name. He is robbed of the souls for whom Christ died, souls whom He longs to bring into His kingdom to dwell in His presence through endless ages." COL 383.1

Friday, November 17

Further Thought

Both the rich young man and Nicodemus were rulers, and though Nicodemus might not have been as rich as was the young man, he nevertheless was not poor. But why was the one asked to distribute his riches to the poor, and the other told to be born again? Why should not both pay the same price for salvation? Here are the reasons:

To avoid being seen in the company of Jesus, Nicodemus came to Him, not by day, but secretly by night, whereas the young ruler came to Jesus not only openly by day, but also while a multitude were with Jesus. The rich young ruler's basic hindrance, therefore, was his wealth, and Nicodemus' basic hindrance was his pride. Plainly, then, the one's ailment called for one kind of treatment, and the other's ailment called for another kind of treatment.

Jesus never asked anyone to take His religion, but He asked them to "follow" Him, to be one of His disciples. The rich young ruler could not follow the Lord because his heart was centered upon his own riches. And Nicodemus could not follow the Lord because he was too proud to be seen in the company of unpopular and hated Jesus followed by humble fishermen. To remove the hindrances, the one had to get rid of his riches, and the other had to get rid of his pride. To eradicate pride, one must be born again, must become a new man. But to eradicate the love of money one must give his money to those who really need it.

The Scriptures bear record that Abraham was very rich. Yet he is called the "friend of God." Riches in themselves, therefore, can be a blessing, although they more often become a curse. Pride, however, is never good.