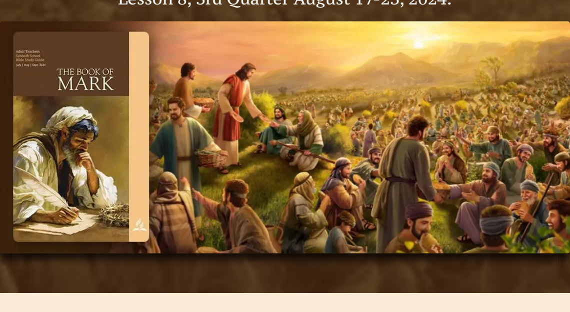
Teaching Disciples: Part II

Lesson 8, 3rd Quarter August 17-23, 2024.



Sabbath Afternoon, August 17

Memory Text:

"For even the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." KJV — Mark 10:45

"Again the strife as to which should be greatest seemed about to be renewed, when Jesus, calling them to Him, said to the indignant disciples, "Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you." DA 550.1

"In the kingdoms of the world, position meant self-aggrandizement. The people were supposed to exist for the benefit of the ruling classes. Influence, wealth, education, were so many means of gaining control of the masses for the use of the leaders. The higher classes were to think, decide, enjoy, and rule; the lower were to obey and serve. Religion, like all things else, was a matter of authority. The people were expected to believe and practice as their superiors directed. The right of man as man, to think and act for himself, was wholly unrecognized. DA 550.2

"Christ was establishing a kingdom on different principles. He called men, not to authority, but to service, the strong to bear the infirmities of the weak. Power, position, talent, education, placed their possessor under the greater obligation to serve his fellows. To even the lowliest of Christ's disciples it is said, "All things are for your sakes." 2 Corinthians 4:15. DA 550.3

"'The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.' Among His disciples Christ was in every sense a caretaker, a burden bearer. He shared their poverty, He practiced self-denial on their account, He went before them to smooth the more difficult places, and soon He would consummate His work on earth by laying down His life. The principle on which Christ acted is to actuate the members of the church which is His body. The plan and ground of salvation is love. In the kingdom of Christ those are greatest who follow the example He has given, and act as shepherds of His flock. DA 550.4

"The words of Paul reveal the true dignity and honor of the Christian life: "Though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all," "not seeking mine own profit, but the profit of many, that they may be saved." 1 Corinthians 9:19; 10:33. DA 550.5

"In matters of conscience the soul must be left untrammeled. No one is to control another's mind, to judge for another, or to prescribe his duty. God gives to every soul freedom to think, and to follow his own convictions. "Every one of us shall give account of himself to God." No one has a right to merge his own individuality in that of another. In all matters where principle is involved, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind." Romans 14:12, 5. In Christ's kingdom there is no lordly oppression, no compulsion of manner. The angels of heaven do not come to the earth to rule, and to exact homage, but as messengers of mercy, to co-operate with men in uplifting humanity." DA 550.6

Sunday, August 18

God's Plan for Marriage

Read Mark 10:1-12, as well as Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:24. What trap was hiding under the Pharisees question about divorce, and what lesson did Jesus teach ion His response?

"In the youthful mind, marriage is clothed with romance, and it is difficult to divest it of this feature, with which imagination covers it, and to impress the mind with a sense of the weighty responsibilities involved in the marriage vow. This vow links the destinies of the two individuals with bonds which nought but the hand of death should sever." 4T 506.3

"Every marriage engagement should be carefully considered, for marriage is a step taken for life. Both the man and the woman should carefully consider whether they can cleave to each other through the vicissitudes of life as long as they both shall live." 11LtMs, Lt 17, 1896, par. 8

"Among the Jews a man was permitted to put away his wife for the most trivial offenses, and the woman was then at liberty to marry again. This practice led to great wretchedness and sin. In the Sermon on the Mount Jesus declared plainly that there could be no dissolution of the marriage tie, except for unfaithfulness to the marriage vow. "Everyone," He said, "that putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, maketh her an adulteress: and whosoever shall marry her when she is put away committeth adultery." R.V. MB 63.1

"When the Pharisees afterward questioned Him concerning the lawfulness of divorce, Jesus pointed His hearers back to the marriage institution as ordained at creation. "Because of the hardness of your hearts," He said, Moses "suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so." Matthew 19:8. He referred them to the blessed days of Eden, when God pronounced all things "very good." Then marriage and the Sabbath had their origin, twin institutions for the glory of God in the benefit of humanity. Then, as the Creator joined the hands of the holy pair in wedlock, saying, A man shall "leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one" (Genesis 2:24), He enunciated the law of marriage for all the children of Adam to the close of time. That which the Eternal Father Himself had pronounced good was the law of highest blessing and development for man. MB 63.2 'Jesus came to our world to rectify mistakes and to restore the moral image of God in man. Wrong sentiments in regard to marriage had found a place in the minds of the teachers of Israel. They were making of none effect the sacred institution of marriage. Man was becoming so hard-hearted that he would, for the most trivial excuse, separate from his wife, or, if he chose, he would separate her from the children and send her away. This was considered a great disgrace, and was often accompanied by the most acute suffering on the part of the discarded one.'" 14LtMs, Ms 16, 1899, par. 10

"Christ came not to destroy the law, but to fulfill its every specification. He came to pull down and destroy the works of oppression that the enemy had raised up everywhere. It was in perfect harmony with His character and work to make known the fact that marriage is a sacred and holy institution." 14LtMs, Ms 16, 1899, par. 31

Monday, August 12

Jesus and Children

Read Mark 10:13-16. What did Jesus do for those who brought children to Him?

"Jesus was ever a lover of children. He accepted their childish sympathy and their open, unaffected love. The grateful praise from their pure lips was music in His ears, and refreshed His spirit when oppressed by contact with crafty and hypocritical men. Wherever the Saviour went, the benignity of His countenance, and His gentle, kindly manner won the love and confidence of children. DA 511.1

"Among the Jews it was customary for children to be brought to some rabbi, that he might lay his hands upon them in blessing; but the Saviour's disciples thought His work too important to be interrupted in this way. When the mothers came to Him with their little ones, the disciples looked on them with disfavor. They thought these children too young to be benefited by a visit to Jesus, and concluded that He would be displeased at their presence. But it was the disciples with whom He was displeased. The Saviour understood the care and burden of the mothers who were seeking to train their children according to the word of God. He had heard their prayers. He Himself had drawn them into His presence. DA 511.2

"One mother with her child had left her home to find Jesus. On the way she told a neighbor her errand, and the neighbor wanted to have Jesus bless her children. Thus several mothers came together, with their little ones. Some of the children had passed beyond the years of infancy to childhood and youth. When the mothers made known their desire, Jesus heard with sympathy the timid, tearful request. But He waited to see how the disciples would treat them. When He saw them send the mothers away, thinking to do Him a favor, He showed them their error, saying, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the kingdom of God." He took the children in His arms, He laid His hands upon them, and gave them the blessing for which they came. DA 511.3

"The mothers were comforted. They returned to their homes strengthened and blessed by the words of Christ. They were encouraged to take up their burden with new cheerfulness, and to work hopefully for their children. The mothers of today are to receive His words with the same faith. Christ is as verily a personal Saviour today as when He lived a man among men. He is as verily the helper of mothers today as when He gathered the little ones to His arms in Judea. The children of our hearths are as much the purchase of His blood as were the children of long ago. DA 512.1

"Jesus knows the burden of every mother's heart. He who had a mother that struggled with poverty and privation sympathizes with every mother in her labors. He who made a long journey in order to relieve the anxious heart of a Canaanite woman will do as much for the mothers of today. He who gave back to the widow of Nain her only son, and who in His agony upon the cross remembered His own mother, is touched today by the mother's sorrow. In every grief and every need He will give comfort and help. DA 512.2

"Let mothers come to Jesus with their perplexities. They will find grace sufficient to aid them in the management of their children. The gates are open for every mother who would lay her burdens at the Saviour's feet. He who said, "Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not," still invites the mothers to lead up their little ones to be blessed by Him. Even the babe in its mother's arms may dwell as under the shadow of the Almighty through the faith of the praying mother. John the Baptist was filled with the Holy Spirit from his birth. If we will live in communion with God, we too may expect the divine Spirit to mold our little ones, even from their earliest moments. DA 512.3

"In the children who were brought in contact with Him, Jesus saw the men and women who should be heirs of His grace and subjects of His kingdom, and some of whom would become martyrs for His sake. He knew that these children would listen to Him and accept Him as their Redeemer far more readily than would grown-up people, many of whom were the worldly-wise and hardhearted. In His teaching He came down to their level. He, the Majesty of heaven, did not disdain to answer their questions, and simplify His important lessons to meet their childish understanding. He planted in their minds the seeds of truth, which in after years would spring up, and bear fruit unto eternal life. DA 512.4

"It is still true that children are the most susceptible to the teachings of the gospel; their hearts are open to divine influences, and strong to retain the lessons received. The little children may be Christians, having an experience in accordance with their years. They need to be educated in spiritual things, and parents should give them every advantage, that they may form characters after the similitude of the character of Christ." DA 515.1

Tuesday, August 20

The Best Investment

Read Mark 10:17-31. What crucial lessons about faith and the cost of discipleship–for anyone, rich or poor–is revealed here?

"Christ gave this man a test. He called upon him to choose between the heavenly treasure and worldly greatness. The heavenly treasure was assured him if he would follow Christ. But self must yield; his will must be given into Christ's control. The very holiness of God was offered to the young ruler. He had the privilege of becoming a son of God, and a coheir with Christ to the heavenly treasure. But he must take up the cross, and follow the Saviour in the path of self-denial. DA 519.5

"Christ's words were verily to the ruler the invitation, "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Joshua 24:15. The choice was left with him. Jesus was yearning for his conversion. He had shown him the plague spot in his character, and with what deep interest He watched the issue as the young man weighed the question! If he decided to follow Christ, he must obey His words in everything. He must turn from his ambitious projects. With what earnest, anxious longing, what soul hunger, did the Saviour look at the young man, hoping that he would yield to the invitation of the Spirit of God! DA 520.1

"Christ made the only terms which could place the ruler where he would perfect a Christian character. His words were words of wisdom, though they appeared severe and exacting. In accepting and obeying them was the ruler's only hope of salvation. His exalted position and his possessions were exerting a subtle influence for evil upon his character. If cherished, they would supplant God in his affections. To keep back little or much from God was to retain that which would lessen his moral strength and efficiency; for if the things of this world are cherished, however uncertain and unworthy they may be, they will become all-absorbing. DA 520.2

"The ruler was quick to discern all that Christ's words involved, and he became sad. If he had realized the value of the offered gift, quickly would he have enrolled himself as one of Christ's followers. He was a member of the honored council of the Jews, and Satan was tempting him with flattering prospects of the future. He wanted the heavenly treasure, but he wanted also the temporal advantages his riches would bring him. He was sorry that such conditions existed; he desired eternal life, but he was not willing to make the sacrifice. The cost of eternal life seemed too great, and he went away sorrowful; "for he had great possessions." DA 520.3

"His claim that he had kept the law of God was a deception. He showed that riches were his idol. He could not keep the commandments of God while the world was first in his affections. He loved the gifts of God more than he loved the Giver. Christ had offered the young man fellowship with Himself. "Follow Me," He said. But the Saviour was not so much to him as his own name among men or his possessions. To give up his earthly treasure, that was seen, for the heavenly treasure, that was unseen, was too great a risk. He refused the offer of eternal life, and went away, and ever after the world was to receive his worship. Thousands are passing through this ordeal, weighing Christ against the world; and many choose the world. Like the young ruler, they turn from the Saviour, saying in their hearts, I will not have this Man as my leader. DA 520.4

"Christ's dealing with the young man is presented as an object lesson. God has given us the rule of conduct which every one of His servants must follow. It is obedience to His law, not merely a legal obedience, but an obedience which enters into the life, and is exemplified in the character. God has set His own standard of character for all who would become subjects of His kingdom. Only those who will become co-workers with Christ, only those who will say, Lord, all I have and all I am is Thine, will be acknowledged as sons and daughters of God. All should consider what it means to desire heaven, and yet to turn away because of the conditions laid down. Think of what it means to say "No" to Christ. The ruler said, No, I cannot give You all. Do we say the same? The Saviour offers to share with us the work God has given us to do. He offers to use the means God has given us, to carry forward His work in the world. Only in this way can He save us. DA 523.1

"The ruler's possessions were entrusted to him that he might prove himself a faithful steward; he was to dispense these goods for the blessing of those in need. So God now entrusts men with means, with talents and opportunities, that they may be His agents in helping the poor and the suffering. He who uses his entrusted gifts as God designs becomes a co-worker with the Saviour. He wins souls to Christ, because he is a representative of His character. DA 523.2

"To those who, like the young ruler, are in high positions of trust and have great possessions, it may seem too great a sacrifice to give up all in order to follow Christ. But this is the rule of conduct for all who would become His disciples. Nothing short of obedience can be accepted. Self-surrender is the substance of the teachings of Christ. Often it is presented and enjoined in language that seems authoritative, because there is no other way to save man than to cut away those things which, if entertained, will demoralize the whole being. DA 523.3

"When Christ's followers give back to the Lord His own, they are accumulating treasure which will be given to them when they shall hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant; ... enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." "Who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of the throne of God." Matthew 25:23; Hebrews 12:2. The joy of seeing souls redeemed, souls eternally saved, is the reward of all that put their feet in the footprints of Him who said, 'Follow Me.'" DA 523.4

Wednesday, August 21

Can you drink My Cup?

Read Mark 10:33-45. How do these verses reveal the continued ignorance of the disciples regarding not only Jesus' mission but what it means to follow Him?

"Again Christ called the twelve about Him, and with greater definiteness than ever before, He opened to them His betrayal and sufferings. "Behold," He said, "we go up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of man shall be accomplished. For He shall be delivered unto the Gentiles, and shall be mocked, and spitefully entreated, and spitted on: and they shall scourge Him, and put Him to death: and the third day He shall rise again. And they understood none of these things: and this saying was hid from them, neither knew they the things which were spoken." DA 547.2

"Had they not just before proclaimed everywhere, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand"? Had not Christ Himself promised that many should sit down with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of God? Had He not promised to all who had left aught for His sake a hundredfold in this life, and a part in His kingdom? And had He not given to the twelve the special promise of positions of high honor in His kingdom,—to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel? Even now He had said that all things written in the prophets concerning Him should be fulfilled. And had not the prophets foretold the glory of the Messiah's reign? In the light of these thoughts, His words in regard to betrayal, persecution, and death seemed vague and shadowy. Whatever difficulties might intervene, they believed that the kingdom was soon to be established. DA 547.3

"John, the son of Zebedee, had been one of the first two disciples who had followed Jesus. He and his brother James had been among the first group who had left all for His service. Gladly they had forsaken home and friends that they might be with Him; they had walked and talked with Him; they had been with Him in the privacy of the home, and in the public assemblies. He had quieted their fears, delivered them from danger, relieved their sufferings, comforted their grief, and with patience and tenderness had taught them, till their hearts seemed linked with His, and in the ardor of their love they longed to be nearest to Him in His kingdom. At every possible opportunity, John took his place next the Saviour, and James longed to be honored with as close connection with Him." DA 548.1

"Jesus bears tenderly with them, not rebuking their selfishness in seeking preference above their brethren. He reads their hearts, He knows the depth of their attachment to Him. Their love is not a mere human affection; though defiled by the earthliness of its human channel, it is an outflowing from the fountain of His own redeeming love. He will not rebuke, but deepen and purify. He said, "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?" They recall His mysterious words, pointing to trial and suffering, yet answer confidently, "We are able." They would count it highest honor to prove their loyalty by sharing all that is to befall their Lord. DA 548.6

"'Ye shall drink indeed of My cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with,' He said; before Him a cross instead of a throne, two malefactors His companions at His right hand and His left. John and James were to share with their Master in suffering; the one, first of the brethren to perish with the sword; the other, longest of all to endure toil, and reproach, and persecution. DA 548.7

"'But to sit on My right hand, and on My left,' He continued, 'is not Mine to give, but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of My Father.' In the kingdom of God, position is not gained through favoritism. It is not earned, nor is it received through an arbitrary bestowal. It is the result of character. The crown and the throne are the tokens of a condition attained; they are the tokens of self-conquest through our Lord Jesus Christ. DA 549.1

"Long afterward, when the disciple had been brought into sympathy with Christ through the fellowship of His sufferings, the Lord revealed to John what is the condition of nearness in His kingdom. "To him that overcometh," Christ said, "will I grant to sit with Me in My throne, even as I also overcame, and am set down with My Father in His throne." "Him that overcometh will I make a pillar in the temple of My God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of My God, ... and I will write upon him My new name." Revelation 3:21, 12. So Paul the apostle wrote, "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." 2 Timothy 4:6-8. DA 549.2

"The one who stands nearest to Christ will be he who on earth has drunk most deeply of the spirit of His self-sacrificing love,—love that 'vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, ... seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil' (1 Corinthians 13:4, 5),—love that moves the disciple, as it moved our Lord, to give all, to live and labor and sacrifice, even unto death, for the saving of humanity. This spirit was made manifest in the life of Paul. He said, 'For to me to live is Christ;' for his life revealed Christ to men; 'and to die is gain,'—gain to Christ; death itself would make manifest the power of His grace, and gather souls to Him. 'Christ shall be magnified in my body,' he said, 'whether it be by life or by death.' Philippians 1:21, 20. DA 549.3

Thursday, August 22

"What do you want Me to do for you?"

Read Mark 10:46-52. How did Bartimaeus react to Jesus' passing by?

"And Jesus answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto him, Lord, that I might receive my sight." KJV — Mark 10:51

"It is only when the sinner feels the need of a Saviour, that his heart goes after the One who can help him. When Jesus walked among men, it was the sick that wanted a physician. The poor, the afflicted and distressed, followed after him, to receive the help and comfort which they could not find elsewhere. Blind Bartimaeus is waiting by the wayside; he has waited long to meet Christ. Throngs of people who possess their sight are passing to and fro, but they have no desire to see Jesus. One look of faith would touch his heart of love, and bring them the blessings of his grace; but they know not the sickness and poverty of their souls, and they feel no need of Christ. Not so with the poor blind man. His only hope is in Jesus. As he waits and watches, he hears the tread of many feet, and he eagerly inquires, What means this noise of travel? The by-standers answer that "Jesus of Nazareth passeth by." With the eagerness of intense desire, he cries, "Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" They try to silence him, but he cries the more vehemently, "Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!" This appeal is heard. His persevering faith is rewarded. Not only is physical sight restored, but the eyes of his understanding are opened. In Christ he sees his Redeemer, and the Sun of righteousness shines into his soul. All who feel their need of Christ as did blind Bartimaeus, and who will be as earnest and determined as he was, will, like him, receive the blessing which they crave. RH March 15, 1887, par. 3

"The afflicted, suffering ones who sought Christ as their helper, were charmed with the divine perfection, the beauty of holiness, that shone forth in his character. But the Pharisees could see no beauty in him that they should desire him. His simple attire, and humble life, devoid of outward show, rendered him to them as a root out of dry ground." RH March 15, 1887, par. 4

"Those who receive Christ by faith will receive also power to become the sons of God."72 SD 126.5

Further Thought

To be a Christian in God's sight you must never praise yourself, but praise God and His goodness. Never boast of your own interests and achievements, but boast of God's. Never try to promote your business, but always try to promote God's. Never pray for light to know what to do, and where to go in order that your business, your interests prosper, but rather pray for light that God help you do the thing or go to the place where you would best serve His cause, that He lead you and teach you how to advance His kingdom. Then, and then only, will you find that you never go wrong! Any motive other than this will take you where God does not want you, and where you will have to carry your own burden independent of Him.

When things go contrary to one's will and way today, most Christians give credit to the Devil. Only when things go according to their liking do they give credit to God! Balaam, too, was happy when the way opened for him to go to Balak, but when the angel of the Lord blocked the road he was traveling on, then Balaam, became as mad as a dog and smote the ass.

No, nothing but you yourself can defeat God's plans for you. Be it your friends or your enemies, be it beasts or kings, you will find them all unwittingly or wittingly working for your good rather than for your harm if you are doing God's bidding. What a rich resource Heaven is! And who knows it!

Remember now, that whatever may stand in your way, be it the Red Sea or the River Jordan, be it a mountain or be it a desert, it shall become your very stepping stone. --{2TG35 30.4}

Such as this is the righteousness of the Lord, and you can have it at the cost of your own righteousness. Then you will find the Lord's ways as much higher than yours as the Heaven is higher than the earth. When this happens, then only you will understandingly say, "The Lord our Righteousness."

"Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee: because he trusteth in Thee. Trust ye in the Lord for ever: for in the Lord JEHOVAH is everlasting strength: for He bringeth down them that dwell on high; the lofty city, He layeth it low; He layeth it low, even to the ground; He bringeth it even to the dust. The foot shall tread it down, even the feet of the poor, and the steps of the needy." Isa. 26:3-6.

For further studies, feel free to contact:

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