



Sabbath School Lesson 5 | Oct 23 – Oct 29 **ADDITIONAL READING: SELECTED** **QUOTES FROM ELLEN G. WHITE**

The Stranger in Your Gates

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23

The Saviour was the One who had instructed the Hebrews in the wilderness; from the pillar of cloud and of fire He had taught a very different lesson from that which the people were now receiving from their priests and teachers. The merciful provisions of the law extended even to the lower animals, which cannot express in words their want and suffering. Directions had been given to Moses for the children of Israel to this effect. . . . But in the [Samaritan] wounded by robbers, Jesus presented the case of a brother in suffering. How much more should their hearts have been moved with pity for him than for a beast of burden! The message had been given them through Moses that the Lord their God, “a great God, a mighty, and a terrible,” “doth execute the judgment of the fatherless and widow, and loveth the stranger.” Wherefore He commanded, “Love ye therefore the stranger.” “Thou shalt love him as thyself.” Deuteronomy 10:17–19; Leviticus 19:34.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 500.

The commandments of God are comprehensive and far reaching; in a few words they unfold the whole duty of man. “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. . . . Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself” (Mark 12:30, 31). In these words the length and breadth, the depth and height, of the law of God is comprehended; for Paul declares, “Love is the fulfilling of the law” (Romans 13:10). The only definition we find in the Bible for sin is that “sin is the transgression of the law” (1 John 3:4). The Word of God declares, . . . “There is none that doeth good, no, not one” (Romans 3:12). Many are deceived concerning the condition of their hearts. They do not realize that the natural heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked. They wrap themselves about with their own righteousness, and are satisfied in reaching their own human standard of character; but how fatally they fail when they do not reach the divine standard, and of themselves they cannot meet the requirements of God.

We may measure ourselves by ourselves, we may compare ourselves among ourselves, we may say we do as well as this one or that one, but the question to which the judgment will call for an answer is, Do we meet the claims of high heaven? Do we reach the divine standard? Are our hearts in harmony with the God of heaven?—*Selected Messages*, book 1, pp. 320, 321.

I saw that whatever divides the affections, or takes away from the heart supreme love for God, or prevents unlimited confidence and entire trust in Him, assumes the character and takes the form of an idol. I was pointed to the first great commandment: “Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” There is allowed no separation of our affections from God. Nothing is to divide

our supreme love for Him or our delight in Him. Your will, wishes, plans, desires, and pleasures must all be in subjection.—Lift Him Up, p. 142.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 24

He then required of Abraham and his seed, circumcision, which was a circle cut in the flesh, as a token that God had cut them out and separated them from all nations as His peculiar treasure. By this sign they solemnly pledged themselves that they would not intermarry with other nations, for by so doing they would lose their reverence for God and His holy law, and would become like the idolatrous nations around them.

By the act of circumcision they solemnly agreed to fulfill on their part the conditions of the covenant made with Abraham, to be separate from all nations and to be perfect. If the descendants of Abraham had kept separate from other nations, they would not have been seduced into idolatry. By keeping separate from other nations, a great temptation to engage in their sinful practices and rebel against God would be removed from them. They lost in a great measure their peculiar, holy character by mingling with the nations around them. To punish them, the Lord brought a famine upon their land, which compelled them to go down into Egypt to preserve their lives. But God did not forsake them while they were in Egypt, because of His covenant with Abraham.—The Story of Redemption, pp. 146, 147.

It is God that circumcises the heart. The whole work is the Lord's from the beginning to the end. The perishing sinner may say: "I am a lost sinner; but Christ came to seek and to save that which was lost. He says, 'I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance' (Mark 2:17). I am a sinner, and He died upon Calvary's cross to save me. I need not remain a moment longer unsaved. He died and rose again for my justification, and He will save me now. I accept the forgiveness He has promised."—Selected Messages, book 1, p. 392.

When we bring our lives to complete obedience to the law of God, regarding God as our supreme Guide, the clinging to Christ as our hope of righteousness, God will work in our behalf. This is a righteousness of faith. The commandments of God diligently studied and practiced, open to us communication with heaven, and distinguish for us the true from the false. This obedience works out for us the divine will, bringing into our lives the righteousness and perfection that was seen in the life of Christ.—Sons and Daughters of God, p. 66.

Every true turning to the Lord brings abiding joy into the life. When a sinner yields to the influence of the Holy Spirit, he sees his own guilt and defilement in contrast with the holiness of the great Searcher of hearts. He sees himself condemned as a transgressor. But he is not, because of this, to give way to despair; for his pardon has already been secured. He may rejoice in the sense of sins forgiven, in the love of a pardoning heavenly Father. It is God's glory to encircle sinful, repentant human beings in the arms of His love, to bind up their wounds, to cleanse them from sin, and to clothe them with the garments of salvation.—Prophets and Kings, p. 668.

MONDAY, OCTOBER 25

In the creation of man was manifest the agency of a personal God. When God had made man in His image, the human form was perfect in all its arrangements, but it was without life. Then a personal, self-existing God breathed into that form the breath of life, and man became a living, intelligent being. All parts of the human organism were set in action. The heart, the arteries, the veins, the tongue, the hands, the feet, the senses, the faculties of the mind, all began their work, and all were placed under law. Man became a living soul. Through Christ the Word, a personal God created man and endowed him with intelligence and power. . . .

Above all lower orders of being, God designed that man, the crowning work of His creation, should express His thought and reveal His glory. But man is not to exalt himself as God.—The Ministry of Healing, p. 415.

That God who marks the fall of a sparrow, marks your deportment and your feelings; He marks your envy, your prejudice, your attempt to justify your action in the least matter of injustice. When you misconceive the

words and acts of another, and your own feelings are stirred, so that you make incorrect statements, and it is known that you are at variance with your brother, you lead others, through their confidence in you, to regard him just as you do; and by the root of bitterness springing up, many are defiled. . . .

Now God requires that you who have thus done the least injustice to another shall confess your fault, not only to the one you have injured, but to those who through your influence have been led to regard their brother in a false light, and to make of none effect the work God has given him to do. . . .

Whatever the character of your sin, confess it. If it is against God only, confess only to Him. If you have wronged or offended others, confess also to them, and the blessing of the Lord will rest upon you. In this way you die to self, and Christ is formed within.—Sons and Daughters of God, p. 309.

Christ recognized no distinction of nationality or rank or creed. The scribes and Pharisees desired to make a local and a national benefit of the gifts of heaven and to exclude the rest of God's family in the world. But Christ came to break down every wall of partition. He came to show that His gift of mercy and love is as unconfined as the air, the light, or the showers of rain that refresh the earth.

The life of Christ established a religion in which there is no caste, a religion by which Jew and Gentile, free and bond, are linked in a common brotherhood, equal before God. No question of policy influenced His movements. He made no difference between neighbors and strangers, friends and enemies. That which appealed to His heart was a soul thirsting for the waters of life.—The Ministry of Healing, p. 25.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 26

While God's chosen people were to stand forth distinct and holy, separate from the nations that knew Him not, they were to treat the stranger kindly. He was not to be looked down upon because he was not of Israel. The Israelites were to love the stranger because Christ died as verily to save him as He did to save Israel. At their feasts of thanksgiving, when they recounted the mercies of God, the stranger was to be made welcome. At the time of harvest they were to leave in the field a portion for the stranger and the poor. So the strangers were to share also in God's spiritual blessings. The Lord God of Israel commanded that they should be received if they chose the society of those who knew and acknowledged Him. In this way they would learn the law of Jehovah and glorify Him by their obedience.

So today God desires His children, both in spiritual and in temporal things, to impart blessings to the world. For every disciple of Christ in every age were spoken those precious words of the Saviour: Out of him "shall flow rivers of living water."

But instead of imparting the gifts of God, many who profess to be Christians are wrapped up in their own narrow interests, and they selfishly withhold God's blessings from their fellow men.—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 6, pp. 273, 274.

God will not vindicate any device whereby man shall in the slightest degree rule or oppress his fellow man. The only hope for fallen man is to look to Jesus, and receive Him as the only Saviour. As soon as man begins to make an iron rule for other men, as soon as he begins to harness up and drive men according to his own mind, he dishonors God, and imperils his own soul and the souls of his brethren.

He [God] expects His workers to be tenderhearted. How merciful are the ways of God! (See Deuteronomy 10:17–20; 2 Chronicles 20:5–7, 9; 1 Peter 1:17.) But the rules God has given have been disregarded, and strange fire has been offered before the Lord.—The Publishing Ministry, p. 139.

"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."—Matthew 7:12.

On the assurance of the love of God toward us, Jesus enjoins love to one another, in one comprehensive principle covering all the relations of human fellowship. . . .

In your association with others, put yourself in their place. Enter into their feelings, their difficulties, their disappointments, their joys, and their sorrows. Identify yourself with them, and then do to them as, were you

to exchange places with them, you would wish them to deal with you. This is the true rule of honesty. It is another expression of the law. "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Matthew 22:39. And it is the substance of the teaching of the prophets. It is a principle of heaven, and will be developed in all who are fitted for its holy companionship.—Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 134.

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 27

Moses repeated to the congregation the words of the Lord, and announced the appointment of the seventy elders. The great leader's charge to these chosen men might well serve as a model of judicial integrity for the judges and legislators of modern times: "Hear the causes between your brethren, and judge righteously between every man and his brother, and the stranger that is with him. Ye shall not respect persons in judgment; but ye shall hear the small as well as the great; ye shall not be afraid of the face of man; for the judgment is God's." Deuteronomy 1:16, 17.—Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 381.

It is strange that professed Christian men should disregard the plain, positive teachings of the word of God and feel no compunctions of conscience. God places upon them the responsibility of caring for the unfortunate, the blind, the lame, the widow, and the fatherless; but many make no effort to regard it. In order to save such, God frequently brings them under the rod of affliction and places them in positions similar to those occupied by the persons who were in need of their help and sympathy, but who did not receive it at their hands.

God will hold the church . . . responsible, as a body, for the wrong course of its members. If a selfish and unsympathizing spirit is allowed to exist in any of its members toward the unfortunate . . . , He will hide His face from His people until they do their duty and remove the wrong from among them. If any professing the name of Christ so far misrepresent their Saviour as to be unmindful of their duty to the afflicted, or if they in any way seek to advantage themselves to the injury of the unfortunate and thus rob them of means, the Lord holds the church accountable for the sin of its members until they have done all they can to remedy the existing evil. He will not hearken to the prayer of His people while the orphan, the fatherless, the lame, the blind, and the sick are neglected among them.—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 3, p. 517.

There must be a power working from within, a new life from above, before men can be changed from sin to holiness. That power is Christ. His grace alone can quicken the lifeless faculties of the soul, and attract it to God, to holiness.

No man receives holiness as a birthright, or as a gift from any other human being. Holiness is the gift of God through Christ. Those who receive the Saviour become sons of God. They are His spiritual children, born again, renewed in righteousness and true holiness. Their minds are changed. With clearer vision they behold eternal realities. They are adopted into God's family, and they become conformed to His likeness, changed by His Spirit from glory to glory. From cherishing supreme love for self, they come to cherish supreme love for God and for Christ. Accepting Christ as a personal Saviour, and following His example of self-denial—this is the secret of holiness.—God's Amazing Grace, p. 120.

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 28

The law, as given through Moses, enjoined a very tender regard for the poor. When a poor man gave his garment as a pledge, or as security for a debt, the creditor was not permitted to enter the dwelling to obtain it; he must wait in the street for the pledge to be brought to him. And whatever the circumstances the pledge must be returned to its owner at nightfall. Deuteronomy 24:10–13. In the days of Christ these merciful provisions were little regarded; but Jesus taught His disciples to submit to the decision of the court, even though this should demand more than the law of Moses authorized.—Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 72.

Christ has shown that our neighbor does not mean merely one of the church or faith to which we belong. It has no reference to race, color, or class distinction. Our neighbor is every person who needs our help. Our neighbor is every soul who is wounded and bruised by the adversary. Our neighbor is everyone who is the property of God. In the story of the good Samaritan, Jesus gave a picture of Himself and His mission. Man had been deceived, bruised,

robbed, and ruined by Satan, and left to perish; but the Saviour had compassion on our helpless condition. He left His glory, to come to our rescue. He found us ready to die, and He undertook our case. He healed our wounds. He covered us with His robe of righteousness. He opened to us a refuge of safety, and made complete provision for us at His own charges. He died to redeem us. Pointing to His own example, He says to His followers, "These things I command you, that ye love one another." "As I have loved you, that ye also love one another." John 15:17; 13:34.—The Desire of Ages, p. 503.

Divine truth exerts little influence upon the world, when it should exert much influence through our practice. The mere profession of religion abounds, but it has little weight. We may claim to be followers of Christ, we may claim to believe every truth in the word of God; but this will do our neighbor no good unless our belief is carried into our daily life. Our profession may be as high as heaven, but it will save neither ourselves nor our fellow men unless we are Christians. A right example will do more to benefit the world than all our profession.

By no selfish practices can the cause of Christ be served. His cause is the cause of the oppressed and the poor. In the hearts of His professed followers there is need of the tender sympathy of Christ—a deeper love for those whom He has so valued as to give His own life for their salvation. These souls are precious, infinitely more precious than any other offering we can bring to God. To bend every energy toward some apparently great work, while we neglect the needy or turn the stranger from his right, is not a service that will meet His approval.—Christ's Object Lessons, p. 383.

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 29

This Day With God, "Imitating the Pattern," p. 291;

Patriarchs and Prophets, "God's Care for the Poor," pp. 532–536.