



Sabbath School Lesson 9 | Nov 20 – Nov 26

ADDITIONAL READING: SELECTED QUOTES FROM ELLEN G. WHITE

"Turn Their Hearts"

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 20

We need an abiding, heartfelt dependence upon the Son of God for salvation and for all wisdom and spiritual influences. Unless there is much more love to God and to man, and a continual dependence upon the renewing, sanctifying grace of Christ to work a transformation of character by a divine change in the heart, which will be manifestly seen in word, spirit, and action, we shall fail in our work.

We need increased faith, far less confidence and assurance in what we can do, and far greater confidence in what the Lord is longing to do for us individually, if we will prepare the way for Him. We need, O so much more than we now have, the longing of soul for communion with God. We need to plead most earnestly with Him. If thou shalt seek the Lord thy God, thou shalt find Him, when thou shalt seek Him with all thy heart and with all thy soul.—The Upward Look, p. 333.

There needs to be a reaching out after God, not now and then, but a continual earnest, heartbreaking confessing and humbling of the soul before God. God's people must come into the audience chamber of the Most High. God understands that you need Him, and if you ask, you will receive help when tempted and tried. Your petitions, made known only to God who searcheth the heart, He will hear and answer.—Letter 45, November 15, 1897, to A. G. Daniells and "My Ministering Brethren, and the Church in Melbourne."

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. . . .

The sanctification of the soul is accomplished through steadfastly beholding Him [Christ] by faith as the only-begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth. The power of truth is to transform heart and character. Its effect is not like a dash of color here and there upon the canvas; the whole character is to be transformed, the image of Christ is to be revealed in words and actions. A new nature is imparted. Man is renewed after the image of Christ in righteousness and true holiness. The grace of Christ is essential every day, every hour. Unless it is with us continually, the inconsistencies of the natural heart will appear and the life will present a divided service. The character is to be full of grace and truth. Wherever the religion of Christ works, it will brighten and sweeten every detail of life with more than an earthly joy and a higher than earthly peace.—Ellen G. White Comments, in The Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary, vol. 6, p. 1117.

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 21

Even one wrong trait of character, one sinful desire, persistently cherished, will eventually neutralize all the power of the gospel. Every sinful indulgence strengthens the soul's aversion to God. The man who manifests an infidel hardihood, or a stolid indifference to divine truth, is but reaping the harvest of that which he has himself sown. In all the Bible there is not a more fearful warning against trifling with evil than the words of the wise man that the sinner "shall be holden with the cords of his sins." Proverbs 5:22.

Christ is ready to set us free from sin, but He does not force the will; and if by persistent transgression the will itself is wholly bent on evil, and we do not desire to be set free, if we will not accept His grace, what more can He do? We have destroyed ourselves by our determined rejection of His love. "Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation." "Today if ye will hear His voice, harden not your hearts." 2 Corinthians 6:2; Hebrews 3:7, 8.—Steps to Christ, p. 34.

The principles set forth in Deuteronomy for the instruction of Israel are to be followed by God's people to the end of time. True prosperity is dependent on the continuance of our covenant relationship with God. Never can we afford to compromise principle by entering into alliance with those who do not fear Him.

There is constant danger that professing Christians will come to think that in order to have influence with worldlings, they must to a certain extent conform to the world. But though such a course may appear to afford great advantages, it always ends in spiritual loss. Against every subtle influence that seeks entrance by means of flattering inducements from the enemies of truth, God's people must strictly guard. They are pilgrims and strangers in this world, traveling a path beset with danger. To the ingenious subterfuges and alluring inducements held out to tempt from allegiance, they must give no heed.—Prophets and Kings, p. 570.

To create the soul anew, to bring light out of darkness, love out of enmity, holiness out of impurity, is the work of Omnipotence alone. The work of the Infinite, as He engages, by the consent of the human being, to make the life complete in Christ, to bring perfection to the character, is the science of eternity.

What is the honor conferred upon Christ? Without employing any compulsion, without using any violence, He blends the will of the human subject to the will of God. This is the science of all true science; for by it a mighty change is wrought in mind and character—the change that must be wrought in the life of every one who passes through the gates of the city of God.—My Life Today, p. 340.

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 22

The exercise of force is contrary to the principles of God's government; He desires only the service of love; and love cannot be commanded; it cannot be won by force or authority. Only by love is love awakened. To know God is to love Him; His character must be manifested in contrast to the character of Satan. . . .

The plan for our redemption was not an afterthought, a plan formulated after the fall of Adam. It was a revelation of "the mystery which hath been kept in silence through times eternal." Romans 16:25, R. V. It was an unfolding of the principles that from eternal ages have been the foundation of God's throne. From the beginning, God and Christ knew of the apostasy of Satan, and of the fall of man through the deceptive power of the apostate. God did not ordain that sin should exist, but He foresaw its existence, and made provision to meet the terrible emergency. So great was His love for the world, that He covenanted to give His only-begotten Son, "that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life." John 3:16.—The Desire of Ages, p. 22.

Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration. . . .

The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. They stand beside the great Sin Bearer, in the light proceeding from the throne of God. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of

God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us." Romans 8:33, 34.—The Desire of Ages, p. 568.

The prayer that comes from an earnest heart, when the simple wants of the soul are expressed, as we would ask an earthly friend for a favor, expecting it to be granted—this is the prayer of faith. God does not desire our ceremonial compliments, but the unspoken cry of the heart broken and subdued with a sense of its sin and utter weakness finds its way to the Father of all mercy. . . .

. . . [God's] command to Israel was, "Rend your heart, and not your garments, and turn unto the Lord your God." Joel 2:13. . . .

. . . Repentance is turning from self to Christ; and when we receive Christ so that through faith He can live His life in us, good works will be manifest.—Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pp. 86, 87.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 23

Satan is constantly working to lead men to deny the light. It is but a step from the straightforward path to a diverging one, in which Satan leads the way, and where light is all darkness, and darkness light. It is a dangerous thing to open the heart to unbelief, for it drives the Spirit of God away from the heart, and Satan's suggestions come in. We must avoid the first admission of doubt and unbelief.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Galatians 6:7. God destroys no man. Every man who is destroyed will destroy himself. When a man stifles the admonitions of conscience, he sows the seeds of unbelief and these produce a sure harvest.—Our High Calling, p. 26.

All who study the Word with full purpose to cleanse away from the life all sin, and who search the Scriptures to learn what is truth, will welcome the truth of the Word as a Thus saith the Lord. They will repent under the sharp reproofs of Bible truth. If a man sow true repentance he will reap the reward of sound good works. If he continues in the faith he reaps peace. If he becomes sanctified and cleansed from his appetite for cheapness and folly he shall reap righteousness and perfect love. A continuance in the well doing in overcoming makes him a daily victor because he keeps the mark of Christ's perfection ever before him.—That I May Know Him, p. 281.

God will not be mocked. A departure from Him has been and always will be followed by its sure results. The commission of acts that displease God will, unless decidedly repented of and forsaken, instead of seeking to justify them, lead the evildoer on step by step in deception, till many sins are committed with impunity. All who would possess a character that would make them laborers together with God and receive the commendation of God must separate themselves from the enemies of God, and maintain the truth which Christ gave to John [the revelator] to give to the world.—The Upward Look, p. 310.

After Adam and Eve had eaten of the forbidden fruit, they were filled with a sense of shame and terror. At first their only thought was how to excuse their sin and escape the dreaded sentence of death. . . . The spirit of self-justification originated in the father of lies and has been exhibited by all the sons and daughters of Adam. Confessions of this order are not inspired by the divine Spirit and will not be acceptable to God. True repentance will lead a man to bear his guilt himself and acknowledge it without deception or hypocrisy. Like the poor publican, not lifting up so much as his eyes unto heaven, he will cry, "God be merciful to me a sinner," and those who do acknowledge their guilt will be justified, for Jesus will plead His blood in behalf of the repentant soul.—Steps to Christ, p. 40.

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 24

For a momentary gratification of appetite that had never been restrained, Esau sold his inheritance; but when he saw his folly, it was too late to recover the blessing. "He found no place of repentance, though he sought it carefully with tears." Hebrews 12:16, 17. Esau was not shut out from the privilege of seeking God's favor by repentance, but he could find no means of recovering the birthright. His grief did not spring from conviction of sin; he did not desire to be reconciled to God. He sorrowed because of the results of his sin, but not for the sin itself.—Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 181.

Like Nicodemus, we must be willing to enter into life in the same way as the chief of sinners. . . . [But] we cannot even repent without the aid of the Spirit of God. The Scripture says of Christ, "Him hath God exalted with His right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins." Acts 5:31. Repentance comes from Christ as truly as does pardon.

How, then, are we to be saved? . . . The light shining from the cross reveals the love of God. His love is drawing us to Himself. If we do not resist this drawing, we shall be led to the foot of the cross in repentance for the sins that have crucified the Saviour. Then the Spirit of God through faith produces a new life in the soul. The thoughts and desires are brought into obedience to the will of Christ. The heart, the mind, are created anew in the image of Him who works in us to subdue all things to Himself.—The Desire of Ages, pp. 175, 176.

The Bible does not teach that the sinner must repent before he can heed the invitation of Christ, "Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy-laden, and I will give you rest." Matthew 11:28. It is the virtue that goes forth from Christ, that leads to genuine repentance. . . . We can no more repent without the Spirit of Christ to awaken the conscience than we can be pardoned without Christ.

Christ is the source of every right impulse. He is the only one that can implant in the heart enmity against sin. Every desire for truth and purity, every conviction of our own sinfulness, is an evidence that His Spirit is moving upon our hearts.

Jesus has said, "I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto Me." John 12:32. Christ must be revealed to the sinner as the Saviour dying for the sins of the world; and as we behold the Lamb of God upon the cross of Calvary, the mystery of redemption begins to unfold to our minds and the goodness of God leads us to repentance. In dying for sinners, Christ manifested a love that is incomprehensible; and as the sinner beholds this love, it softens the heart, impresses the mind, and inspires contrition in the soul.—Steps to Christ, p. 26.

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 25

In coming to John [the Baptist], the [Pharisees and Sadducees] were not actuated by right motives. They were corrupt in principles and practice; yet they had no sense of their true condition. Filled with pride and ambition, they would not hesitate at any means which would enable them to exalt self and strengthen their influence with the people. And baptism at the hands of this popular young teacher might, they thought, aid them in carrying out these designs more successfully.

Their motives were not hidden from John, and he met them with the searching inquiry, "Who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Had they heard the voice of God speaking to their hearts, they would have given evidence of the fact by bringing forth fruits meet for repentance. No such fruit was seen. They had heard the warning as merely the voice of man. They were charmed with the power and boldness with which John spoke; but the Spirit of God did not send conviction to their hearts, and as a sure result the word spoken did not bring forth fruit unto life eternal.—This Day With God, p. 197.

None are farther from the kingdom of heaven than self-righteous formalists, who are perhaps filled with pride at their own attainments, while they are wholly destitute of the Spirit of Christ, and are controlled by envy, jealousy, and love of praise and popularity. They belong to the class that John addressed as a generation of vipers, children of the wicked

one. They serve the cause of Satan more effectively than the vilest profligate; for the latter does not disguise his true character; he appears what he really is.

Nothing short of an amended life—fruits meet for repentance—will meet the requirements of God. Without such fruit, our profession of faith is of no value.—The Signs of the Times, July 7, 1887.

Many are asking the same question as did the multitude on the Day of Pentecost, when, convicted of sin, they cried out, “What shall we do?” The first word of Peter’s answer was, “Repent,” “. . . and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out.” Acts 2:37, 38, 3:19.

Repentance includes sorrow for sin and a turning away from it. We shall not renounce sin unless we see its sinfulness; until we turn away from it in heart, there will be no real change in the life.

There are many who fail to understand the true nature of repentance. Multitudes sorrow that they have sinned and even make an outward reformation because they fear that their wrongdoing will bring suffering upon themselves. But this is not repentance in the Bible sense. They lament the suffering rather than the sin. . . .

But when the heart yields to the influence of the Spirit of God, the conscience will be quickened. . . . Conviction takes hold upon the mind and heart. The sinner has a sense of the righteousness of Jehovah and feels the terror of appearing, in his own guilt and uncleanness, before the Searcher of hearts. He sees the love of God, the beauty of holiness, the joy of purity; he longs to be cleansed and to be restored to communion with Heaven.—Steps to Christ, pp. 23, 24.

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 26

Selected Messages, “The Significance of Christ’s Birth,” book 1, pp. 250, 251;

The Faith I Live By, “The Sowing Time of Life,” p. 155.