

Lesson 2

A Day in the Ministry of Jesus

Sabbath afternoon, July 6

After He had entered on His ministry, [Jesus] said, "I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." John 9:4. Jesus did not shirk care and responsibility, as do many who profess to be His followers. . . . The positiveness and energy, the solidity and strength of character, manifested in Christ are to be developed in us, through the same discipline that He endured. And the grace that He received is for us.

So long as He lived among men, our Saviour shared the lot of the poor. He knew by experience their cares and hardships, and He could comfort and encourage all humble workers. Those who have a true conception of the teaching of His life will never feel that a distinction must be made between classes, that the rich are to be honored above the worthy poor.—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 73.

Christ chose the foolish things of the world—those whom the world pronounced unlearned and ignorant—to confound the wise men of the world. The disciples were unlearned in the traditions of the rabbis, but with Christ as their example and teacher, they were gaining an education of the highest order; for they had before them a divine Example. Christ was presenting to them truths of the highest character.

Those whom God employs to do service for Him, He would have fitted in His way for that service. Those who preach Christ must learn of Christ daily, in order to understand the mystery of saving and serving the souls for whom He had died. . . . They must pattern after Him in all things, sharing His tender compassion and His sternness against all evil working.—Letter 53, February 2, 1905, to two leading workers at the newly established Paradise Valley Sanitarium.

The Saviour's life on earth was a life of communion with nature and with God. In this communion He revealed for us the secret of a life of power.

Jesus was an earnest, constant worker. Never lived there among men another so weighted with responsibilities. Never another carried so heavy a burden of the world's sorrow and sin. Never another toiled with such self-consuming zeal for the good of men. Yet His was a life of health. Physically as well as spiritually He was represented by the sacrificial lamb, "without blemish and without spot." 1 Peter 1:19. In body as in soul He was an example of what God designed all humanity to be through obedience to His laws.

As the people looked upon Jesus, they saw a face in which divine compassion was blended with conscious power. He seemed to be surrounded with an atmosphere of spiritual life. While His manners were gentle and unassuming, He impressed men with a sense of power that was hidden, yet could not be wholly concealed.—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 51.

Sunday, July 7

“Follow Me”

When Christ was upon this earth, He did not direct fishermen to leave their nets and boats, and go to the Jewish teachers to gain a preparation for the gospel ministry. Walking by the Sea of Galilee, He saw “two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea: for they were fishers. And he saith unto them, Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men. And they straightway left their nets, and followed him. And going on from thence, he saw other two brethren, James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets; and he called them. And they immediately left the ship and their father, and followed him” (Matthew 4:18–22).

This prompt obedience, without any question, without one promise of wages, seems remarkable. But the words of Christ were an invitation that implied all that He meant it should. There was an impelling influence in His words. There was no long explanation, but what He said had a drawing power.—This Day With God, p. 41.

Unexpected talent will be developed in those in the common walks of life. If men and women can only have the message of truth brought to them, many who hear will receive it. Those of every rank of life, high and low, rich and poor, will accept the truth for this time. Some who are regarded as uneducated will be called to the service of the Master, even as the humble, unlearned fishermen were called by the Saviour. Men will be called from the plow, as was Elisha, and will be moved to take up the work that God has appointed them. They will begin to labor in simplicity and quietness, reading and explaining the Scriptures to others. Their simple efforts will be successful.—This Day With God, p. 115.

They were humble and unlearned men, those fishers of Galilee; but Christ, the light of the world, was abundantly able to qualify them for the position for which He had chosen them. The Saviour did not despise education; for when controlled by the love of God, and devoted to His service, intellectual culture is a blessing. But He passed by the wise men of His time, because they were so self-confident that they could not sympathize with suffering humanity, and become colaborers with the man of Nazareth. In their bigotry they scorned to be taught by Christ. The Lord Jesus seeks the co-operation of those who will become unobstructed channels for the communion of His grace. . . .

He who called the fishermen of Galilee is still calling men to His service. And He is just as willing to manifest His power through us as through the first disciples. However imperfect and sinful we may be, the Lord holds out to us the offer of partnership with Himself, of apprenticeship to Christ. He invites us to come under the divine instruction, that, uniting with Christ, we may work the works of God.—Conflict and Courage, p. 282.

Monday, July 8

An Unforgettable Worship Service

The demoniac partially comprehended that he was in the presence of One who could set him free; but when he tried to come within reach of that mighty hand, another's will held him, another's words found utterance through him.

The conflict between the power of Satan and his own desire for freedom was terrible. It seemed that the tortured man must lose his life in the struggle with the foe that had been the ruin of his manhood. But the Saviour spoke with authority and set the captive free. The man who had been possessed stood before the wondering people in the freedom of self-possession. . . .

Every man is free to choose what power he will have to rule over him. None have fallen so low, none are so vile, but that they may find deliverance in Christ. The demoniac, in place of prayer, could utter only the words of Satan; yet the heart's unspoken appeal was heard. No cry from a soul in need, though it fail of utterance in words, will be unheeded. Those who consent to enter into covenant with God are not left to the power of Satan or to the infirmity of their own nature.—The Ministry of Healing, pp. 91–93.

The same evil spirit that tempted Christ in the wilderness, and that possessed the maniac of Capernaum, controlled the unbelieving Jews. But with them he assumed an air of piety, seeking to deceive them as to their motives in rejecting the Saviour. Their condition was more hopeless than that of the demoniac, for they felt no need of Christ and were therefore held fast under the power of Satan. . . .

The leaders and teachers of Israel were powerless to resist the work of Satan. They were neglecting the only means by which they could have withstood evil spirits. It was by the word of God that Christ overcame the wicked one. The leaders of Israel professed to be the expositors of God's word, but they had studied it only to sustain their traditions, and enforce their man-made observances. By their interpretation they made it express sentiments that God had never given. Their mystical construction made indistinct that which He had made plain. They disputed over insignificant technicalities, and practically denied the most essential truths. Thus infidelity was sown broadcast. God's word was robbed of its power, and evil spirits worked their will.—The Desire of Ages, pp. 256, 257.

True knowledge comes from God, and returns again to God. His children are to receive that they may give again. Those who through the grace of God have received intellectual and spiritual benefits are, as they advance, to draw others with them to a higher excellence. And this work, done to promote the good of others, will have the cooperation of unseen agencies. As we faithfully continue the work, we shall have high aspirations for righteousness, holiness, and a perfect knowledge of God.—Manuscript 108, September 1, 1898, "Higher Education."

Tuesday, July 9

More Sabbath Ministry

In the fisherman's home at Capernaum the mother of Peter's wife is lying sick of "a great fever," and "they tell Him of her." Jesus "touched her hand, and the fever left her," and she arose and ministered to the Saviour and His disciples. Luke 4:38; Mark 1:30; Matthew 8:15.

Rapidly the tidings spread. The miracle had been wrought upon the Sabbath, and for fear of the rabbis the people dared not come for healing until the sun was set. Then from the homes, the shops, the market places, the inhabitants of the city pressed toward the humble dwelling that sheltered Jesus. The sick were brought upon litters, they came leaning upon staffs, or, supported by friends, they tottered feebly into the Saviour's presence. . . .

Not until the last sufferer had been relieved did Jesus cease His work. It was far into the night when the multitude departed and silence settled down upon the home of Simon.—The Ministry of Healing, p. 29.

Our confession of His faithfulness is Heaven's chosen agency for revealing Christ to the world. We are to acknowledge His grace as made known through the holy men of old; but that which will be most effectual is the testimony of our own experience. We are witnesses for God as we reveal in ourselves the working of a power that is divine. Every individual has a life distinct from all others, and an experience differing essentially from theirs. God desires that our praise shall ascend to Him, marked by our own individuality. These precious acknowledgments to the praise of the glory of His grace, when supported by a Christ-like life, have an irresistible power that works for the salvation of souls.—The Desire of Ages, p. 347.

We are to bear Christ's yoke, to work as he worked for the salvation of the lost; and those who are partakers of his sufferings will also be partakers of his glory. The apostle says, "Ye are laborers together with God." Then let us take hold of his strength. Let every one who names the name of Christ among us become a laborer together with God. Let not the burden of the whole work fall on the ministers, but let every member of the church realize that he has a work to do. . . .

The Saviour's commission to his people is, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature." O, how grievously has this work been neglected, and yet the famine-stricken world is perishing for the bread of life. Let every one surrender himself to God, accept the heavenly endowment of the Holy Spirit, and go forth to tell those who sit in darkness of a Saviour's love and sacrifice, that they should not perish, but have everlasting life. In whatever place you take up your abode, be a light to the people, pointing out the path cast up for the ransomed of the Lord to walk in, and thus become laborers together with God.—Bible Echo, April 15, 1892.

Wednesday, July 10

The Secret of Jesus' Ministry

Behold the Son of God bowed in prayer to His Father! Though He is the Son of God, He strengthens His faith by prayer, and by communion with heaven gathers to Himself power to resist evil and to minister to the needs of men. As the Elder Brother of our race He knows the necessities of those who, compassed with infirmity and living in a world of sin and temptation, still desire to serve Him. He knows that the messengers whom He sees fit to send are weak, erring men; but to all who give themselves wholly to His service He promises divine aid. His own example is an assurance that earnest, persevering supplication to God in faith . . . will avail to bring to men the Holy Spirit's aid in the battle against sin.

[Everyone] who follows the example of Christ will be prepared to receive and use the power that God has promised to His church for the ripening of earth's harvest. Morning by morning, as the heralds of the gospel kneel before the Lord and renew their vows of consecration to Him, He will grant them the presence of His Spirit, with its reviving, sanctifying power.—The Acts of the Apostles, p. 56.

All who are under the training of God need the quiet hour for communion with their own hearts, with nature, and with God. In them is to be revealed a life that is not in harmony with the world, its customs, or its practices; and they need to have a personal experience in obtaining a knowledge of the will of God. We must individually hear Him speaking to the heart. When every other voice is hushed, and in quietness we wait before Him, the silence of the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. He bids us, "Be still, and know that I am God." Psalm 46:10. This is the effectual preparation for all labor for God. Amidst the hurrying throng, and the strain of life's intense activities, he who is thus refreshed will be surrounded with an atmosphere of light and peace. He will receive a new endowment of both physical and mental strength. His life will breathe out a fragrance, and will reveal a divine power that will reach men's hearts.—The Ministry of Healing, p. 58.

Early in the morning, Peter and his companions came to Jesus, saying that already the people of Capernaum were seeking Him. . . . But with surprise they heard Christ's words, "I must preach the kingdom of God to other cities also: for therefore am I sent."

In the excitement which then pervaded Capernaum, there was danger that the object of His mission would be lost sight of. Jesus was not satisfied to attract attention to Himself merely as a wonder worker or a healer of physical diseases. He was seeking to draw men to Him as their Saviour. While the people were eager to believe that He had come as a king, to establish an earthly reign, He desired to turn their minds away from the earthly to the spiritual. Mere worldly success would interfere with His work.—The Desire of Ages, p. 260.

Thursday, July 11

Can You Keep a Secret?

Standing afar off, the leper catches a few words from the Saviour's lips. He sees Him laying His hands upon the sick. He sees the lame, the blind, the paralytic, and those dying of various maladies rise up in health, praising God for deliverance. His faith strengthens. Nearer and yet nearer he approaches to the listening throng. The restrictions laid upon him, the safety of the people, the fear with which all men regard him, are alike forgotten. He thinks only of the blessed hope of healing.

He is a loathsome spectacle. The disease has made frightful inroads, and his decaying body is horrible to look upon. At sight of him the people fall back. In their terror they crowd upon one another to escape from contact with him. Some try to prevent him from approaching Jesus, but in vain. He neither sees nor hears them. Their expressions of loathing are lost upon him. He sees only the Son of God, he hears only the voice that speaks life to the dying.

Pressing to Jesus, he casts himself at His feet with the cry, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean."

Jesus replies, "I will; be thou clean," and lays His hand upon him. Matthew 8:2, 3.

Immediately a change passes over the leper. His blood becomes healthy, the nerves sensitive, the muscles firm. The unnaturally white, scaly surface peculiar to leprosy disappears; and his flesh becomes as the flesh of a little child.—The Ministry of Healing, pp. 68, 69.

The disciples sought to prevent their Master from touching him; for he who touched a leper became himself unclean. But in laying His hand upon the leper, Jesus received no defilement. The leprosy was cleansed. Thus it is with the leprosy of sin—deep-rooted, deadly, impossible to be cleansed by human power. . . . But Jesus, coming to dwell in humanity, receives no pollution. His presence was healing virtue for the sinner. Whoever will fall at His feet, saying in faith, "Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean," shall hear the answer, "I will; be thou clean."

In some instances of healing, Jesus did not at once grant the blessing sought. But in the case of leprosy no sooner was the appeal made than it was granted. When we pray for earthly blessings, the answer to our prayer may be delayed, or God may give us something other than we ask; but not so when we ask for deliverance from sin. It is His will to cleanse us from sin, to make us His children, and to enable us to live a holy life. Christ "gave Himself for our sins, that He might deliver us from this present evil world, according to the will of God and our Father." Galatians 1:4. "And this is the confidence that we have in Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us: and if we know that He hear us, whatsoever we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him." 1 John 5:14, 15.—The Ministry of Healing, p. 70.

Friday, July 12

For Further Reading

Reflecting Christ, "Fishers of Men Need the Divine Presence," p. 237;
The Desire of Ages, "Thou Canst Make Me Clean," pp. 262–266.