

Sabbath School Lesson #8 – The Mission of Jesus – 16-22 May 2015

Christ gives salvation to whosoever will, “for the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost” (Luke 19:10). Through the prophet Isaiah, Christ declared His mission: “to preach good tidings unto the meek; to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound” (Isaiah 61:1; Luke 4:16-19). Christ came to deliver us from the bondage of sin; and we give thanks to His Father “who hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of his dear Son” (Colossians 1:13) through whose blood we have redemption.

The setting at liberty the captives, the deliverance from the bondage of sin, is effected by Christ Himself. Christ said, “If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free.” “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed” (John 8:31-32, 36). This freedom comes to everyone that believeth, for to them that believe on His name, He gives the “power to become the sons of God” (John 1:12). “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit” (Romans 8:1); “For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ” (Galatians 3:26-27). It is by faith that Christ dwells in our hearts.

Christ, in His mission to “preach deliverance to the captives” (Luke 4:18), took the battle against Satan in order “to save the world” (John 12:47). “For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh” (Romans 8:3). With no exemption, no bulletproof vest, Jesus entered into the same arena where we have all lost the battle. And right here in our human flesh and human nature He “condemned,” defeated, *destroyed* sin. He came to where it had taken root – in human flesh. In our same flesh He won the great controversy with Satan, opened the gates of heaven for believing, repenting sinners, and rejoiced the hearts of all in heaven. Christ fulfilled His mission, did His work; He did “save the world.”

But the world He died to save fails to grasp that Jesus died the second death of every person who has ever been born: “He by the grace of God tasted [the second] death for every person” (Hebrews 2:9). Not just our “sleep.” The sacrifice on the cross was infinitely greater than we have been able to see. The teaching of natural immortality says Jesus did not truly die the real thing, our wages of sin – death; thus it teaches error that He did not “pay it all.”

We must grasp this cardinal truth: that Christ condemned sin in the flesh so “that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit” (Romans 8:4). In other words, the cardinal truth is this: human beings *by the faith of Jesus* will overcome sin, “condemn” it in *our* fallen flesh, and will become ready for the second coming of Jesus – this is the ultimate mission of Jesus.

In His mission to save sinners, Christ came in the likeness of sinful flesh; yet He was “full of grace and truth” (John 1:14). Christ was “in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin” (Hebrews 4:15). God made Him “to be sin for us,” yet He “knew no sin” (2 Corinthians 5:21). He was made to be sin, yet He “committed no sin, nor was deceit found in His mouth” (1 Peter 2:22). It is these two things combined that make Him a sympathising Saviour, in whom we may freely confide. No one can sympathise with another’s failings, if he has not been tempted in the same way. Christ was tempted to the uttermost, and was always pure from the slightest taint of sin; therefore we may trust Him as one who knows and who cares.

Christ is able to deliver us. “Therefore, in all things He had to be made like His brethren, that He might be a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. For in that He Himself has suffered, being tempted, He is able to aid those who are tempted” (Hebrews 2:17-18). And “He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him” (Hebrews 7:25). People sometimes imagine that because Christ never sinned, He cannot so fully sympathise with us in our sin; but that is just why He can. He knows the strength of temptation as no one else does, for He felt all the power of Satan. The one upon whom the enemy exerts all his power in vain, knows the extent of that power more than the one who yields to it. The man who pulls against the tide knows its strength better than the one who floats with it; and the man who

successfully breasts the current knows its strength better than the one who is swept back by it. So Christ not only knows all our need, and cares for it, but He is able to deliver us.

Christ is able to redeem us, as He was able to create us in the beginning. Redemption is new creation. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation" (2 Corinthians 5:17). Christ's power manifested in the first creation is the same as in the restoration, for the new creation is simply the restoration of "that which was from the beginning" (1 John 1:1). Christ is the minister of endless life. "He gave Himself for our sins" (Galatians 1:4), that He might deliver us from sin. It is on the cross that He makes this sacrifice, giving His life. When He hung on the cross He cried out, "It is finished," and then "gave up the Ghost" (John 19:30), or, literally, He "breathed out His life." Why did He breathe out His life on the cross? – In order that we might breathe His life in. But that is exactly what He did in the beginning. He breathed into Adam's nostrils the breath of life, and the lifeless dust became a living soul.

The mission of Jesus is not in vain; He lives to deliver us. What the Lord promised, He is "able also to perform" (Romans 4:21). He "is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think" (Ephesians 3:20). He "is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy" (Jude 24). He gave Himself for our sins that He might deliver us, and He did not die in vain. Deliverance is ours. Christ was sent "to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the prison house" (Isaiah 42:7). Accordingly He cries out to the captives, "Liberty!" To them that are bound He proclaims that the prison doors are open (Isaiah 61:1).

In fulfilling His mission to set captives free from sin, Christ says to all the prisoners, "Go forth" (Isaiah 49:9). Each soul may say, if he will, "O Lord, truly I am thy servant; I am thy servant, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast loosed my bonds" (Psalm 116:16). And, this is a true saying, whether we believe it or not. We are the Lord's servants, even though we stubbornly refuse to serve; for He has bought us; and, having bought us, He has broken every bond that hindered us from serving Him. If we but believe, we have the victory that has overcome the world (1 John 5:4; John 16:33). The message to us is that our "warfare is accomplished," our "iniquity is pardoned" (Isaiah 40:2). We have but to shout, as Israel did before Jericho, to see that the Lord has given to us the victory. "Blessed be the Lord, the God of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people" (Luke 1:68). Out of Zion has come the Deliverer, to "turn away ungodliness from Jacob" (Romans 11:26). "But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Corinthians 15:57).

Christ died to deliver every man from sin to everlasting life. All Christ's deliverance is "according to the will of our God and Father" (Galatians 1:4). The will of God is our sanctification (1 Thessalonians 4:3). God wills that all men should be saved and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4). God "accomplishes all things to the counsel of His will" (Ephesians 1:11). It is the love of God that whosoever believes in Christ should not perish (John 3:16). This love is extended to everyone. "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation has appeared to all men" (Titus 2:11). God has wrought out salvation for every man, and has given it to him; but the majority spurn it and throw it away. Christ hath brought life to light for all (2 Timothy 1:10). The judgment will reveal the fact that full salvation was given to all men and that the lost have deliberately thrown away their birthright possession.

Christ has performed His mission, but it will mean nothing to us unless we confess that Christ "is come in the flesh" (1 John 4:2). He that confesses it day by day, and hour by hour, and moment by moment, living continually in the recognition that Christ is in him, and that it is His life that he has, – He is of God. "For Christ also hath suffered once for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God" (1 Peter 3:18). This was in order that we might abide in Him, and His life be perfectly manifested in us. That part of it Christ has performed. "I in them" (John 17:23), yes, in sinful flesh. Christ wants us to confess that fact continually. Christ in us means we are made "the righteousness of God in Him" (2 Corinthians 5:21), and all His righteousness, which He had in the flesh, is ours. Christ was "in all points tempted as we are, yet without sin" (Hebrews 4:15). When from the heart we confess the fact which the Scripture tells us, that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh even now, and even in us, because we are in the flesh, the recognition of that brings also the other fact with it, that in Him was no sin while in the flesh; therefore His life, while we confess it, cleanses us from all sin.