

Sabbath School Lesson #2 – The Choices We Make – 6-12 April 2019

Christ through His servant Joshua calls to everyone, “.. choose you this day whom ye will serve ..” (Joshua 24:15). Every day each one is making the choice. “Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness?” (Romans 6:16). “Without Me ye can do nothing;” “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me” (John 15:5; Philippians 4:13). With Christ, means His life manifested in mortal flesh; Without Christ means to be against Christ, for the life will inevitably be “according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience” (Ephesians 2:2). Every act of disobedience is the direct working of Satan against the truth of God. Every act of obedience is the working of Christ’s power in hearts of those who choose Him. “For it is God that worketh in you, both to will and to do of His good pleasure” (Philippians 2:13). Satan works disobedience in men, and he works this “with all deceivableness of unrighteousness.” May every professed Christian choose Christ.

Sunday: Free Will, Free Choice – Man was created with free will. Every man can choose to be saved. But you may ask, does it not say somewhere that many are called, but you few are chosen? and is not that evidence that all cannot be saved? That statement is indeed made, but it by no means teaches that there are any who cannot be saved if they wished salvation. The Word of God is not divided against itself. Read the passages in which this statement is found (Matthew 20:1-16 and 22:1-14), and it will be apparent that those who are not chosen are those who themselves do not choose to accept the terms of salvation. That is the whole of the matter. Election means choice. The free choice is given to all. “Choose life, that both thou and thy seed may live” (Deuteronomy 30:19). “Choose you this day whom ye will serve” (Joshua 24:13). Whoever chooses salvation, or, in other words, elects to be saved, is one of the elect. The non-elect are, of course, lost, but it is of their own choice. Of those who are lost, the Spirit of God says, “For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the LORD: They would none of my counsel: they despised all my reproof. Therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices” (Proverbs 1:29-31). When the Jews at Antioch “spake against those things which were spoken by Paul, contradicting and blaspheming,” the apostle said, “It was necessary that the word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles” (Acts 13:45-46). They judged themselves unworthy of everlasting life, by refusing to receive it. It was indeed given to them, and they put it away from them. Note that it was all in their own hands; they were made judges in the case. And so it is with all men; each of man determines his own worthiness or unworthiness. Whoever will receive the eternal life, is counted worthy of it. Each man judges of his own fitness, and he elects himself. Surely God could not possibly deal more fairly with mankind. That the matter of the election is one that rests with the individual, is seen from the exhortation of the apostle Peter: “Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling an election sure” (2 Peter 1:10). All men are called of God’s own free grace; but the call avails nothing if men do not choose to accept the call.

Monday: Making the Right Choices – Man is continually putting self in God’s way. He refuses to submit his will to God’s will. And this is all the difficulty about living the Christian life. It is not a difficulty of performing works, but the difficulty of making the right choice, of yielding to God and not to self, of looking to Christ and not to something else, and of *letting* His mind and His spirit be in us. He is our Sun, the “Sun of Righteousness” (Malachi 4:3). If we will look steadfastly at Him as the plant does at the sun that shines in the heavens, if we will make it our constant effort to turn toward Him as the plant does to the source of its life, and to reach up more and more toward the brightness of His face, we shall experience no difficulty in obtaining the full measure of growth that we desire. But we need not expect to realize the fact that we are growing, any more than we can realize that we are growing physically by trying to note changes in our stature from day to day. If the plant should turn its head away from the sun to look at itself and see how fast it was growing, it would soon cease to grow; and just so with the Christian. When he tries to see himself growing spiritually

he is taking one of the most effective means to stop his growth entirely. There is no cause for discouragement therefore in the fact we do not at any time realize this process of growth.

Tuesday: Choosing Friends – If children are taught how to choose friends, when they grow up they will never be disappointed by friends. “There is a Friend that sticketh closer than a brother” (Proverbs 18:24). Children like to have friends – those who love them – to whom they can tell all of their joys and sorrows. Some children have a great many friends. There are their playmates, with whom they go to school and spend many happy hours. Then there are their uncles, and aunts, and cousins, their brothers and sisters, and best of all their father and mother. Their father and mother are the best earthly friends that they have, because they love them more and have done more for them than any other of their friends.

Some children have lost their father and mother and do not have many other friends. But no matter how poor and lonely they may be, *all* children have one Friend, “that sticketh closer than a brother,” a Friend that loves them more and has done more for them than any father and mother. He gave them their parents, and brothers and sisters. He caused the wheat to grow that they might have bread to eat. He made water for them to drink, air for them to breathe, and warm sunshine to keep them well and strong. And He made the animals, and birds, and bright flowers, with which they love to play. He watches over them and takes care of them day and night. That Friend is God, our kind Heavenly Father. He is our ever present best Friend! He says, “Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, yet will I not forget thee” (Isaiah 49:15). Let us remember this precious promise when we get into trouble.

Wednesday: Choosing a Life Partner – As Seventh-day Adventists, we should not intermarry with those who are not Seventh-day Adventists. Paul admonishes, saying, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? and what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?” (2 Corinthians 6:14-18). If we neglect this counsel and be unequally yoked, our Christianity would be corrupted, for “evil communications corrupt good manners” (1 Corinthians 15:33). Many Adventists who have not fully surrendered themselves to God, though knowing His will, excuse their intention of joining themselves to marry unbelievers by saying that these are as good as themselves. While this may be true the terrible danger of their course is none the less real. In a little while the glamour of romance will have worn away, the novelty of a new experience will cease to excite the mind, for no human love can satisfy the soul’s deep need. There will be an intense desire for the pure, sweet, lasting comfort that Christ alone can give. Then too late comes the bitter awakening to the fact that that which was intended to be a temple for the living God has been surrendered to idols. To be faithful to God means then a lifelong struggle against opposing, ever-present influences, and many give up in discouragement.

Thursday: Choosing a Course – In choosing any course in life, we do well to remember the words of our Lord: “without Me ye can do nothing” (John 15:5). The life of man is a continual seeking. There is implanted in his very nature a longing for something better, a reaching out for something more than He has yet attained. But for many, the result is always more or less disappointing; he is never satisfied. If he gains that which he sought, – wealth, fame, position, – it is only to discover that he wanted twice as much of it as he got. One drink from the intoxicating cup of worldly success only increases the thirst for more. All this is the result of sin. With Adam, in his innocence, it was not so. He had the same longing and reaching out for higher things that his descendants have always had, but it was not a longing that brought restlessness and discontent. It was one that could find satisfaction. But with man’s fall, there came a change. The longing for something beyond him still remained, but, separated from God, and with a mind darkened by sin, he no longer understood how to satisfy it. He began to devise ways of his own, and to reach out after the illusions of a perverted imagination. “Lo, this have I found,” says the wise man, “that God hath made man upright, but they have sought out many inventions” (Ecclesiastes 7:29). Their inventions have not added to their peace and happiness, but only plunged them deeper into the mire of restlessness and want. They do not know what they want. It is a vain task, and brings only sorrow “and vexation of spirit” (Ecclesiastes 2:11). Without Christ, we can do nothing.