

## Sabbath School Lesson #12 – To Love Mercy – 14-20 September 2019

**C**hrist would have us “to do justly, and to love mercy.” “Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness: *he is* gracious, and full of compassion, and righteous. A good man sheweth favour, and lendeth: he will guide his affairs with discretion” (Psalm 112:4-5). There are none who have not some consciousness of right and wrong (Romans 1:28; 2:14-15). If a man persists in stifling his conscience, and is determined that he will not do even the little good that he knows, he must inevitably go into deeper darkness and degradation. It would be impossible for God to give him greater light, since he resolutely shuts his eyes to that which he has. And it is just as true that if a man has a fixed purpose to practice all the good that he knows, he will not only be aided in his effort, but will be given greater light. “If any man will do His will, he shall know of the doctrine” (John 7:17). “Light is sown for the righteous” (Psalm 97:11). “Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness.”

Sunday: Kingdom Priorities – If we would accept them, kingdom priorities are priceless! The best things are to be had for nothing, for money cannot be mentioned in connection with them; they are above all price. Men strive for money; they scheme, and plan, and even fight for it, as though it were the chief thing to be desired; yet it will not purchase the things that they most stand in need of: health, life, and love. Someone will say that money is necessary in this world, under the present circumstances, since even the necessaries of life, as for instance, water, must be bought of corporations that have gained a monopoly of them. True; but the promise is, “Your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things. But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you” (Matthew 6:32-33). The first thing is not to make a living; indeed, we do not have that to do at all, for the Lord gives us our living, our life, for He is our life. Our priority and only business is to glorify the Lord with the life He has given us so freely. If men would but believe this fact, and would always remember it, there would not be so many compromises and denials of the truth, on the ground that it is necessary in order to live. No; the Lord says, “Hear, and your soul shall live.” Again the objection will be made, ‘But that means spiritual life!’ Well, suppose it does: which is greater and more enduring, physical life or spiritual life? Is not “the life everlasting” greater than the life for a few days? Does not the greater include the less? If the Lord can give us life for eternity, does it not stand to reason that He can keep us in life the short time that we have to spend in this present world? “O ye of little faith!” How can a man persuade himself that he believes in and trusts the Lord for salvation to all eternity, when he is afraid to abstain from working on Sabbath, lest he should lose his living?

Monday: Compassion Fatigue – “And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not” (Galatian 6:9). Solomon says, “In the morning sow thy seed, and in the evening withhold not thine hand; for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good” (Ecclesiastes 11:6). This is the thing that is taught in Galatians 6:9. No fatigue; do not faint in well-doing. We cannot tell how much we shall reap, nor from which of the seed that we sow. Some may fall by the wayside, and be snatched away before it has time to take root, and other may fall on stony ground, where it will wither, and still other may fall among thorns, and be choked; but one thing is certain, and that is that we shall reap. Notice the statement in Ecclesiastes: We do not know whether the morning sowing or the evening sowing will prosper, or whether both shall alike be good. There is no possibility that both can be bad. One or the other alone may prosper, or else both may be good. Is not that encouragement enough for us not to be weary in well-doing? The ground may seem poor, and the season may not be favourable, so that the prospect for a crop may be most unpromising, and we may be tempted to think that all our labour is wasted. Not so; “in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.” “Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (1 Corinthians 15:58).

Tuesday: Generosity – While people’s spirituality is not always to be measured by their generosity, it is certainly true that their spirituality never rises *above* their generosity; always remembering, however, that the gift is measured not by its money value, but, as in the case of the poor widow (Luke 21:2-4) by the motive which prompts the gift. Those who give most

from a sincere desire to advance the cause of truth, are blest most; not because the gift of God can be purchased with money, but because having given their means they will also give their prayers; and in so doing what they can to water others, their own souls will be watered. The scriptural rule for giving is this: "he that giveth, let him do it with simplicity;" "God loveth a cheerful giver." He does not value an offering that is given with reluctance, and counted a matter of hardship. "This have ye done again, covering the altar of the Lord with tears, with weeping, and with crying out, insomuch that He regardeth not the offering any more, or receiveth it with goodwill at your hands" (Malachi 2:13). Even though a man bestow all his goods to feed the poor, except love prompt the gift, it is a worthless, unprofitable offering. When the thought in giving is to attract attention to the generosity of the giver; and cause him to be well spoken of, the Lord does not count the offering as made to Himself. Such a payment is neither offered nor accepted as a free gift. It is a business transaction. The donor desires to purchase so much of standing, influence and fame, and gives what he thinks will acquire the desired advantages. "They have their reward." There is nothing further for them. Churches are not content to rely upon the simplicity of giving. They extract by entertainment money from the "lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof" (2 Timothy 3:4-5). Such efforts are not always successful in raising the desired funds, but when they are, it is not the love of God that has provided the means. It is much better to fundraise God's way. Every gift, given with simplicity and grateful acknowledgment to God, is another link to connect us with Him. "For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." God knows how to acknowledge to every cheerful giver the receipt of his offering, and does it in a way that, in itself, is worth more than the gift. The charge of robbery is made by God against all who withhold from Him the tithes and offerings which are His due, but to all who render these cheerfully a glorious promise is given; "Bring ye all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be meat in Mine house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it" (Malachi 3:8-13).

Wednesday: Peacemaking – "Blessed are the peacemakers; for they shall be called the children of God" (Matthew 5:9). This is but natural, for God is "the very God of peace." There is no better way to make peace, than to carry it in one's own heart and life. Jesus "is our peace," because He gives to us His life, reconciling us to God. The most successful peacemakers are not those who go about intermeddling with strife belonging not to them, but those who themselves have the peace of God ruling in their hearts. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked," but only to those who hearken to His commandments (Isaiah 48:18-22). Therefore the only way we can make peace is to proclaim and present the righteousness of the law of God. Preachers of righteousness are the true peacemakers.

Thursday: A Voice for the Voiceless – Scriptures recognise that there will be oppression of the poor by the rich in the last days. But the Lord judges the cause of the poor. In this is their only hope. "Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth" (James 5:4). The Lord hates oppression, but when the labourers organise, that they may oppress their oppressors, they take their case out of the Lord's hand. He cannot approve or support their course. 'Shall men sit down tamely then under oppression?' If they commit their cause to God they may be quite sure that all that God can do for them will be done. "Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord." "For the Lord spake thus to me with a strong hand, and instructed me that I should not walk in the way of this people, saying, Say ye not, A confederacy, to all them to whom this people shall say, A confederacy; neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of Hosts [the Lord of sabaoth] Himself; and let Him be your fear, and let Him be your dread" (Isaiah 8:11-13). Labour unions may have good objects, but they often work hardships on those whose interests they seek. There is only one Union which will never fail to secure its objects, and which will never work an injury to its members, its resources are sufficient for every struggle, and no applicant for membership is refused – the Union Christ spoke of: "And the glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, *even as we are One*: I in them, and Thou in Me, that they may be made perfect in one" (John 17:22-23).