

Sabbath School Lesson #5 – Shining as Lights in the Night – 24-30 January 2026

Christ living in you is the life that shines in a dark world. The religion of Jesus Christ is a life to be lived, and not a theory to be debated about. Christ did not debate with the devil in the temptation in the wilderness; He simply lived. There is no debating the question of actual life; and anything less than this is not worth debating about. ‘You say you are alive,’ someone says; ‘let us debate the question.’ ‘I refuse to debate such a question,’ you reply. ‘If you do not debate, people will think you are afraid,’ they argue. Suppose a man should, in order to ‘defend the truth,’ get up and debate the question as to whether he is alive or not. Anyone who would do that would show that his life is not of sufficient value to give him good sense. The truth as it is in Jesus, is the life of God, and the life of God lived in His own way. All that we have to do is to let Him work in us, so that the injunction may be obeyed, “Do all things without murmurings and disputings: That ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world; Holding forth the word of life; that I may rejoice in the day of Christ, that I have not run in vain, neither laboured in vain” (Philippians 2:14-16). The word to us is, “Arise, shine” (Isaiah 60:1), – not debate. The sun shines, and men may rail at it all they wish, but it has not time to stop shining to go to arguing. The religion of Christ is the life of Christ, and it is the life that is the light. Christ is our life. Let His life spring up, and do not try to stop the flow. It is a fountain; do not be afraid of exhausting the supply.

Sunday: We Work Out What God Works In – Read Philippians 2:12-13; In what ways have you experienced Christ working in you? How, though, does your fallen nature fight against what God is doing in you, and how can you resist that pull? The words of Paul to the Philippians, “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling,” are often quoted by those who forget the words immediately following, “For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” God Himself does the good works which, when exhibited in the lives of men, render them pleasing to Him. So, the Saviour said: “But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God” (John 3:21). How, then, do they appear in men? This is the “mystery of godliness.” It is the mystery of “God manifest in the flesh.” “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” “And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt, among us” (John 1:1, 14). This was done to demonstrate the possibility of God’s dwelling in human flesh. The mystery of the works of God being manifested in the lives of men, is simply the mystery of the incarnation. In Christ dwelleth “all the fullness of the Godhead bodily” (Colossians 2:9). Therefore when Christ in His completeness dwells in the heart by faith, that person will be “filled with all the fullness of God” (Ephesians 3:17-19). What words could be more full of comfort, and more suggestive of the infinite possibilities of the Christian life than those in Psalm 33:19: “O how great is Thy goodness which Thou hast laid up for them that fear Thee; which Thou hast wrought for them that trust in Thee before the sons of men!” Think of it! God himself has wrought the good works with which we are to appear before His throne. How are we to get them? – Simply by trusting Him; by appropriating those good works by faith. God himself comes to dwell with those who believe His word; He lives out His own life in them. This thought is enough to fill every soul with love, and joy, and confidence.

The Christian life is simply the life of Christ. If the master who sets the copy for the schoolboy, could put all his own skill and power into that boy, so that what he writes will not be merely an imitation of the master’s copy, but the master’s own writing, and still the free act of the boy, we should have an illustration of the Christian life. “Work out your own salvation with fear and trembling. For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure.” “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life that I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave Himself for me” (Galatians 2:20). “He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked” (1 John 2:6). And how was it that He walked? Christ Himself said, “The Father that dwelleth in Me, He doeth the works” (John 14:10). Christ has set us the copy, but instead of standing off and watching us try to imitate Him, He gladly comes into our hearts, becoming one with us, so that His life is our life, and His act is ours. Christ is our life. This is life – the Christian life.

Monday: Light in a Dark World – Read Philippians 2:14-16; How can we live in this dark world and yet remain as lights shining in the night? We cannot withdraw from our fellow men in order to shine as lights. We live in the world but “not of the world” (John 15:19). But we do not withdraw from our fellow-men, because Christ has set us in the world to be lights to it. To us it is said: “Do all things without murmurings and disputings; that ye may be blameless and harmless, the sons of God, without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, among whom ye shine as lights in the world” (Philippians 2:14-15). Thus we see that the ideal Christian life is that which is lived “in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation.” The true Christian life cannot be lived anywhere else by the man who is in possession of ordinary health and strength; for God has never sent any man to dwell in a monastery, and men can live true godly lives only where God sends them. “The world” is the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; and these every man carries with him. It is not some other person’s lust and pride, but the lust of our own flesh, and our own pride, that cause us to sin. One may go into the desert, and live alone, yet he will carry the world with him. If he cannot live free from the world when surrounded by people, he cannot do it when alone. Christ lived a life of activity in this world. He had seasons of retirement, as everyone should have, but His life was among the people. “As He is, so are we in this world” (1 John 4:17), if we are His true followers. The sole business of a Christian is to benefit others; he who can benefit his fellows in no other way than by taking himself away from them, is certainly not a Christian.

Tuesday: A Living Sacrifice – Read Philippians 2:17, Romans 12:1; How are we to be a “living sacrifice”? “Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31). There is such a thing as living to the glory of God even in eating and drinking. “I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service” (Romans 12:1). We are to serve God, therefore, with our bodies. Again, the apostle writes, “What? know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own? For ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God’s” (1 Corinthians 6:19-20). How are we to glorify and serve God in our bodies? Evidently, not by subjecting them to misuse, but by preserving each faculty in the best condition for use in His service. This is how we can eat and drink to the glory of God. The preservation of the faculties of the body is intimately connected with eating and drinking; and therefore we are bound to eat and drink such things and to do this in such a manner, as will tend to keep our physical faculties strong and unimpaired. Even our bodies are not our own, but belong to God, and are to be used not to gratify ourselves, but to serve Him. We are therefore accountable to Him for the way that we treat them, as men are accountable for the use they make of the property of another.

Wednesday: Proven Character – Read Philippians 2:19-23; Why do you think Paul speaks so positively and at such length about Timothy here? What we see here is that Paul was commanding to the Philippian church leaders of the same character as himself, of whom he says: “I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timotheus shortly unto you, that I also may be of good comfort, when I know your state. For I have no man like-minded, who will naturally care for your state. For all seek their own, not the things which are Christ’s. But ye know the proof of him, that, as a son with the Father, he hath served with me in the gospel. Him therefore I hope to send presently, so soon as I shall see how it will go with me.”

Thursday: “Hold Such Men in Esteem” – Read Philippians 2:25-30; How does Paul describe Epaphroditus? What specific attitudes and actions of this Christian worker reveal his character? Paul commends this Christian to the church, when he says, “Yet I supposed it necessary to send to you Epaphroditus, my brother, and companion in labor, and fellow soldier, but your messenger, and he that ministered to my wants. For he longed after you all, and was full of heaviness, because that ye had heard that he had been sick. For indeed he was sick nigh unto death: but God had mercy on him; and not on him only, but on me also, lest I should have sorrow upon sorrow. I sent him therefore the more carefully, that, when ye see him again, ye may rejoice, and I may be the less sorrowful. Receive him therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation: because for the work of Christ he was nigh unto death, not regarding his life, to supply your lack of service toward me.”