

Lesson 4: Witness and Service: The Fruit of Revival

Sabbath

The lesson states this better than I can, so I copied/pasted it here:

“But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Acts 1:8, NKJV).

“The purpose of revival is to fill our hearts with such a love for Jesus that we long to share this love with every person possible. In genuine revival, our own hearts are wakened to God’s goodness, compassion, forgiveness, and power. We are so charmed by His love and transformed by His grace that we cannot be silent.

In contrast, a “revival” that focuses on one’s “spiritual experience alone” misses the mark. If it develops attitudes critical of others who do not measure up to one’s “standard of holiness,” it is certainly not heaven inspired. If the emphasis of revival is to merely change external behavior rather than to change hearts, then something is wrong.

Changed hearts lead to changed behavior. Genuine revival never leads to self-centeredness or, especially, to self-sufficiency or self-exaltation. Instead, it always leads to a selfless concern for others. When our hearts are renewed by God’s grace, we long to bless and serve those who are in need. All genuine revival leads to a renewed emphasis on mission and service. [emphasis added].”

I think this is very eloquently said. Too many times, we seem to put “the cart before the horse” and look at outward behaviors in ourselves & others [where they are much easier to observe and criticize], and we think that by changing our behavior[s], we can change our hearts. Only the Holy Spirit can change the human heart. It is true that our behavior[s] can help or hinder this process, but the heart must be healed first.

Sunday

Christ’s parting Commission and Promise.

Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” ... Matt. 28:19-20.

And He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. Mark 16:15.

And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

⁴⁶ *Then He said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day,* ⁴⁷ *and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in*

His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And you are witnesses of these things. Luke 24:45-49.

So Jesus said to them again, “Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.” John 20:21.

Again, the lesson succinctly states: “Once Christ ascended to heaven, His church was to be a visible manifestation of His love and grace to the world. The disciples had a mission. They had a message to share. They had a task to complete. They were to carry on the work that He began.”

Has the Christian church fulfilled our Savior’s wishes?? Has the SDA church??

Monday

Receiving the Promise

The lesson suggests that the ratio of Christians to the rest of the world’s population was 1:580,000 at the time of the Day of Pentecost. How long would it take 1 person to tell 580,000 about the gospel?? Let’s get some perspective: Have you ever heard the problem – would you rather have \$5 million right now, or have one penny doubling every day for one month?? The answer is the doubling penny every day for a 31 day month resulting in a total of \$10,737,418.23. This is a simple geometric progression with a constant ratio of 2.

So, if one person told another about his/her conversion experience and what Christ has done for him/her, and it doubled every day for a month, more than 10 million people would have heard about it. And that’s just with human effort. The Holy Spirit could make this an exponential progression and then ...

Have we done our job?? What needs to happen first?? Doesn’t it matter which gospel is being presented?? Is it no wonder that Christ has not come yet??

Tuesday

The Power of Personal Testimony

The lesson is dead on again with the following: “Religious ritual has little power to change lives. Religious formalism leaves people spiritually barren. Doctrine alone will not transform hearts. The power of New Testament witnessing was rooted in the genuineness of lives changed by the gospel. The disciples were not play-acting. They were not going through the motions. Theirs was not some form of artificial spirituality. An encounter with the living Christ had changed them, and they could not be silent any longer.”

AMEN.

This is what our Saviour was referring to when he told the woman at the well she should seek the “living water”, and again in John 7: 38, “...*whoever believes in me [Christ], rivers of living water will flow from within them.*”

Sometimes this transformation occurs quickly [as with Saul of Tarsus / Paul], however most times it is the work of a lifetime.

An upright character is of greater worth than the gold of Ophir. Without it none can rise to an honorable eminence. But character is not inherited. It cannot be bought. Moral excellence and fine mental qualities are not the result of accident. The most precious gifts are of no value unless they are improved. The formation of a noble character is the work of a lifetime and must be the result of diligent and persevering effort. God gives opportunities; success depends upon the use made of them. {PP 223.1}

“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.” The Desire of Ages, p. 347.

The lesson asks a poignant question. “What kind of personal testimony do you have that tells of what the Lord has done for you??” More specifically, has conformity with God’s Natural Law produced any changes in your life? Any thoughts??

Wednesday

A Witnessing Faith is a Growing Faith.

“Activity is a Law of Life.” Well said. More importantly, it is a natural Law, not an imposed law. God created life to move. From the smallest sub-atomic particles to colossal super-galaxies, everything is in motion. Stagnation is death. **Here we can see Scripture, science, and our experience in perfect harmony.**

This is a Law that I see every day in my practice. When a patient stops moving a body part, joints/connective tissues get stiff and resistant to motion. Sometimes a restoration of motion is painful and even produces bruising. Any parallels with a return to mental, emotional, or Spiritual motion? The lesson states the law of multiplication is a divine principle. More than a multiplication by 2, as in the penny reference above, the Holy Spirit can multiply by numbers we cannot even fathom. Has anyone told you, “you just need more [stronger] faith”? Have you ever told anyone else they need more faith? How does one “get more faith”? What does much of Christianity teach strengthens our faith? What actually strengthens our faith?? Hint: see above.

Note Matt. 10:8. “*Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out demons. Freely you have received, freely give.*”

Do we not have access to the same power the disciples had?? Have we raised any dead lately??

Thursday

Revival, Witnessing, and Divine Intervention.

Does our class have any evidence of divine intervention regarding it's growth?? Have we not experienced some of the same things the early Christian church dealt with? Thankfully, none of us have imprisoned or tortured – yet. We have, though, been lied about, been dismissed from our congregation, been mistreated, all due to wanting to share our message. Has this *mild* persecution resulted in growth or decay of our ministry??

Consider the example given in the lesson of Philip and the Ethiopian. After Philip shared the true gospel of Jesus of Nazareth, he baptized him right away. He didn't baptize him in to a denomination. He didn't wait until the Ethiopian had given up his cigarettes, or became a vegetarian. Anything we can learn from this experience??