

DAY BY DAY

Bible Texts and Topics, With Comments,
For Personal Study and Use at Family Worship.

10: PARABLE LESSONS

1. THE SHEEP AND THE GOATS

“When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit upon the throne of his glory: And before him shall be gathered all nations: and he shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats: And he shall set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left. Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me. Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

“Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels: For I was an hungred, and ye gave me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me not in: naked, and ye clothed me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited me not. Then shall they also answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto thee? Then shall he answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did it not to one of the least of these, ye did it not to me. And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.” Matthew 25:31-46.

“Those whom Christ commends in the judgment, may have known little theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.

“How surprised and gladdened will be the lowly among the nations, and among the heathen, to hear from the lips of the Savior, “Inasmuch as you have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, you have done it unto Me.” How glad will be the heart of Infinite Love as His followers look up with surprise and joy at His words of approval.” The Desire of Ages, page 638.

2. THE SILENT SEED

“And he said, So is the kingdom of God, as if a man should cast seed into the ground; and should sleep, and rise night and day, and the seed should spring and grow up, he knows not how. For the earth brings

forth fruit of herself. First the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear. But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest is come." Mark 4:26-29.

"The wheat develops, "first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear." The object of the husbandman in the sowing of the seed and the culture of the growing plant, is the production of grain. He desires bread for the hungry, and seed for future harvests. So the divine Husbandman looks for a harvest as the reward of His labor and sacrifice. Christ is seeking to reproduce Himself in the hearts of men; and He does this through those who believe in Him. The object of the Christian life is fruit bearing, the reproduction of Christ's character in the believer, that it may be reproduced in others.

"The plant does not germinate, grow, or bring forth fruit for itself, but to "give seed to the sower, and bread to the eater." Isaiah 55:10. So no man is to live unto himself. The Christian is in the world as a representative of Christ, for the salvation of other souls.

"There can be no growth or fruitfulness in the life that is centered in self. If you have accepted Christ as a personal Savior, you are to forget yourself, and try to help others. Talk of the love of Christ, tell of His goodness. Do every duty that presents itself. Carry the burden of souls upon your hearts, and by every means in your power seek to save the lost. As you receive that Spirit of Christ,-the spirit of unselfish love and labor for others,-you will grow and bring forth fruit. The graces of the Spirit will ripen in your character. Your faith will increase, your convictions deepen, your love be made perfect. More and more you will reflect the likeness of Christ in all that is pure, noble, and lovely.

"The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." Galatians 5:22, 23. This fruit can never perish, but will produce after its kind a harvest unto eternal life.

"When the fruit is brought forth, immediately he puts in the sickle, because the harvest is come." Christ is waiting with longing desire for the manifestation of Himself in His church. When the character of Christ shall be perfectly reproduced in His people, then He will come to claim them as His own.

"It is the privilege of every Christian, not only to look for, but to hasten the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2 Peter 3:12, margin. Were all who profess His name bearing fruit to His glory, how quickly the whole world would be sown with the seed of the gospel. Quickly the last great harvest would be ripened, and Christ would come to gather the precious grain." Christ's Object Lessons, pages 67-69.

3. THE TWO DEBTORS

There was a certain creditor which had two debtors: the one owed five hundred pence, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing to pay, he frankly forgave them both. Tell me therefore, which of them will love him most?" Luke 7:41, 42.

"When Satan comes to tell you that you are a great sinner, look up to your Redeemer, and talk of His merits. That which will help you is to look to His light. Acknowledge your sin, but tell the enemy that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15), and that you may be saved by His matchless love.

"Jesus asked Simon a question in regard to two debtors. One owed his lord a small sum, and the other owed him a very large sum; but he forgave them both, and Christ asked Simon which debtor would love his lord most. Simon answered, "He to whom he forgave most." Luke 7:43.

"We have been great sinners, but Christ died that we might be forgiven. The merits of His sacrifice are sufficient to present to the Father in our behalf. Those to whom He has forgiven most will love Him most, and will stand nearest His throne to praise Him for His great love and infinite sacrifice. It is when

we most fully comprehend the love of God that we best realize the sinfulness of sin. When we see the length of the chain that was let down for us, when we understand something of the infinite sacrifice that Christ has made in our behalf, the heart is melted with tenderness and contrition." - Steps to Christ, pages 40, 41.

"Jesus knows the circumstances of every soul. You may say, I am sinful, very sinful. You may be; but the worse you are, the more you need Jesus. He turns no weeping, contrite one away. He does not tell to any all that He might reveal, but He bids every trembling soul take courage. Freely will He pardon all who come to Him for forgiveness and restoration.

"Christ might commission the angels of heaven to pour out the vials of His wrath on our world, to destroy those who are filled with hatred of God. He might wipe this dark spot from His universe. But He does not do this. He is today standing at the altar of incense, presenting before God the prayers of those who desire His help.

"The souls that turn to Him for refuge, Jesus lifts above the accusing and the strife of tongues. No man or evil angel can impeach these souls. Christ unites them to His own divine-human nature. They stand beside the great Sin Bearer, in the light proceeding from the throne of God. "Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifies. Who is he that condemns? It is Christ that died; yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us." Romans 8:33, 34. The Desire of Ages, page 568.

4. THE GOOD SAMARITAN

"Jesus answering said, A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, which stripped him of his raiment, and wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. And by chance there came down a certain priest that way: and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. And likewise a Levite, when he was at the place, came and looked on him, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was: and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, and bound up his wounds. Pouring in oil and wine, and set him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. And on the morrow when he departed, he took out two pence, and gave them to the host, and said unto him, Take care of him; and whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee." Luke 10:30-35.

"I saw that it is in the providence of God that widows and orphans, the blind, the deaf, the lame, and persons afflicted in a variety of ways, have been placed in close Christian relationship to His church; it is to prove His people and develop their true character. Angels of God are watching to see how we treat these persons who need our sympathy, love, and disinterested benevolence. This is God's test of our character. If we have the true religion of the Bible, we shall feel that a debt of love, kindness, and interest is due to Christ in behalf of His brethren. And we can do no less than to show our gratitude for His immeasurable love to us while we were sinners unworthy of His grace, by having a deep interest and unselfish love for those who are our brethren, and who are less fortunate than ourselves.

"The two great principles of the law of God are supreme love to God and unselfish love to our neighbor. The first four commandments and the last six hang upon, or grow out of, these two principles. Christ explained to the lawyer who his neighbor was in the illustration of the man who was traveling from Jerusalem to Jericho, and who fell among thieves, and was robbed, and beaten, and left half dead. The priest and the Levite saw this man suffering, but their hearts did not respond to his wants. They avoided him by passing by on the other side. The Samaritan came that way, and when he saw the stranger's need of help, he did not question whether he was a relative, or was of his country or creed; but he went to work to help the sufferer because there was work which needed to be done. He relieved him as best

he could, put him upon his own beast, and carried him to an inn, and made provision for his wants at his own expense. This Samaritan, said Christ, was neighbor to him who fell among thieves. The Levite and the priest represent a class in the church who manifest an indifference to the very ones who need their sympathy and help. This class, notwithstanding their position in the church, are commandment breakers. The Samaritan represents a class who are true helpers with Christ, and who are imitating his example in doing good." Testimonies Vol. 3, pp. 511, 512.

5. THE IMPORTUNATE FRIEND

"He said unto them, Which of you shall have a friend, and shall go unto him at midnight, and say unto him, Friend, lend me three loaves; for a friend of mine in his journey is come to me, and I have nothing to set before him? And he from within shall answer and say, Trouble me not: the door is now shut, and my children are with me in bed; I cannot rise and give thee. I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needs." Luke 11:5-8.

"The petition that the suppliant offers to Heaven, God is as willing to grant as the petitioner is earnest to request. The Lord in His wisdom does not always grant the request at once. He sees that it is necessary that the petitioner should search his heart, and should exercise repentance for sin and wrong. He sees that it is necessary that the heart should be emptied of vanity so that God may pour His richest treasures into the soul.

"The Lord encourages us to ask. No one is to become discouraged because he does not immediately realize the relief he desires. Let the petitioner cherish trusting faith, and refuse to be disheartened. Let him appropriate the promise, believing that his petition has found favor with God, and rest in the promise, "It shall be given you." Although we cannot always be upon our knees, yet the desires of our heart should be constantly ascending to God. We should present to Him those things that we feel are necessary for our advancement. We may have to pass through a painful season of suspense, and our case may seem exceedingly urgent, but in this way the soul becomes educated to look unto God as unto a faithful Creator. He would have us ponder on the promises and delight in the positive assurances that He has brought to view in His precious word.

"The promises of God are like precious flowers scattered through a garden. The Lord would have us linger over them, looking closely into them, taking in their loveliness, and appreciating the favor that God has bestowed upon us by making such rich provisions for our needs." Mrs. E. White, Review & Herald, Nov. 19, 1895.

Success from Perseverance: It is said of Marshall Field that when a boy he went to a great merchant and asked, "Do you want a boy?" "Nobody wants a boy," replied the merchant. "Do you need a boy?" the boy persisted, nowise abashed. "Nobody needs a boy," was the reply. But the boy would not give up. "Well, say, mister, do you have to have a boy?" "I think likely we do," replied the merchant, "and I rather think we will have to have a boy just like YOU." James Terry White.

6. THE RICH FOOL

"He spoke a parable unto them, saying, The ground of a certain rich man brought forth plentifully: and he thought within himself, saying, What shall I do, because I have no room where to bestow my fruits? And he said, This will I do: I will pull down my barns, and build greater; and there will I bestow all my fruits and my goods. And I will say to my soul, Soul, thou has much goods laid up for many years; take your ease, eat, drink, and be merry. But God said unto him, Thou fool, this night thy soul shall be required of thee: then whose shall those things be, which thou has provided?" Luke 12:16-20.

“The solemn warning that was given to the foolish rich man, should be a sufficient warning for all men to the close of time. Lesson upon lesson was given by our Lord to take every one away from selfishness, and to establish close bonds of fellowship and brotherhood between man and man. He desired that the hearts of believers should be closely knit together in strong bonds of sympathy, so that there might be unity in Himself. They are together to rejoice in hope of the glory of God, looking for eternal life through the virtue of Jesus Christ. If Christ is abiding in the heart, His love will diffuse itself to others through its possessor, and will bind heart to heart.” - Mrs E. White, in Review & Herald, June 26, 1894.

“Men act as though they were bereft of their reason. They are buried up in the cares of this life. They have no time to devote to God, no time to serve Him. Work, work, work, is the order of the day. All about them are required to labor upon the, high-pressure plan, to take care of large farms. To tear down and build greater is their ambition, that they may have wherewith to bestow their goods. Yet these very men who are weighed down with their riches pass for Christ's followers. They have the name of believing that Christ is soon to come, that the end of all things is at hand; yet they have no spirit of sacrifice. They are plunging deeper and deeper into the world. They allow themselves but little time to study the word of life, and to meditate and pray. Neither do they give others in their family, or those who serve them, this privilege. Yet these men profess to believe that this world is not their home, that they are merely pilgrims and strangers upon the earth, preparing to move to a better country.

“The example and influence of all such is a curse to the cause of God. Hollow hypocrisy characterizes their professed Christian lives. They love God and the truth just as much as their works show, and no more. A man will act out all the faith he has. “By their fruits you shall know them.” The heart is where the treasure is. Their treasure is upon this earth, and their hearts and interests are also here.” Testimonies, Vol. 2, pages 662, 663.

7. THE GREAT SUPPER

“A certain man made a great supper, and bade many: and sent his servant at supper time to say to them that were bidden, Come; for all things are now ready. And they all with one consent began to make excuse. The first, said unto him, I have bought a piece of ground, and I must needs go and see it: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to prove them: I pray thee have me excused. And another said, I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come. So that servant came, and showed his lord these things. Then the master of the house being angry said to, his servant. Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in hither the poor, and the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. And the servant said, Lord, it is done as thou has commanded, and yet there is room. And the lord said unto the servant, Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I say unto you, that none of those men which were bidden shall taste of my supper.” Luke 14:16-24.

“This parable correctly represents the condition of many professing to believe the present truth. The, Lord has sent them an invitation to come to the supper which He has prepared for them at great cost to Himself; but worldly interests look to them of greater importance than the heavenly treasure. They are invited to take part in things of eternal value; but their farms,, their cattle, and their home interests seem of so much greater importance than obedience to the heavenly invitation that they overpower every divine attraction, and these earthly things are made the excuse for their disobedience to the heavenly command, “Come; for all things are now ready.” These brethren are blindly following the example of those represented in the parable. They look at their worldly possessions, and say, No, Lord, I cannot follow Thee; “I pray Thee have me excused.”

“The very blessings which God has given to these men, to prove them, to see if they will render “unto God the things that are God's,” they use as an excuse that they cannot obey the claims of truth. They

have grasped their earthly treasure in their arms, and say, "I must take care of these things; I must not neglect the things of this life; these things are mine." Thus the hearts of these men have become as hardened as the beaten highway. They close the door of their hearts to the heavenly messenger, who says, "Come; for all things are now ready," and throw it open, inviting the entrance of the world's burden and business cares, and Jesus knocks in vain for admittance." Testimonies, Vol. 3, pages 383, 384.

Throwing Bricks at a Jaguar Sportscar: Years ago, a young and very successful executive named Josh was traveling down a Chicago neighborhood street. He was going a bit too fast in his sleek, black, 12 cylinder Jaguar XKE, which was only two months old.

He was watching out for children darting out from between parked cars and slowed down when he thought he saw something. As his car passed, no child darted out, but a brick sailed out and - WHUMP! - it smashed into the Jag's shiny black side door! SCREECH...!!!!

Brakes slammed! Gears ground into reverse, and tires madly spun the Jaguar back to the spot from where the brick had been thrown. Josh jumped out of the car, grabbed the child and pushed him up against a parked car. He shouted at him, "What was that all about and who are you? Just what the are you doing?!" Building up a head of steam, he went on. "That's my new Jag, that brick you threw is gonna cost you a lot of money. Why did you throw it?"

"Please, mister, please ... I'm sorry! I didn't know what else to do!" pleaded the youngster. "I threw the brick because no one else would stop!" Tears were dripping down the boy's chin as he pointed around the parked car.

"It's my brother, mister," he said. "He rolled off the curb and fell out of his wheelchair and I can't lift him up." Sobbing, the boy asked the executive, "Would you please help me get him back into his wheelchair? He's hurt and he's too heavy for me."

Moved beyond words, the young executive tried desperately to swallow the rapidly swelling lump in his throat. Straining, he lifted the young man back into the wheelchair and took out his handkerchief and wiped the scrapes and cuts, checking to see that everything was going to be OK. He then watched the younger brother push him down the sidewalk toward their home.

It was a long walk back to the sleek, black, shining, 12 cylinder Jaguar XKE - a long and slow walk. Josh never did fix the side door of his Jaguar. He kept the dent to remind him not to go through life so fast that someone has to throw a brick at him to get his attention.....

Watch out for the bricks that come into your life. Some will be softer than others. Some will really make a dent.