

DAY BY DAY

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

11: MORE PARABLE LESSONS

1. THE PIECES OF MONEY

“Either what woman having ten pieces of silver, if she lose one piece, doth not light a candle, and sweep the house, and seek diligently till she find it? And when she hath found it, she calls her friends and her neighbors together, saying, Rejoice with me; for I have found the piece which I had lost. Likewise, I say unto you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth.” Luke 15:8-10.

“The lost sheep knows that it is lost. It has left the shepherd and the flock, and it cannot recover itself. It represents those who realize that they are separated from God, and who are in a cloud of perplexity, in humiliation, and sorely tempted. The lost coin represents those who are lost in trespasses and sins, but who have no sense of their condition. They are estranged from God, but they know it not. Their souls are in peril, but they are unconscious and unconcerned. In this parable Christ teaches that even those who are indifferent to the claims of God are the objects of His pitying love. They are to be sought for, that they may be brought back to God.

“The sheep wandered away from the fold; it was lost in the wilderness or upon the mountains. The piece of silver was lost in the house. It was close at hand, yet it could be recovered only by diligent search.” Christ's Object Lessons, pages 193, 194.

“This parable has a lesson to families. In the household there is often a great carelessness concerning the souls of its members. Among their number may be one who is estranged from God; but how little anxiety is felt lest, in the family relationship, there be lost one of God's entrusted gifts.

“The coin, though lying among dust and rubbish, is a piece of silver still. Its owner seeks it because it is of value. So every soul, however degraded by sin, is in God's sight accounted precious. As the coin bears the image and superscription of the reigning power, so man at his creation bore the image and superscription of God; and though now marred and dim through the influence of sin, the traces of this inscription remain upon every soul. God desires to recover that soul, and to retrace upon it His own image in righteousness and holiness....

“If there is in the family one child who is unconscious of his sinful state, parents should not rest. Let the candle be lighted. Search the word of God, and by its light let everything in the home be diligently examined, to see why this child is lost. Let parents search their own hearts, examine their habits and practices. Children are the heritage of the Lord, and we are answerable to Him for our management of His property.” Christ's Object Lessons, pages 194, 195.

2. THE UNJUST STEWARD

And He said also unto His disciples, There was a certain rich man, which had a steward; and the same was accused unto him that he had wasted his goods. And he called him, and said unto him, How is it that I hear this of thee? Give an account of thy stewardship; for thou may be no longer steward. Then the steward said within himself, What shall I do? For my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do, that, when I am put out of the stewardship, they

may receive me into their houses. So he called every one of his Lord debtors unto him, and said unto the first, How much owes thou unto my lord? And he said, A hundred measures of oil. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and sit down quickly, and write fifty. Then said he to another, And how much owes thou? And he said, A hundred measures of wheat. And he said unto him, Take thy bill, and write fourscore. And the Lord commended the unjust steward, because he had done wisely: for the children of this world are in their generation wiser than the children of light." Luke 16:1-8.

"The lesson of this parable is for all. Every one will be held responsible for the grace given him through Christ. Life is too solemn to be absorbed in temporal or earthly matters. The Lord desires that we shall communicate to others that which the eternal and unseen communicates to us.

"Every year millions upon millions of human souls are passing into eternity unwarned and unsaved. From hour to hour in our varied life, opportunities to reach and save souls are opened to us. These opportunities are continually coming and going. God desires us to make the most of them Days, weeks, and months are passing; we have one day, one week, one month less in which to do our work. A few more years at the longest, and the voice which we cannot refuse answer will be heard, saying, "Give an account of thy stewardship."

"Christ calls upon every one to consider. Make an honest reckoning. Put into one scale Jesus, which means eternal treasure, life, truth, heaven, and the joy of Christ in souls redeemed; put into the other every attraction the world can offer. Into one scale put the loss of your own soul, and the souls of those whom you might have been instrumental in saving; into the other, for yourself and for them, a life that measures with the life of God. Weigh for time and for eternity. While you are thus engaged, Christ speaks: "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

"God desires us to choose the heavenly in place of the earthly. He opens before us the possibilities of a heavenly investment. He would, give encouragement to our loftiest aims, security to our choicest treasure. He declares, "I will make a man more precious than fine gold; even a man than the golden wedge of Ophir." When the riches that moth devours and rust corrupts shall be swept away, Christ's followers can rejoice in their heavenly treasure, the riches that are imperishable.... Better than all the words of earthly praise, will be the Savior's words to His faithful servants, "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world." Christ's Object Lessons, pages 373, 374.

3. UNPROFITABLE SERVANTS

"But which of you, having a servant plowing or feeding cattle, will say unto him by and by, when he is come from the field, Go and sit down to meat? And will not rather say unto him, Make ready wherewith I may sup, and gird thyself, and serve me, till I have eaten and drunken; and afterward thou shalt eat and drink? Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do." Luke 17:7-10.

"When the cases of all come in review before God, the question, What did they profess? Will not be asked, but, What have they done? Have they been doers of the word? Have they lived for themselves, or have they been exercised in works of benevolence, in deeds of kindness and love, preferring others before themselves, and denying themselves that they might bless others? If the record shows that this has been their life, that their characters have been marked with tenderness, self-denial, and benevolence, they will receive the blessed assurance and benediction from Christ, "Well done." "Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

Christ has been grieved and wounded by your marked selfish love, and your indifference to the woes and needs of others.

“Many times our efforts for others may be disregarded, and apparently lost. But this should be no excuse for us to become weary in well doing. How often has Jesus come to find fruit upon the plants of His care, and found nothing but leaves! We may be disappointed as to the result of our best efforts; but this should not lead us to be indifferent to others' woes, and to do nothing. “Curse you Meroz, said the angel of the Lord, curse you bitterly the inhabitants thereof; because they came not to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the mighty.” Judges 5:23.

“How often is Christ disappointed in those who profess to be His children! He has given them unmistakable evidence of His love. He became poor, that through His poverty we might be made rich. He died for us, that we might not perish, but have eternal life. What if Christ had refused to bear our iniquity because He was rejected by many, and because so few appreciated His love and the infinite blessings He came to bring them? We need to encourage patient, painstaking efforts.” Testimonies, Vol. 3, page 525.

“Even when your affairs be of so much importance as to require your whole attention, you should look mentally toward God from time to time, as mariners do, who, to arrive at the port for which they are bound, look more up toward heaven than down to the sea on which they sail.” E. M. Goulburn.

4. THE PHARISEE AND THE PUBLICAN

“And he spake this parable unto certain which trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: Two men went up into the temple to pray; the one a Pharisee, and the other a publican. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other: for every one that exalteth himself shall be abased; and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” Luke 18:10-14.

“The Pharisee and the publican represent two great classes into which those who come to worship God are divided. Their first two representatives are found in the first two children that were born into the world. Cain thought himself righteous, and he came to God with a thank offering only. He made no confession of sin, and acknowledged no need of mercy. But Abel came with the blood that pointed to the Lamb of God. He came as a sinner, confessing himself lost; his only hope was the unmerited love of God. The Lord had respect to his offering, but to Cain and his offering He had no respect. The sense of need, the recognition of our poverty and sin, is the very first condition of acceptance with God. “Blessed are the poor in spirit; for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.” Christ's Object Lessons, page 152.

The prayer of the publican was heard because it showed dependence reaching forth to lay hold upon Omnipotence. Self to the publican appeared nothing but shame. Thus it must be seen by all who seek God. By faith-faith that renounces all self-trust-the needy suppliant is to lay hold upon infinite power.

No outward observances can take the place of simple faith and entire renunciation of self. But no man can empty himself of self. We can only consent for Christ to accomplish the work. Then the language of the soul will be, “Lord, take my heart; for I cannot give it. It is Thy property. Keep it pure, for I cannot keep it for Thee. Save me in spite of myself, my weak, unchristlike self. Mold me, fashion me, raise me into a pure and holy atmosphere, where the rich current of Thy love can flow through my soul.” Christ's Object Lessons Ibid., page 159.

O Lord, I need Thee every day,
I stretch my arms to Thee;
Thou art a solace for each care
That hovers over me.

I'm weary, and the world looks sad
With grief and much despair;
My only solace is Thy love
And tender, soothing care.

My joys in life are very few,
My task is almost done;
I hope to meet Thee on the height
Whenever the battle's won." Donald W. McKay.

5. THE LEAVEN

"Again He said, Whereunto shall I liken the kingdom of God? It is like leaven, [yeast] which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened." Luke 13:20, 21.

"This parable illustrates the penetrating and assimilating power of the gospel, which is to fashion the church after the divine similitude by working on the hearts of the individual members. As the leaven operates on the meal, so the Holy Spirit operates on the human heart, absorbing all its capabilities and powers, bringing soul, body, and spirit into conformity to Christ.

"In the parable the woman placed the leaven in the meal. It was necessary to supply a want. By this God would teach us that, of himself, man does not possess the properties of salvation. He cannot transform himself by the exercise of his will. The truth must be received into the heart. Thus the divine leaven does its work. By its transforming, vitalizing power it produces a change in the heart. New thoughts, new feelings, new purposes are awakened. The mind is changed, the faculties are set to work. Man is not supplied with new faculties, but the faculties he has are sanctified. The conscience, hitherto dead, is aroused. But man cannot make this change himself. It can be made only by the Holy Spirit. All who would be saved, high or low, rich or poor, must submit to the working of this power." Mrs E. White, in Review and Herald, July 25, 1899.

"Received into the heart, the leaven of truth will regulate the desires, purify the thoughts, and sweeten the disposition. It quickens the faculties of the mind and the energies of the soul. It enlarges the capacity for feeling, for loving.

"The world regards as a mystery the man who is imbued with this principle. The selfish, money-loving man lives only to secure for himself the riches, honors, and pleasures of this world. He loses the eternal world from his reckoning. But with the follower of Christ these things will not be all absorbing. For Christ's sake he will labor and deny self that he may aid in the great work of saving souls who are without Christ and without hope in the world. Such a man the world cannot understand; for he is keeping in view eternal realities. The love of Christ with its redeeming power has come into the heart. This love masters every other motive, and raises its possessor above the corrupting influence of the world." Christ's Object Lessons, page 101.

"As a pebble dropped in water sends its waves out more and more, In an ever widening circle till they reach the very shore; So a word, a deed, an action, dropped upon the sea of life, Sends a blessing or a cursing to this world of sin and strife."

6. SERVANTS WATCHING

Let your loins be girded about, and your lights burning; and ye yourselves like unto men that wait for their lord, when he will return from the wedding; that when he cometh and knocketh, they may open unto him immediately. Blessed are those servants, whom the lord when he cometh shall find watching: verily I say unto you, that he shall gird himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them. And if he shall come in the second watch, or come in the third watch, and find them so, blessed are those servants. And this know, that if the good man of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched, and not have suffered his house to be broken through. Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man comes at an hour when ye think not. Luke 12:35-40.

“God designs that His people shall fix their eyes heavenward, looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. While the attention of worldlings is turned to various enterprises, ours should be to the heavens. Our faith should reach farther and farther into the glorious mysteries of the heavenly treasure, drawing the precious, divine rays of light from the heavenly sanctuary to shine in our hearts, as they shine upon the face of Jesus. The scoffers mock the waiting, watching ones, and inquire, “Where is the promise of His coming? You have been disappointed. Engage now with us, and you will prosper in worldly things. Get gain, get money, and be honored of the world.” The waiting ones look upward and answer, “We are watching.” And by turning from earthly pleasure and worldly fame, and from the deceitfulness of riches, they show themselves to be in that position. By watching, they become strong; they overcome sloth and selfishness, and love of ease. Affliction's fire kindles upon them, and the waiting time seems long. They sometimes grieve, and faith falters; but they rally again, overcome their fears and doubts, and while their eyes are directed heavenward, say to their adversaries, 'I am watching, I am waiting the return of my Lord. I will glory in tribulation, in affliction, in necessities.”

“The desire of our Lord is that we should be watching, so that when He comes and knocks, we may open to Him immediately. A blessing is pronounced upon those servants whom He finds watching. “He shall gird Himself, and make them to sit down to meat, and will come forth and serve them.” Who among us in these last days will be thus specially honored by the Master of assemblies? Are we prepared without delay to open to Him immediately and welcome Him in? Watch, watch, watch.” Testimonies, Vol. 2, 194, 195.

“Be sure, brethren, that Christ will appear, and that every eye shall see Him, and that the thoughts of every heart will be made manifest before Him. There is no more doubt of that than there is that the sun will rise out of this coming night.” F. D. Maurice.

7. THE LORD'S PRAYER

“After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil: For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen.” Matthew 6:9-13.

“The Lord's prayer was twice given by our Savior, first to the multitude in the sermon on the mount, and again, some months later, to the disciples alone. The disciples had been for a short time absent from their Lord, when on their return they found Him absorbed in communion with God. Seeming unconscious of their presence, He continued praying aloud. The Savior's face was irradiated with a celestial brightness. He seemed to be in the very presence of the Unseen; and there was a living power in His words, as of one who spoke with God....

“As He ceased praying, it was with a conviction of their own deep need that they exclaimed, “Lord, teach us to pray.”

“Jesus gives them no new form of prayer. That which He has before taught them, He repeats, as if He would say: You need to understand what I have already given. It has a depth of meaning you have not yet fathomed.

“The Savior does not, however, restrict us to the use of these exact words. As one with humanity, He presents His own ideal of prayer, words so simple that they may be adopted by the little child, yet so comprehensive that their significance can never be fully grasped by the greatest minds. We are taught to come to God with our tribute of thanksgiving, to make known our wants, to confess our sins, and to claim His mercy in accordance with His promise.

Pray, though the gift you ask for
May never comfort your fears,
May never repay your pleading,
Yet pray with hopeful tears.
An answer-not that you long for,
But diviner-will come one day,
Your eyes are too dim to see it,
Yet strive and wait and pray. Adelaide Proctor.

Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, pages 151-153.

O Thou who made the blind ones see
In days of old in Galilee,
But give us faith, restore our sight,
That we grope no more in earth's dark night
Nor walk again forbidden ways.
Grant in the love that lights our days
We follow Thee till life is done,
And then go home at set of sun.
Then may we see Thy face divine,
And in Thy radiance that day shine. Inez Brasier