

Central Study Hour – Lesson 5 “Jesus on Community Outreach”

*SABBATH AFTERNOON

Quickly review highlights from the last two lessons from the Old Testament, especially **Micah 6:8** and the Ellen White quotation from the July 21 page. *Would Jesus teach any differently from the OT?* No. Jesus quotes from the OT to show that social justice and mercy is not new. He enlarges and illustrates with parables.

Note Robert Louis Stevenson’s boyhood comment about the street lamplighter’s work; “there’s a man poking holes in the darkness.” Jesus taught that we are to be “**the light of the world**” (Matt. 5:14). We are to reflect Jesus, the True Light of the world (John 8:12). Through Jesus, we can poke holes in the darkness of our world.

*SUNDAY: JESUS’ MISSION STATEMENT

There was great enthusiasm as Jesus returned to Nazareth for the first time since He had started His ministry. He was asked to read the Scriptures at the local synagogue. **Read Luke 4:18-19.** *Where have we heard these words before?* Isaiah 61:1-2 from last week’s lesson. *What was Jesus proclaiming by reading those texts?* Verses 20-21 will tell us. **Read Luke 4:20-21.** “**Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.**” Jesus was applying the work of the “**anointed One**” to Himself. People understood the “anointed One” to be the coming Messiah so Jesus was clearly identifying Himself as the Messiah, that He is the fulfillment of Isaiah 61.

Why didn’t Jesus finish the complete sentence of Is. 61:2? What did He leave out and why? **Read Is. 61:1-2** and compare it with **Luke 4:18-19.** Jesus left out “**the day of vengeance of our God**” from the end of verse 2. *Why?* Well, first notice that he did repeat the phrase “**the acceptable year of our LORD.**” We learned last week that this is a reference to the Jubilee Year. Every 50th year in the Jubilee all debts were canceled, slaves or servants were set free, land returned to those who due to financial loss had been forced to sell. The Jubilee symbolizes the hope, freedom, restoration, and receiving the heavenly Canaan that will happen at the second coming. However, the 2nd coming will also destroy the unrepentant wicked. The people of Jesus’ day thought “**the day of vengeance**” applied to getting revenge on the Roman occupiers. Therefore, Jesus didn’t finish with that phrase because it would have kicked in that prevailing false concept and completely distracted from His point. “Instead, He focused on what He would do for those who needed what He had to offer right then and there.” (Discuss the two questions in the box at the bottom of the page).

*MONDAY: LOVING YOUR NEIGHBOR

Read Luke 10:25-28. Okay, so this lawyer was an expert in the Law of Moses. He quotes Deut. 6:5 and Lev. 19:18. He realizes that all of the commandments are about loving God and loving others – loving your neighbor as yourself. Jesus commends him on giving a good answer, and then Jesus said, “**Do this and you will live.**” But, the lawyer wasn’t satisfied. He was troubled by one question. *What was his question?* **Read Luke 10:29.** In the following verses, Jesus answers the question, “**Who is my neighbor?**” *What famous parable does Jesus tell to explain who “my neighbor” is?* The Good Samaritan, of course! Verses 30-32 tell how a traveler was robbed, badly beaten, and left to die on the side of the road. His good luck is that the first person to come along is a priest who would know the Law of Moses, and being a spiritual man would surely help him. But the priest doesn’t help at all and passes him by, leaving him there to die. And a Levite comes next and passes him by also. **Read Luke 10:33-37.** *So, what is the message regarding helping those in need that Jesus gave with this parable?* (See highlights from Monday’s page. Then share from the **Teacher’s Comments** p. 65 the two questions under **1. Know: Serving the Community.** Also from p. 66-67 **Motivate** and **Explore.** After the question at the bottom of p. 66, it would fit well to ask the question at the bottom of p. 59, Monday’s page.) The big question is: *Are we the uncaring religious people or are we the Good Samaritan?*

*TUESDAY: THE WHOLE RECIPE

What does the author mean by “the whole recipe”? First, he quotes **Matt. 5:13**, “**You are the salt of the earth.**” What does this mean? Salt is a transforming agent. It’s supposed to make food taste better. The author likens the church to a saltshaker. By the whole recipe the author means to just eat plain salt by itself for food. Well that would be tough to handle. However, when salt is lightly added to something, such as bread, “it transforms” it “from bland to delicious. Salt does more good when it mixes with elements unlike itself. The same is true of Christians. This won’t happen if we stay comfortably in the church ‘saltshaker.’” (Read the 3rd paragraph in the middle of the page starting, “Thus, there’s a point...”).

Read Matt. 5:13 again, noting the rest of the verse. *How can salt lose its savor or flavor?* When salt is not protected but is exposed to the elements, such as damp air, it loses its effect. When Christians are indolent, lazy, or uncaring, they are in some way unprotected and exposed to sin and lose their vitality, as well. (Read the quotation from page 439 of *The Desire of Ages*, in Tuesday’s lesson).

*WEDNESDAY: ON BEING A FARMER

After Jesus conversed with the woman at the well, she ran into town to tell people about Jesus. The disciples came to Jesus and He told them a harvest was coming. He was talking of the people coming from the town right then to see him. Jesus comments some more. **Read John 4:36-38**. *What two steps that farmers follow to harvest crops does Jesus mention here?* Sowing first and then reaping. *What is Jesus comparing this to?* Winning people to Christ for a harvest of souls for eternal life. *Could a person expect to reap a harvest in a field where no seed was sown?* Not much if any. *Do we ever try to reap a harvest of souls without sowing?* We shouldn’t. However, there are other types of farm work that need to be done before there can be a plentiful harvest. In the LORD’s harvest field there’s more than planters and reapers needed. *In the parable of the sower, what was the problem?* Not all the ground was good. There were four types of ground: hard ground on the path, stony ground, ground encumbered with thorns, and good ground. So, before planting seeds often the soil must be prepared. *How?* Plow and till soil to soften it up, remove rocks, and pull up thorns and weeds. *What can your church do in your community to soften “hard ground” and remove “rocks” and “thorns”?* Community services and health ministries are good for softening ground. (Go into the details of the rest of the page noting all the other agricultural steps that need to happen and how that sets a pattern for harvesting souls for the kingdom. Conclude with the question in the bottom shaded box.)

*THURSDAY: CHURCH PLANTING

Jesus sent His 12 disciples out to preach. **Read Matt. 10:7-10**. *Why would Jesus send them out to the surrounding towns and villages without any resources?* (Read the following paragraph and then highlight the twelve steps Pastor Frank took to plant a new church.) The key point is the best way to plant and/or grow a church is to begin a ministry that meets the needs of the community. We need to poke holes in the darkness.

*FRIDAY

“**Unless the church is the light of the world, it is darkness.**” ST, 9/11, 1893. (Discuss as needed. Then cover the **Apply** section from the **Teacher’s Comments**, p. 68-69, including the **Thought Questions**.) *If we don’t get specific about what to do, will we become a “caring church” by accident?* A solemn thought to consider! As a church we need to pray about what we can do! That’s where it begins. *Will you commit to pray for God to show us specifically what to do?*