

Spiritual Growth Lessons

LESSON 10 of 32

♥ A LOVE FOR THE LOST ♥

"But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest" (Matthew 9:36-38).

THE GREAT COMMISSION

"Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature" (Mark 16:15).

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

"And the gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come" (Matthew 24:14).

To the church of Jesus Christ has been given the grave responsibility of reaching this world with the gospel that alone can save them. It must be preached in every nation, and we are also commanded to preach it to every person. This responsibility is not for just a few. It is given to the whole church of Jesus Christ. If we have the Holy Ghost, God has given us that which qualifies us to become His witnesses--His power, His love!

We are the light of the world. Wherever we go, we must let our lights shine by our Christian conduct and testimony (Matthew 5:14-16).

We are the salt of this earth. Salt is a preserving substance. The only thing that is keeping this world from the judgments of God is the presence of His church on this earth. But if we lose our identification (if the salt has lost its savour), we are useless (Matthew 5:13).

A COMPASSION FOR SOULS

Definition of the word compassion: To have the bowels (tender emotions) yearn, to feel sympathy, to feel pity.

We cannot reach this world when we are not even willing to reach our neighbour. Yet we are commanded to love our neighbour as ourselves (Luke 10:27). This we find very hard to do! We can love our brother, because he also may feel kindly towards us--but to love our neighbour, that is a very different thing!

When Jesus reminded a lawyer of this requirement of the royal law of love, the man sought to justify himself by asking the question, "And who is my neighbour?" (Luke 10:29). Jesus then told the man a parable: "...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).

We can learn many valuable truths from this parable:

1. The "certain man" is a type of the sinner. His road is downwards.
2. The thieves represent the power of sin, or demonic spirits that try to destroy the sinner, and leave him wounded and dying.
3. Two religious leaders were coming from Jerusalem, a priest and a Levite. They had been engaged in religious service in the temple, and were on their way home when they came across the wounded man. The priest did not even bother to check the condition of the man. The Levite did walk over and look at his condition, but then went on his journey. Neither man was moved with compassion. Their religion had little effect upon their lives. They had already finished their religious duties, and they had no time to be bothered with helping others.
4. The man who was wounded was a Jew. The priest and the Levite were Jews. The Jews hated and often mistreated Samaritans. Nevertheless, it was a Samaritan who came along and felt compassion towards the wounded man, and ministered to his needs.

We can learn important lessons how we can be a soul winner by taking note of just what this Samaritan did:

a. He came where the man was. He did not wait for the man to come to him. Sometimes we can be so "heavenly-minded" that we are of no "earthly good." We must not stand aloof from sinners. We must not be quick to judge and criticize them. We must not act as if we are better than they are. We need to humble ourselves and get down on their level.

b. He truly saw the man's need, and was moved with compassion towards him: There are so many people that we daily meet who do not know Jesus Christ. Many of them have been wounded by sin, and all who do not know Jesus truly are dying. We must pray that we will have a heart full of love and compassion for them. If we do not have a burden for the lost, the chances are great that we will never win anybody to Jesus Christ! How sad it would be to some day meet our Saviour and have Him ask us, "Where are the souls that you have helped to win?" And we would have to say, "There are none!"

c. He went to him. We must put the "go" in the gospel by going to the sinner. The church is not the field, the world is the field. "Go ye into all the world..." is the command we have received from the Lord.

d. He bound up his wounds. "...he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted" (Isaiah 61:1). This is what the gospel of Jesus Christ will do for the sinner. Sin leaves its victim helpless and bleeding, but the saving gospel of Jesus Christ gives healing and forgiveness.

e. He poured in oil and wine. Both oil and wine are types of the Holy Ghost. He did not wait until he brought the man to the inn before he poured in the oil and wine. You can minister the Holy Ghost to people wherever they are!

f. He brought him to the inn. He put the man on his own beast. This meant that there was a real sacrifice involved, because he would have to walk along beside the animal. Perhaps he had to travel for several miles before they came to the inn. This showed how much he cared. He would not stop caring for the man until his needs were all met. The inn is a type of the church. It is important that we bring those we win to Christ to the church where they can find spiritual rest and receive spiritual food.

g. He turned him over to the innkeeper, but did not forget about him after that. The innkeeper is the pastor. Those you win to Jesus do need a pastor. However, do not

just drop those that you have won to Jesus. Continue to minister the love of God towards them, and help disciple them. What was the chief difference between the priest and the Levite, and the good Samaritan? The first two men had absolutely no feeling towards the wounded man, while the third took the time to really see what the man's need was, and then ministered to that need. He was filled with compassion towards him. It is an absolute necessity to have a burden and a compassion for souls if we are going to be soulwinners. *"He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed (the word of God), shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him"* (Psalm 126:6).

JESUS, THE SOULWINNER

Jesus did not just command us to be soulwinners, He gave us a living example. The greatest example of soulwinning in the Bible is when Jesus Christ witnessed to the woman of Samaria: It was no accident that Jesus went to Samaria. It was not the normal route for Jews travelling north to other parts. Jews normally avoided this area, because they were highly prejudiced against the Samaritans. Yet we read concerning Jesus, *"He must needs go through Samaria"* (John 4:4). He could have gone around it, but the great Soulwinner had a burden for a certain sinner in that region. When Jesus reached the city of Sychar, a city of Samaria, he was very weary, and sat down on the well.



This was one of the wells that Jacob had dug many hundreds of years earlier, and the Samaritans were proud of its historical significance. As Jesus sat there, a woman came to draw water. It was about noon time when the woman arrived. (The Jewish sixth hour is twelve o'clock.) Most women had long ago finished drawing the day's supply of water in order to avoid the hot sun, but this woman probably purposely waited until she would be alone. Such was her lifestyle that she was ashamed to meet other women. She was startled to find a Jew sitting on the well when she arrived. Oh well, she was used to being snubbed by her own, and now she would be snubbed by a Jew. Then Jesus spoke to her, *"Give me to drink."* How shocked she was, so that she had to inquire, *"How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans?"* Jesus immediately turned the conversation from the natural to the spiritual: *"...If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water"* (John 4:10).

It is not probable that Jesus stopped everyone who came to the well and witnessed to them. He sat there until this particular woman came whom he discerned felt a real need for something in her life. Jesus later cried out to a multitude of people, *"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink"* (John 7:37). That message was only for those who were spiritually thirsty. He evidently considered this woman to be among those who were thirsty for the things of the Spirit.

We can learn a lesson from this. If we witness to everyone that we meet, we may have little results for the time spent. It is best to pray that God will lead us to those who are thirsty. The soil of their heart is prepared for the seed of God's Word. Jesus knew that this woman formerly had five husbands, and the man she was living with at the present was not her husband. She was seeking true love, but from the wrong sources. Now "Love" was sitting on the well beside her, sharing with her the truth that would change her life.

When we witness to people, we need to somehow show a care and concern for them. We need to find out what their personal needs are, and show them that Jesus Christ is the answer to their needs. If they have family problems, let them know that Jesus

is the answer! If they have physical problems, tell them that Jesus wants to be their Healer! If they are having problems overcoming some evil habit, tell them that Jesus Christ wants to be their Saviour and Deliverer!

When the student studies the entire witness of Jesus to this woman, he will see that the woman kept trying to change the conversation, but Jesus kept coming back to her personal need. The woman was so excited about her conversation with Jesus that she forgot why she had come to the well. She left her waterpot, and went running into the city and told the men of the city: *"Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?"* (John 4:29). Her testimony caused the whole city to come unto him (verse 30). Meanwhile, the disciples were more interested in other things, than witnessing. They had gone into the city to buy food, while Jesus rested upon the well. When they returned, they saw him witnessing to the woman, but said nothing (verses 8, 27). After Jesus' conversation with the woman was concluded, the disciples begged him, *"Master, eat."* *"But he said unto them, I have meat to eat that ye know not of. Therefore said the disciples one to another, Hath any man brought him aught to eat? Jesus saith unto them, My meat is to do the will of him that sent me, and to finish his work. Say not ye, there are yet four months, and then cometh harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest"* (verses 32-35).

The disciples did not understand that after Jesus witnessed to the Samaritan woman he felt full, satisfied. How does the worth of one soul compare with earthly food, regardless of how tasty it might be? Their minds were on the things of this earth to the extent that they had no interest in what Jesus was doing. Therefore He encouraged them, *"lift up your eyes, and look on the fields."* They did not consider that it was the proper time for the harvesting of souls, but He encouraged them to realize that there was no better time than the present.

What about us? Are we waiting for some future time to begin to be a real witness for Jesus Christ? Meanwhile, souls around us are going to hell daily! We need to get our eyes off of everything, and see the ripened fields. We can be so caught up with personal problems, self-pity, etc., that we are not doing that for which we have been called.

We need a burden, because a burden will make a way for itself. A burden will cause us to pray, to weep for souls, to fast, to witness, to love, to do all that is necessary to bring the lost to Jesus Christ.

Some years ago, while traveling on missionary deputation, the Lord gave me this chorus:

Lord give me a burden for souls,
Give me a burden for souls,
Open my eyes, help me realize,
That right now it is harvest time.
Lord give me a burden for souls,
Give me a burden for souls,
Help me to care, help me to share,
Lord give me a burden, yes I need a
burden,
Please give me a burden for souls. *ds*

