

Lesson 4

Jesus, Our Faithful Brother

Sabbath Afternoon, January 15

[Christ] came to this world in human form, to live a man amongst men. He assumed the liabilities of human nature, to be proved and tried. In His humanity He was a partaker of the divine nature. In His incarnation He gained in a new sense the title of the Son of God. Said the angel to Mary, “The power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God” (Luke 1:35). While the Son of a human being, He became the Son of God in a new sense. Thus He stood in our world— the Son of God, yet allied by birth to the human race.

Christ came in human form to show the inhabitants of the unfallen worlds and of the fallen world that ample provision has been made to enable human beings to live in loyalty to their Creator.

—*Selected Messages, book 1, pp. 226, 227.*

[Christ] was tempted in all points like as man is tempted, yet He is called “that holy thing.” It is a mystery that is left unexplained to mortals that Christ could be tempted in all points like as we are, and yet be without sin. The incarnation of Christ has ever been, and will ever remain a mystery. That which is revealed, is for us and for our children, but let every human being be warned from the ground of making Christ altogether human, such an one as ourselves; for it cannot be. The exact time when humanity blended with divinity, it is not necessary for us to know. We are to keep our feet on the Rock Christ Jesus, as God revealed in humanity.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 5, pp. 1128, 1129.*

Christ laid aside His royal robe, His kingly crown, and His high command, and stepped down, down, down, to the lowest depths of humiliation. Bearing human nature, He met all the temptations of humanity and in our behalf defeated the enemy on every point.

All this He did that He might bring men power by which they might be overcomers. “All power,” He says, “is given unto Me.” Matthew 28:18. And this He gives to all who will follow Him. They may demonstrate to the world the power that there is in the religion of Christ for the conquest of self.

“Learn of Me,” Christ says, “and ye shall find rest unto your souls.” Matthew 11:29. Why do we not learn of the Saviour every day? Why do we not live in constant communion with Him, so that in our connection with one another we can speak and act kindly and courteously? Why do we not honor the Lord by manifesting tenderness and love for one another? If we speak and act in harmony with the principles of heaven, unbelievers will be drawn to Christ by their association with us.

—*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, p. 190.*

Sunday, January 16: The Brother as a Redeemer

Of Christ's relation to His people, there is a beautiful illustration in the laws given to Israel. When through poverty a Hebrew had been forced to part with his patrimony, and to sell himself as a bondservant, the duty of redeeming him and his inheritance fell to the one who was nearest of kin. See Leviticus 25:25, 47-49; Ruth 2:20. So the work of redeeming us and our inheritance, lost through sin, fell upon Him who is "near of kin" unto us. It was to redeem us that He became our kinsman. Closer than father, mother, brother, friend, or lover is the Lord our Saviour. "Fear not," He says, "for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name; thou art Mine." "Since thou wast precious in My sight, thou hast been honorable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life." Isaiah 43:1, 4.

Christ loves the heavenly beings that surround His throne; but what shall account for the great love wherewith He has loved us? We cannot understand it, but we can know it true in our own experience.

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 327.

[Christ] passed by no human being as worthless, but sought to apply the healing remedy to every soul. ... He sought to inspire with hope the roughest and most unpromising, setting before them the assurance that they might become blameless and harmless, attaining such a character as would make them manifest as the children of God.

Often He met those who had drifted under Satan's control, and who had no power to break from his snare. To such a one, discouraged, sick, tempted, fallen, Jesus would speak words of tenderest pity, words that were needed and could be understood. Others He met who were fighting a hand-to-hand battle with the adversary of souls. These He encouraged to persevere, assuring them that they would win; for angels of God were on their side and would give them the victory.

—*The Faith I Live By*, p. 98.

Meek and lowly was the life of Christ. He chose this life that He might help the human family. He did not take His place upon a throne as Commander of the whole earth. He laid aside His royal robe, He laid off His kingly crown, that He might be made one of the human family. He took not on Him the nature of angels. His work was not the priestly office after the appointments of men. It was impossible for man to understand His exalted position, unless the Holy Spirit should make it known. For our sake, He clothed His divinity with humanity, and stepped down from the royal throne. He resigned His position as Commander in the heavenly courts, and for our sakes became poor, that we through His poverty might be made rich. Thus, He hid His glory under the guise of humanity, that He might touch humanity with His divine, transforming power.

—*The Upward Look*, p. 67

Monday, January 17: Not Ashamed to Call Them Brothers

Moses was fitted to take pre-eminence among the great of the earth, to shine in the courts of its most glorious kingdom, and to sway the scepter of its power. His intellectual greatness distinguishes him above the great men of all ages. As historian, poet, philosopher, general of armies, and legislator, he stands without a peer. Yet with the world before him, he had the moral strength to refuse the flattering prospects of wealth and greatness and fame, “choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.”

Moses had been instructed in regard to the final reward to be given to the humble and obedient servants of God, and worldly gain sank to its proper insignificance in comparison. The magnificent palace of Pharaoh and the monarch’s throne were held out as an inducement to Moses; but he knew that the sinful pleasures that make men forget God were in its lordly courts. He looked beyond the gorgeous palace, beyond a monarch’s crown, to the high honors that will be bestowed on the saints of the Most High in a kingdom untainted by sin. He saw by faith an imperishable crown that the King of heaven would place on the brow of the overcomer. This faith led him to turn away from the lordly ones of earth and join the humble, poor, despised nation that had chosen to obey God rather than to serve sin.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 246.

Jesus teaches us to call His Father our Father. He is not ashamed to call us brethren. Hebrews 2:11. So ready, so eager, is the Saviour’s heart to welcome us as members of the family of God, that in the very first words we are to use in approaching God He places the assurance of our divine relationship, “Our Father.”

Here is the announcement of that wonderful truth, so full of encouragement and comfort, that God loves us as He loves His Son. This is what Jesus said in His last prayer for His disciples, Thou “hast loved them, as Thou hast loved Me.” John 17:23.

The world that Satan has claimed and has ruled over with cruel tyranny, the Son of God has, by one vast achievement, encircled in His love and connected again with the throne of Jehovah. Cherubim and seraphim, and the unnumbered hosts of all the unfallen worlds, sang anthems of praise to God and the Lamb when this triumph was assured. They rejoiced that the way of salvation had been opened to the fallen race and that the earth would be redeemed from the curse of sin. How much more should those rejoice who are the objects of such amazing love!

—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 103, 104.

Tuesday, January 18: Flesh and Blood Like Us

Was the human nature of the Son of Mary changed into the divine nature of the Son of God? No; the two natures were mysteriously blended in one person—the man Christ Jesus. In Him dwelt all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. When Christ was crucified, it was His human nature that died. Deity did not sink and die; that would have been impossible. Christ, the sinless One, will save every son and daughter of Adam who accepts the salvation proffered them, consenting to become the children of God. The Saviour has purchased the fallen race with His own blood.

This is a great mystery, a mystery that will not be fully, completely understood in all its greatness until the translation of the redeemed shall take place. Then the power and greatness and efficacy of the gift of God to man will be understood. But the enemy is determined that this gift shall be so mystified that it will become as nothingness.

—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 5, p. 1113.

The mysteries of redemption, embracing Christ's divine-human character, His incarnation, His atonement for sin, could employ the pens and the highest mental powers of the wisest men from now until Christ shall be revealed in the clouds of heaven in power and great glory. But though these men should seek with all their power to give a representation of Christ and His work, the representation would fall far short of the reality. ...

The theme of redemption will employ the minds and tongues of the redeemed through everlasting ages. The reflection of the glory of God will shine forth forever and ever from the Saviour's face.

—*Lift Him Up*, p. 76.

Christ humbled Himself to stand at the head of humanity, to meet the temptations and endure the trials that humanity must meet and endure. He must know what humanity has to meet from the fallen foe, that He might know how to succor those who are tempted. ...

We have a character to maintain, but it is the character of Christ... May the Lord help us to die to self, and be born again, that Christ may live in us, a living, active principle, a power that will keep us holy.

—*My Life Today*, p. 335.

Our souls are to be surrounded by the atmosphere of heaven. Men and women are to watch themselves; they are to be constantly on guard, allowing no word or act that would cause their good to be evil spoken of. He who professes to be a follower of Christ is to watch himself, keeping himself pure and undefiled in thought, word, and deed. His influence upon others is to be uplifting. His life is to reflect the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

There is need that much time be spent in secret prayer, in close communion with God. Thus only can victories be won. Eternal vigilance is the price of safety.

—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 257, 258.

Wednesday, January 19: Perfected Through Sufferings

The Son of God came voluntarily to accomplish the work of atonement. ... Christ alone was free from the claims of the law to undertake the redemption of the sinful race. He had power to lay down His life and to take it up again. ...

... This glorious Being loved the poor sinner and took upon Himself the form of a servant, that He might suffer and die in man's behalf. Jesus might have remained at His Father's right hand, wearing His kingly crown and royal robes. But He chose to exchange all the riches, honor, and glory of heaven for the poverty of humanity, and His station of high command for the horrors of Gethsemane and the humiliation and agony of Calvary. He became a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, that by His baptism of suffering and blood He might purify and redeem a guilty world. "Lo, I come," was the joyful assent, "to do Thy will, O My God."

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, pp. 120, 121.

Seek Jesus with all lowliness and meekness. Do not try to draw the attention of the people to yourselves. Let them lose sight of the instrument, while you exalt Jesus. Talk of Jesus; lose self in Jesus. There is too much bustle and stir about our religion, while Calvary and the cross are forgotten.

We are in the greatest peril when we receive praise of one another, when we enter into a confederacy to exalt one another. The great burden of the Pharisees was to secure the praise of men; and Christ told them that that was all the reward they would ever receive. Let us take up our appointed work and do it for Christ; if we suffer privation, let it be for His sake. Our divine Lord was made perfect through suffering. Oh, when shall we see men laboring as He labored!

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, p. 133.

How can we ever be in doubt and uncertainty, and feel that we are orphans? It was in behalf of those who had transgressed the law that Jesus took upon Him human nature; He became like unto us, that we might have everlasting peace and assurance. We have an Advocate in the heavens, and whoever accepts Him as a personal Saviour is not left an orphan to bear the burden of his own sins.

"Beloved, now are we the sons of God." "And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together." "It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." 1 John 3:2; Romans 8:17.

The very first step in approaching God is to know and believe the love that He has to us (1 John 4:16); for it is through the drawing of His love that we are led to come to Him.

—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 104, 105.

Thursday, January 20: The Brother as a Model

Exemplify in the life the lessons given by Christ in His Sermon on the Mount. This will make a deeper impression and have a more lasting influence upon minds than will the sermons given from the pulpit. You may not be able to speak eloquently to those you desire to help; but if you speak modestly, hiding self in Christ, your words will be dictated by the Holy Spirit; and Christ, with whom you are co-operating, will impress the heart.

Exercise that faith which works by love and sanctifies the soul. Let none now make the Lord ashamed of them because of their unbelief. ... Looking unto Jesus, not only as our Example, but as the Author and Finisher of our faith, let us go forward, having confidence that He will supply strength for every duty.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 472.

By acquaintance and association with Christ we may become like Him, the one faultless Example.

Communion with Christ—how unspeakably precious! Such communion it is our privilege to enjoy if we will seek it, if we will make any sacrifice to secure it. When the early disciples heard the words of Christ, they felt their need of Him. They sought, they found, they followed Him. They were with Him in the house, at the table, in the closet, in the field. They were with Him as pupils with a teacher, daily receiving from His lips lessons of holy truth. They looked to Him as servants to their master, to learn their duty. They served Him cheerfully, gladly. They followed Him, as soldiers follow their commander, fighting the good fight of faith. “And they that are with Him are called, and chosen, and faithful.” ...

... This conformity to Jesus will not be unobserved by the world. It is a subject of notice and comment. The Christian may not be conscious of the great change; for the more closely he resembles Christ in character the more humble will be his opinion of himself; but it will be seen and felt by all around him. Those who have had the deepest experience in the things of God are the farthest removed from pride or self-exaltation. They have the humblest thoughts of self, and the most exalted conceptions of the glory and excellence of Christ. They feel that the lowest place in His service is too honorable for them.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 5, pp. 222, 223.

Christ came to break the shackles of sin-slavery from the soul. “If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.” “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus” sets us “free from the law of sin and death.” Romans 8:2.

In the work of redemption there is no compulsion. No external force is employed. Under the influence of the Spirit of God, man is left free to choose whom he will serve.

—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 466.

Friday, January 21: For Further Reading

In Heavenly Places, “Wonderful Condescension!” p. 40;

Steps to Christ, “Consecration,” pp. 43, 44.