

Lesson 9

A Life of Praise

Sabbath Afternoon, August 20

Take the word of Christ as your assurance. Has He not invited you to come unto Him? Never allow yourself to talk in a hopeless, discouraged way. If you do you will lose much. By looking at appearances and complaining when difficulties and pressure come, you give evidence of [an] enfeebled faith. Talk and act as if your faith was invincible. The Lord is rich in resources; He owns the world. Look heavenward in faith. Look to Him who has light and power and efficiency.

There is in genuine faith a buoyancy, a steadfastness of principle, and a fixedness of purpose that neither time nor toil can weaken. “Even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall: but they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint.” Isaiah 40:30, 31.

—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 146, 147.

Often the Christian life is beset with dangers, and duty seems hard to perform. The imagination pictures impending ruin before, and bondage and death behind. Yet the voice of God speaks clearly, Go forward. Let us obey the command, even though our sight cannot penetrate the darkness. The obstacles that hinder our progress will never disappear before a halting, doubting spirit. Those who defer obedience till every uncertainty disappears, and there remains no risk of failure or defeat, will never obey. Faith looks beyond the difficulties, and lays hold of the unseen, even Omnipotence, therefore it cannot be baffled. Faith is the clasping of the hand of Christ in every emergency.

—*Gospel Workers*, p. 262.

The Lord desires us to make mention of His goodness and tell of His power. He is honored by the expression of praise and thanksgiving. He says, “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me.” Psalm 50:23. The people of Israel, as they journeyed through the wilderness, praised God in sacred song. The commandments and promises of the Lord were set to music, and all along the journey these were sung by the pilgrim travelers. And in Canaan as they met at their sacred feasts God’s wonderful works were to be recounted, and grateful thanksgiving was to be offered to His name. God desired that the whole life of His people should be a life of praise. Thus His way was to be made “known upon earth,” His “saving health among all nations.” Psalm 67:2.

So it should be now. . . .

The Lord desires us to . . . serve Him in newness of life, with gladness every day. He longs to see gratitude welling up in our hearts because our names are written in the Lamb’s book of life, because we may cast all our care upon Him who cares for us. He bids us rejoice because we are the heritage of the Lord, because the righteousness of Christ is the white robe of His saints, because we have the blessed hope of the soon coming of our Saviour.

—*Christ’s Object Lessons*, pp. 298, 299.

Sunday, August 21

Framework for Praise

“In everything give thanks” (1 Thessalonians 5:18) for the keeping power of God through Jesus Christ. . . . At the moment when you are offering your prayer for help you may not feel all the joy and blessing that you would like to feel, but if you believe that Christ will hear and answer your petition, the peace of Christ will come. . . .

If you take hold of the strength of the mighty Helper, and not reason with your adversary and never complain of God, His promises will be verified. The experience that you gain today in trusting Him will help you in meeting the difficulties of tomorrow. Each day you are to come, trusting as a little child drawing nearer to Jesus and heaven. In meeting with unwavering trust in God the daily trials and difficulties, you will again and again test the promises of Heaven, and each time you will learn a lesson of faith. Thus you will gain strength to resist temptation, and when the harder trials come, you will be able to endure.

—*Our High Calling*, p. 326.

“Let your moderation be known unto all men. The Lord is at hand. Be careful for nothing”—that is, be not overanxious—“but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” What a privilege is this given to everyone to trust in Jesus and tell Him everything! “And the peace of God, which passeth all understanding, shall keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4–7).

Have faith in God. However stormy may be the times, looking unto Jesus who is the author and the finisher of your faith, you will be complete in Him. Abide in the old paths, whoever may turn back. Be rooted and grounded and built up in the most holy faith, a living epistle known and read of all men.

—*That I May Know Him*, p. 212.

[Late in 1891, Ellen G. White . . . journeyed to Australia to assist in strengthening the newly established work there. . . . Soon after her arrival she was overtaken by an extended and painful illness. The following items record her fortitude in this affliction.—Compilers.] . . .

. . . In the long weary hours of the night, when sleep has been out of the question, I have devoted much time to prayer; and when every nerve seemed to be shrieking with pain, when if I considered myself, it seemed I should go frantic, the peace of Christ has come into my heart in such measure that I have been filled with gratitude and thanksgiving. I know that Jesus loves me, and I love Jesus. Some nights I have slept three hours, a few nights four hours, and much of the time only two, and yet in these long Australian nights, in the darkness, all seems light about me, and I enjoy sweet communion with God.

—*Selected Messages*, book 2, pp. 233, 234.

Monday, August 22

Praying Down Walls

All was silent, save the measured tread of many feet, and the occasional sound of the trumpet, breaking the stillness of the early morning. The massive walls of solid stone seemed to defy the siege of men. . . . As the seventh circuit was completed, the long procession paused, the trumpets, which for an interval had been silent, now broke forth in a blast that shook the very earth. The walls of solid stone, with their massive towers and battlements, tottered and heaved from their foundations, and with a crash fell in ruin to the earth. The inhabitants of Jericho were paralyzed with terror, and the hosts of Israel marched in and took possession of the city.

The Israelites had not gained the victory by their own power; the conquest had been wholly the Lord's; and as the first fruits of the land, the city, with all that it contained, was to be devoted as a sacrifice to God. It was to be impressed upon Israel that in the conquest of Canaan they were not to fight for themselves, but simply as instruments to execute the will of God; not to seek for riches or self-exaltation, but the glory of Jehovah their King.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 491.

“By faith the walls of Jericho fell down.” Hebrews 11:30. . . . [The] plan of continuing this ceremony through so long a time prior to the final overthrow of the walls afforded opportunity for the development of faith among the Israelites. It was to be impressed upon their minds that their strength was not in the wisdom of man, nor in his might, but only in the God of their salvation. They were thus to become accustomed to relying wholly upon their divine Leader.

God will do great things for those who trust in Him. The reason why His professed people have no greater strength is that they trust so much to their own wisdom, and do not give the Lord an opportunity to reveal His power in their behalf. He will help His believing children in every emergency if they will place their entire confidence in Him and faithfully obey Him.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 493.

This [sixty-sixth] psalm and portions of the sixty-eighth and seventy-second psalms were often sung by Christ. Thus in the most simple and unassuming way He taught others.

. . . Would it not be well to cultivate gratitude, and to offer grateful songs of thanksgiving to God? As Christians we ought to praise God more than we do. We ought to bring more of the brightness of His love into our lives. As by faith we look to Jesus His joy and peace are reflected from the countenances. How earnestly we should seek so to relate ourselves to God that our faces may reflect the sunshine of His love! When our own souls are vivified by the Holy Spirit, we shall exert an uplifting influence upon others who know not the joy of Christ's presence.

—*Ellen G. White Comments, in The SDA Bible Commentary, vol. 3, p. 1148.*

Tuesday, August 23

The Life of Praise

The Lord is good, and greatly to be praised. Let us learn to praise Him with our voices, and to realize that at all times we are in excellent companionship—even with God and with His Son, Jesus. We are a spectacle to the unfallen worlds, to angels, and to our fellow men. A realization of this will lead us to go forth as the Lord may direct, with a firm, well-garrisoned heart.

—*This Day With God*, p. 238.

“O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth! . . . When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?” “All thy works praise thee, O Lord; and thy saints shall bless thee” (Psalm 8:1, 3, 4; Psalm 145:10).

. . . The goodness, wisdom, and power of God are manifest everywhere. In mountains, rocks, hills, and valleys, I see the works of divine power. I can never be lonely while viewing the grand scenery of nature. On the journey over the plains and mountains I have had feelings of the deepest reverence and awe while viewing the frowning precipice and snowcapped mountain heights.

The mountains, hills, and valleys should be to us as schools in which to study the character of God in His created works. The works of God which we may view in the ever-varying scenes—in mountains, hills, and valleys, in trees, shrubs, and flowers, in every leaf, every spire of grass—should teach us lessons of the skill and love of God and of His infinite power.

Those who study nature cannot be lonesome. They love the quiet hours of meditation, for they feel that they are brought in close communion with God while tracing His power in His created works.

—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 9.

We are not only to contemplate the glory of Christ, but also to speak of His excellences. Isaiah not only beheld the glory of Christ, but he also spoke of Him. While David mused, the fire burned; then spoke he with his tongue. While he mused upon the wondrous love of God he could not but speak of that which he saw and felt. Who can by faith behold the wonderful plan of redemption, the glory of the only-begotten Son of God, and not speak of it? Who can contemplate the unfathomable love that was manifested upon the cross of Calvary in the death of Christ, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life—who can behold this and have no words with which to extol the Saviour’s glory?

“In His temple doth everyone speak of His glory.” Psalm 29:9. The sweet singer of Israel praised Him upon the harp, saying, “I will speak of the glorious honor of Thy majesty, and of Thy wondrous works. And men shall speak of the might of Thy terrible acts: and I will declare Thy greatness.” Psalm 145:5, 6.

—*Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 43, 44.

Wednesday, August 24

A Witness Who Convicts

The keeper of the jail had heard with amazement the prayers and songs of the imprisoned apostles. When they were led in, he had seen their swollen and bleeding wounds, and had himself caused their feet to be fastened in the stocks. He had expected to hear from them bitter groans and imprecations, but he heard instead songs of joy and praise. With these sounds in his ears the jailer had fallen into a sleep from which he was awakened by the earthquake and the shaking of the prison walls. ...

The severity with which the jailer had treated the apostles had not aroused their resentment. Paul and Silas had the spirit of Christ, not the spirit of revenge. Their hearts, filled with the love of the Saviour, had no room for malice against their persecutors. . . .

. . . A sanctifying influence diffused itself among the inmates of the prison, and the minds of all were opened to listen to the truths spoken by the apostles. They were convinced that the God whom these men served had miraculously released them from bondage.

—*The Acts of the Apostles*, pp. 215–217.

The apostles counted not their lives dear unto themselves, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ. Paul and Silas suffered the loss of all things. They suffered scourging, and were in no gentle manner thrown upon the cold floor of a dungeon in a most painful position, their feet elevated and fastened in the stocks. Did repinings and complaints then reach the ear of the jailer? Oh, no! From the inner prison, voices broke the silence of midnight with songs of joy and praise to God. These disciples were cheered by a deep and earnest love for the cause of their Redeemer, for which they suffered.

As the truth of God fills our hearts, absorbs our affections, and controls our lives, we also will count it joy to suffer for the truth's sake. No prison walls, no martyr's stake, can then daunt or hinder us in the great work.

— *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 3, pp. 406, 407.

Every soul is surrounded by an atmosphere of its own—an atmosphere, it may be, charged with the life-giving power of faith, courage, and hope, and sweet with the fragrance of love. . . . By the atmosphere surrounding us, every person with whom we come in contact is consciously or unconsciously affected. . . .

. . . The silent witness of a true, unselfish, godly life carries an almost irresistible influence. By revealing in our own life the character of Christ we co-operate with Him in the work of saving souls. It is only by revealing in our life His character that we can co-operate with Him. And the wider the sphere of our influence, the more good we may do. When those who profess to serve God follow Christ's example, practicing the principles of the law in their daily life; when every act bears witness that they love God supremely and their neighbor as themselves, then will the church have power to move the world.

—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 339, 340.

Thursday, August 25

A Weapon That Conquers

With confidence Jehoshaphat could say to the Lord, “Our eyes are upon Thee.” For years he had taught the people to trust in the One who in past ages had so often interposed to save His chosen ones from utter destruction; and now, when the kingdom was in peril, Jehoshaphat did not stand alone; “all Judah stood before the Lord, with their little ones, their wives, and their children.” Unitedly they fasted and prayed; unitedly they besought the Lord to put their enemies to confusion, that the name of Jehovah might be glorified. . . .

God was the strength of Judah in this crisis, and He is the strength of His people today. We are not to trust in princes, or to set men in the place of God. We are to remember that human beings are fallible and erring, and that He who has all power is our strong tower of defense. In every emergency we are to feel that the battle is His. His resources are limitless, and apparent impossibilities will make the victory all the greater.

—Conflict and Courage, p. 217.

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and He will never betray your trust. If you will ask help of God you need not ask in vain. In order to encourage us to have confidence and trust He comes near us by His holy Word and Spirit, and seeks in a thousand ways to win our confidence. But in nothing does He take more delight than in receiving the weak who come to Him for strength. If we will find heart and voice to pray, He will be sure to find an ear to hear and an arm to save.

There is not a single instance in which God has hidden His face from the supplication of His people. When every other resource failed He was a present help in every emergency. God bless you, poor, stricken, wounded soul. Cling to His hand; hold fast. He will take you, your children, and all your griefs and burdens if you will only cast them all upon Him.

—Letter 42, July 4, 1875.

If the loving-kindness of God called forth more thanksgiving and praise, we would have far more power in prayer. We would abound more and more in the love of God and have more bestowed to praise Him for.

You who complain that God does not hear your prayers, change your present order and mingle praise with your petitions. When you consider His goodness and mercies you will find that He will consider your wants. . . .

Our God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, declares: “Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me.” All heaven unite in praising God. Let us learn the song of the angels now, that we may sing it when we join their shining ranks. Let us say with the psalmist: “While I live will I praise the Lord: I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.” “Let the people praise Thee, O God; let all the people praise Thee.”

—Testimonies for the Church, vol. 5, pp. 317–319.

Friday, August 26
For Further Reading

Sons and Daughters of God, “Be Strong, for God Is With Us,” p. 202;
Patriarchs and Prophets, “The Fall of Jericho,” pp. 487–498.