

Lesson 11

Waiting in the Crucible

Sabbath Afternoon, September 3

Christ presented to men that which was entirely contrary to the representations of the enemy in regard to the character of God, and sought to impress upon men the love of the Father, who “so loved the world, that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.” John 3:16. He urged upon men the necessity of prayer, repentance, confession, and the abandonment of sin. He taught them honesty, forbearance, mercy, and compassion, enjoining upon them to love not only those who loved them, but those who hated them and treated them despitefully. In all this He was revealing to them the character of the Father, who is long-suffering, merciful, and gracious, slow to anger, and full of goodness and truth.

—*Counsels to Parents, Teachers, and Students*, pp. 29, 30.

The lives of His people are to reveal love, meekness, long-suffering. Long-suffering bears something, yea, many things, without seeking to be avenged by word or act.

“Long-suffering” is patience with offence; long endurance. If you are long-suffering, you will not impart to others your supposed knowledge of your brother’s mistakes and errors. You will seek to help and save him, because he has been purchased with the blood of Christ. “Tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.” “Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, considering thyself, lest thou also be tempted.” To be long-suffering is not to be gloomy and sad, sour and hardhearted; it is to be exactly the opposite.

—*My Life Today*, p. 52.

I saw that those who profess the truth should hold the standard high, and induce others to come up to it. I saw that some would have to walk the straight path alone. Their companions and children will not walk the self-denying pathway with them. Patience and forbearance should ever characterize the lives of those lone pilgrims, following the example of their blessed Master. They will have many trials to endure, but they have a hope that makes the soul strong, that bears them up above the trials of earth, that elevates them above scorn, derision and reproach. Those who possess a hope like this should never indulge a harsh, unkind spirit. This will only injure their own souls, and drive their friends farther from the truth. Treat them tenderly. Give them no occasion to reproach the cause of Christ; but never yield the truth to please any one. Be decided, be fixed, be established, be not of a doubtful mind.

—*Spiritual Gifts*, vol. 2, p. 266.

Sunday, September 4

The God of Patience

We may walk in the enjoyment of the truth. It need not be to us a yoke of bondage, but a consolation, a message to us of glad tidings of great joy, animating our hearts and causing us to make melody in our hearts unto God. Through patience and comfort of the Scriptures we have hope. The Christian hope is not gloomy, comfortless. Oh, no, no. It does not shut us up in a prison of doubts and fears. The truth makes free those who love and are sanctified through it. They walk in the glorious liberty of the sons of God.

We who claim to believe the truth should reveal its fruits in our words and character. We are to be far advanced in a knowledge of Jesus Christ, in the reception of His love for God and for our neighbor, in order to have the sunlight of heaven shining in our daily life. Truth must reach down to the deepest recesses of the soul, and cleanse away everything unlike the spirit of Christ, and the vacuum be supplied by the attributes of His character who was pure and holy and undefiled, that all the springs of the heart may be as flowers, fragrant with perfume, a sweet-smelling savor, a savor of life unto life.

—*Our High Calling*, p. 33.

When we are encompassed with doubt, perplexed by circumstances, or afflicted by poverty or distress, Satan seeks to shake our confidence in Jehovah. It is then that he arrays before us our mistakes and tempts us to distrust God, to question His love. He hopes to discourage the soul and break our hold on God.

. . . But God understands, and He still pities and loves. He reads the motives and the purposes of the heart. To wait patiently, to trust when everything looks dark, is the lesson that the leaders in God's work need to learn. Heaven will not fail them in their day of adversity. Nothing is apparently more helpless, yet really more invincible, than the soul that feels its nothingness and relies wholly on God.

—*Prophets and Kings*, pp. 174, 175.

The lessons that God sends will always, if well learned, bring help in due time. Put your trust in God. Pray much, and believe. Trusting, hoping, believing, holding fast the hand of Infinite Power, you will be more than conquerors.

True workers walk and work by faith. Sometimes they grow weary with watching the slow advance of the work when the battle wages strong between the powers of good and evil. But if they refuse to fail or be discouraged they will see the clouds breaking away and the promise of deliverance fulfilling. Through the mist with which Satan has surrounded them, they will see the shining of the bright beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

Work in faith, and leave results with God. Pray in faith, and the mystery of His providence will bring its answer. At times it may seem that you cannot succeed. But work and believe, putting into your efforts faith, hope, and courage. After doing what you can, wait for the Lord, declaring His faithfulness, and He will bring His word to pass. Wait, not in fretful anxiety, but in undaunted faith and unshaken trust.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, p. 245.

Monday, September 5

In God's Time

I cannot read the purpose of God in my affliction, but He knows what is best, and I will commit my soul, body, and spirit to Him as unto my faithful Creator. “For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able to keep that which I have committed unto Him against that day” (2 Timothy 1:12). If we educated and trained our souls to have more faith, more love, greater patience, and a more perfect trust in our heavenly Father, I know we would have more peace and happiness day by day as we pass through the conflicts of this life.

The Lord is not pleased to have us fret and worry ourselves out of the arms of Jesus. More is needed of the quiet waiting and watching combined. We think unless we have feeling that we are not in the right track, and we keep looking within for some sign befitting the occasion; but the reckoning is not of feeling but of faith.

—*Selected Messages, book 2, p. 242.*

We need not expect all sunshine in this world. Clouds and storms will cluster about us, and we must be prepared to keep our eyes directed where we saw the light last. Its rays may be hidden but they still live, still shine beyond the cloud. It is our work to wait, to watch, to pray, and to believe. We shall prize the light of the sun more highly after the clouds disappear. We shall see the salvation of God if we trust in God in the darkness as well as in the light.

All trials, all afflictions, all peace, all safety, health, hope, life, and success are in God's hands, and He can control them all for the good of His children. It is our privilege to be suppliants, to ask anything and everything of God, submitting our request in submission to His wise purposes and infinite will.

—*Our High Calling, p. 318.*

God designs that His people shall fix their eyes heavenward, looking for the glorious appearing of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. While the attention of worldlings is turned to various enterprises, ours should be to the heavens; our faith should reach further and further 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? . . .” 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.”

—*Testimonies for the Church, vol. 2, pp. 194, 195.*

Tuesday, September 6

David: An Object Lesson in Waiting

Hidden by the deep shadows of the hills, David and his attendant entered the encampment of the enemy. As they sought to ascertain the exact number of their foes, they came upon Saul sleeping, his spear stuck in the ground, and a cruse of water at his head. Beside him lay Abner, his chief commander, and all around them were the soldiers, locked in slumber. Abishai raised his spear, and said to David, “God hath delivered thine enemy into thine hand this day: now therefore let me smite him, I pray thee. . . .” He waited for the word of permission; but there fell upon his ear the whispered words: “Destroy him not: for who can stretch forth his hand against the Lord’s anointed, and be guiltless? . . . As the Lord liveth, the Lord shall smite him; or his day shall come to die; or he shall descend into battle, and perish. The Lord forbid that I should stretch forth mine hand against the Lord’s anointed.” . . .

The second instance of David’s respect for his sovereign’s life made a still deeper impression upon the mind of Saul and brought from him a more humble acknowledgment of his fault. He was astonished and subdued at the manifestation of such kindness. In parting from David, Saul exclaimed, “Blessed be thou, my son David: thou shalt both do great things, and also shalt still prevail.” But the son of Jesse had no hope that the king would long continue in this frame of mind.

—*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 668–672.

It is important to believe God’s word and act upon it promptly, while His angels are waiting to work for us. Evil angels are ready to contest every step of advance. And when God’s providence bids His children go forward, when He is ready to do great things for them, Satan tempts them to displease the Lord by hesitation and delay; he seeks to kindle a spirit of strife or to arouse murmuring or unbelief, and thus deprive them of the blessings that God desired to bestow. God’s servants should be minutemen, ever ready to move as fast as His providence opens the way. And delay on their part gives time for Satan to work to defeat them.

— *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 423.

The Lord does not always choose for His work men of the greatest talents, but He selects those whom He can best use. Individuals who might do good service for God, may for a time be left in obscurity, apparently unnoticed and unemployed by their Master. But if they faithfully perform the duties of their humble position, cherishing a willingness to labor and to sacrifice for Him, He will in His own time entrust them with greater responsibilities.

Before honor is humility. The Lord can use most effectually those who are most sensible of their own unworthiness and inefficiency. He will teach them to exercise the courage of faith. He will make them strong by uniting their weakness to His might, wise by connecting their ignorance with His wisdom.

—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 2, p. 1003.

Wednesday, September 7

Elijah: The Problem of Rushing

God met His tried servant with the inquiry, “What doest thou here, Elijah?” I sent you to the brook Cherith and afterward to the widow of Sarepta. I commissioned you to return to Israel and to stand before the idolatrous priests on Carmel, and I girded you with strength to guide the chariot of the king to the gate of Jezreel. But who sent you on this hasty flight into the wilderness? What errand have you here? . . .

Much depends on the unceasing activity of those who are true and loyal, and for this reason Satan puts forth every possible effort to thwart the divine purpose to be wrought out through the obedient. He causes some to lose sight of their high and holy mission, and to become satisfied with the pleasures of this life. . . . Others he causes to flee in discouragement from duty, because of opposition or persecution. . . . To every child of God whose voice the enemy of souls has succeeded in silencing, the question is addressed, “What doest thou here?” I commissioned you to go into all the world and preach the gospel, to prepare a people for the day of God. Why are you here?

—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 214.

Remember that prayer is the source of your strength. A worker cannot gain success while he hurries through his prayers and rushes away to look after something that he fears may be neglected or forgotten. He gives only a few hurried thoughts to God; he does not take time to think, to pray, to wait upon the Lord for a renewal of physical and spiritual strength. He soon becomes weary. He does not feel the uplifting, inspiring influence of God’s Spirit. He is not quickened by fresh life. His jaded frame and tired brain are not soothed by personal contact with Christ.

. . . There are those who work all day and far into the night to do what seems to them must be done. The Lord looks pityingly upon these weary, heavy-laden burden bearers and says to them: “Come unto Me, . . . and I will give you rest.” Matthew 11:28.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, pp. 243, 244.

When men are as devoted as Elijah was and possess the faith that he had, God will reveal Himself as He did then. When men plead with the Lord as did Jacob, the results that were seen then will again be seen. Power will come from God in answer to the prayer of faith.

Because the life of Jesus was a life of constant trust, sustained by continual communion, His service for heaven was without failure or faltering. . . . Christ knew that He must strengthen His humanity by prayer. In order to be a blessing to men, He must commune with God, from Him obtaining energy, perseverance, steadfastness.

—*Gospel Workers*, pp. 255, 256.

Thursday, September 8

Learning to Take Delight in the Lord

The psalmist says, “Trust in the Lord, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.” Psalm 37:3. “Trust in the Lord.” Each day has its burdens, its cares and perplexities; and when we meet how ready we are to talk of our difficulties and trials. So many borrowed troubles intrude, so many fears are indulged, such a weight of anxiety is expressed, that one might suppose we had no pitying, loving Saviour ready to hear all our requests and to be to us a present help in every time of need.

Some are always fearing, and borrowing trouble. Every day they are surrounded with the tokens of God’s love; every day they are enjoying the bounties of His providence; but they overlook these present blessings. Their minds are continually dwelling upon something disagreeable which they fear may come; or some difficulty may really exist which, though small, blinds their eyes to the many things that demand gratitude.

—*Steps to Christ*, pp. 121, 122.

In every trial we have strong consolation. Is not our Saviour touched with the feeling of our infirmities? Has He not been tempted in all points like as we are? And has He not invited us to take every trial and perplexity to Him? Then let us not make ourselves miserable over tomorrow’s burdens. Bravely and cheerfully carry the burdens of today. Today’s trust and faith we must have. But we are not asked to live more than a day at a time. He who gives strength for today will give strength for tomorrow. . . .

Nothing wounds the soul like the sharp darts of unbelief. When trial comes, as it will, do not worry or complain. Silence in the soul makes more distinct the voice of God. “Then are they glad because they be quiet” (Psalm 107:30). Remember that underneath you are the everlasting arms. “Rest in the Lord, and wait patiently for him” (Psalm 37:7). He is guiding you into a harbor of gracious experience.

—*In Heavenly Places*, p. 269.

We need to appreciate more fully the meaning of the words: “I sat down under His shadow with great delight.” Song of Solomon 2:3. These words do not bring to our minds the picture of hasty transit, but of quiet rest. . . .

Let us turn from the dusty, heated thoroughfares of life to rest in the shadow of Christ’s love. Here we gain strength for conflict. Here we learn how to lessen toil and worry, and how to speak and sing to the praise of God. Let the weary and the heavy-laden learn from Christ the lesson of quiet trust. They must sit under His shadow if they would be possessors of His peace and rest.

—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 7, pp. 69, 70.

Friday, September 9

For Further Reading

In Heavenly Places, “Graces to Cherish,” p. 244;

Testimonies for the Church, “Christian Forbearance,” vol. 5, pp. 331–336.