

## Lesson 6

### Laying Up Treasure in Heaven

#### Sabbath Afternoon, February 4

[The] work of transferring your possessions to the world above is worthy of all your best energies. It is of the highest importance, and involves your eternal interests. That which you bestow in the cause of God is not lost. All that is given for the salvation of souls and the glory of God is invested in the most successful enterprise in this life and in the life to come. Your talents of gold and silver, if given to the exchangers, are gaining continually in value, which will be registered to your account in the kingdom of heaven. You are to be the recipients of the eternal wealth that has increased in the hands of the exchangers. In giving to the work of God, you are laying up for yourselves treasures in heaven. All that you lay up above is secure from disaster and loss and is increasing to an eternal, and enduring, substance.—“The Treasure and the Heart,” Review and Herald, January 24, 1888.

Every Christian is a steward of God, entrusted with His goods. Let all who claim to be Christians deal wisely with the Lord’s goods. God is making an inventory of the money lent you and the spiritual advantages given you. Will you as stewards make careful inventory? Will you examine whether you are using economically all that God has placed in your charge, or whether you are wasting the Lord’s goods by selfish outlay in order to make a display? Would that all that is spent needlessly were laid up as treasure in heaven! . . .

God will encourage His faithful stewards who are ready to put all their energies and God-given endowments to the very best use. As all learn the lesson of faithfully rendering to God what is His due, He through His providence will enable some to bring princely offerings. He will enable others to make smaller offerings, and the small and the large gifts are acceptable to Him if given with an eye single to His glory.—That I May Know Him, p. 220.

What can be compared with the loss of a human soul? It is a question which every soul must determine for himself—whether to gain the treasures of eternal life or to lose all because of his neglect to make God and His righteousness his first and only business. Jesus, the world’s Redeemer, . . . looks with grief upon the large number of those who profess to be Christians who are not serving Him but themselves. They scarcely think of eternal realities, notwithstanding He calls their attention to the rich reward awaiting the faithful who will serve Him with their undivided affections. He brings eternal realities within the range of their vision. He bids them to count the cost now of being an obedient and faithful follower of Christ, and says, “Ye cannot serve God and mammon” (Matthew 6:24).—Manuscript 45, 1890.

Where their treasure is, there will their heart be also. Those who have the Lord’s talents of means are placed under a heavy responsibility. They are not to invest money merely for the gratification of selfish desires, for whatever is spent in this way is just that much kept from the Lord’s treasury. Through the sovereign goodness of God, the Holy Spirit works through the human agent, and causes him to make smaller or larger investments in the cause of God, to make them redound to the glory of God.—Reflecting Christ, p. 266.

## **Sunday, February 5: Noah Found Grace**

Noah and his family were not alone in fearing and obeying God. But Noah was the most pious and holy of any upon the earth, and was the one whose life God preserved to carry out His will in building the ark and warning the world of its coming doom. Methuselah, the grandfather of Noah, lived until the very year of the Flood; and there were others who believed the preaching of Noah, and aided him in building the ark, who died before the flood of waters came upon the earth. Noah, by his preaching and example in building the ark, condemned the world.

God gave all who chose an opportunity to repent and turn to Him. But they believed not the preaching of Noah. They mocked at his warnings and ridiculed the building of that immense vessel on dry land. Noah's efforts to reform his fellow men did not succeed. But for more than one hundred years he persevered in his efforts to turn men to repentance and to God. Every blow struck upon the ark was preaching to the people. Noah directed, he preached, he worked, while the people looked on in amazement and regarded him as a fanatic.—The Story of Redemption, p. 63.

Geologists claim to find evidence from the earth itself that it is very much older than the Mosaic record teaches. Bones of men and animals, as well as instruments of warfare, petrified trees, et cetera, much larger than any that now exist, or that have existed for thousands of years, have been discovered, and from this it is inferred that the earth was populated long before the time brought to view in the record of creation, and by a race of beings vastly superior in size to any men now living. Such reasoning has led many professed Bible believers to adopt the position that the days of creation were vast, indefinite periods.

But apart from Bible history, geology can prove nothing. Those who reason so confidently upon its discoveries have no adequate conception of the size of men, animals, and trees before the Flood, or of the great changes which then took place. Relics found in the earth do give evidence of conditions differing in many respects from the present, but the time when these conditions existed can be learned only from the Inspired Record. In the history of the Flood, inspiration has explained that which geology alone could never fathom. In the days of Noah, men, animals, and trees, many times larger than now exist, were buried, and thus preserved as an evidence to later generations that the antediluvians perished by a flood. God designed that the discovery of these things should establish faith in inspired history; but men, with their vain reasoning, fall into the same error as did the people before the Flood—the things which God gave them as a benefit, they turn into a curse by making a wrong use of them.—Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 112.

The voice of duty is the voice of God—an inborn, heaven-sent guide. Whether it be pleasing or unpleasing, we are to do the duty that lies directly in our pathway. If the Lord would have us bear a message to Nineveh, it will not be pleasing to Him for us to go to Joppa or Capernaum. God has reasons for sending us to the place to which our feet are directed.—In Heavenly Places, p. 226.

## **Monday, February 6: Abram, the Father of the Faithful**

When called to become a sower of the seed of truth, Abraham was bidden, "Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will show thee." Genesis 12:1. "And he went out, not knowing whither he went." Hebrews 11:8. So to the apostle Paul, praying in the temple at Jerusalem, came the message from God, "Depart; for I will send thee far hence unto the Gentiles." Acts 22:21. So those who are called to unite with Christ must leave all, in order to follow Him. Old associations must be broken up, plans of life relinquished, earthly hopes surrendered. In toil and tears, in solitude, and through sacrifice, must the seed be sown.—Christ's Object Lessons, p. 36.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect? James 2:21, 22.

There is a belief that is not a saving faith. The Word declares that the devils believe and tremble. The so-called faith that does not work by love and purify the soul will not justify any man. "Ye see," says the apostle, "how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Abraham believed God. How do we know that he believed? His works testified to the character of his faith, and his faith was accounted to him for righteousness.

We need the faith of Abraham in our day, to lighten the darkness that gathers around us, shutting out the sweet sunlight of God's love, and dwarfing spiritual growth. Our faith should be prolific of good works; for faith without works is dead. Every duty performed, every sacrifice made in the name of Jesus, brings an exceeding great reward. In the very act of duty, God speaks and gives His blessing.—"Faith and Good Works," Signs of the Times, May 19, 1898.

Long have we waited for our Saviour's return. But none the less sure is the promise. Soon we shall be in our promised home. There Jesus will lead us beside the living stream flowing from the throne of God and will explain to us the dark providences through which on this earth He brought us in order to perfect our characters. There we shall behold with undimmed vision the beauties of Eden restored. Casting at the feet of the Redeemer the crowns that He has placed on our heads and touching our golden harps, we shall fill all heaven with praise to Him that sitteth on the throne.

Let all that is beautiful in our earthly home remind us of the crystal river and green fields, the waving trees and the living fountains, the shining city and the white-robed singers, of our heavenly home—that world of beauty which no artist can picture, no mortal tongue describe. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him."—The Adventist Home, pp. 544, 545.

## Tuesday, February 7: Lot's Bad Decisions

Lot chose Sodom for his home because he saw advantages to be gained there from a worldly point of view. But after he had established himself, and grown rich in earthly treasure, he was convinced that he had made a mistake in not taking into consideration the moral standing of the community in which he was to make his home.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1092.

[Lot] chose a land which was beautiful in situation, which promised great returns. Lot went in rich, and came forth with nothing as the result of his choice. It makes every difference whether men place themselves in positions where they will have the very best help of correct influences, or whether they choose temporal advantages. There are many ways which lead to Sodom. We all need anointed eyesight, that we may discern the way that leads to God.—Letter 109, 1899.

Abraham had honored God, and the Lord honored him, taking him into His counsels, and revealing to him His purposes. "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do?" said the Lord.

And the man of faith pleaded for the inhabitants of Sodom. Once he had saved them by his sword, now he endeavored to save them by prayer. With deep reverence and humility he urged his plea. Himself a sinner, he pleaded in the sinner's behalf. Such a spirit all who approach God should possess. Yet Abraham manifested the confidence of a child pleading with a loved father. He came close to the heavenly Messenger, and fervently urged his petition. . . .

Love for perishing souls inspired Abraham's prayer. While he loathed the sins of that corrupt city, he desired that the sinners might be saved. His deep interest for Sodom shows the anxiety that we should feel for the impenitent. We should cherish hatred of sin, but pity and love for the sinner.—*Conflict and Courage*, p. 51.

The parable of the rich man and Lazarus shows how the two classes represented by these men are estimated in the unseen world. There is no sin in being rich if riches are not acquired by injustice. A rich man is not condemned for having riches, but condemnation rests upon him if the means entrusted to him is spent in selfishness. . . .

Money cannot be carried into the next life; it is not needed there; but the good deeds done in winning souls to Christ are carried to the heavenly courts. But those who selfishly spend the Lord's gifts on themselves, leaving their needy fellow creatures without aid and doing nothing to advance God's work in the world, dishonor their Maker. Robbery of God is written opposite their names in the books of heaven. . . .

Christ lifted the curtain and presented this picture before priests and rulers, scribes and Pharisees. Look at it, you who are rich in this world's goods and are not rich toward God. Will you not contemplate this scene? That which is highly esteemed among men is abhorrent in the sight of God. Christ asks, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Mark 8:36, 37.—*Christ's Object Lessons*, pp. 266, 267.

### **Wednesday, February 8: From Deceiver to Prince**

Rebekah repented in bitterness for the wrong counsel which she gave to Jacob, for it was the means of separating him from her forever. He was compelled to flee for his life from the wrath of Esau, and his mother never saw his face again. Isaac lived many years after he gave Jacob the blessing, and was convinced, by the course of Esau and Jacob, that the blessing rightly belonged to Jacob.—The Story of Redemption, p. 89.

Jacob's wrong in receiving his brother's blessing by fraud was again brought forcibly before him, and he was afraid that God would permit Esau to take his life. In his distress he prayed to God all night. An angel was represented to me as standing before Jacob, presenting his wrong before him in its true character. . . .

All night Jacob wrestled with the angel, making supplication for a blessing. The angel seemed to be resisting his prayer, by continually calling his sins to his remembrance, at the same time endeavoring to break away from him. Jacob was determined to hold the angel, not by physical strength, but by the power of living faith. In his distress Jacob referred to the repentance of his soul, the deep humility he had felt for his wrongs. . . .

But when [the angel] saw that he prevailed not against Jacob, to convince him of his supernatural power, he touched his thigh, which was immediately out of joint. But Jacob would not give up his earnest efforts for bodily pain. . . . His faith grew more earnest and persevering until the very last, even till the breaking of the day. He would not let go his hold of the angel until he blessed him.—The Story of Redemption, pp. 94, 95.

It will require a sacrifice to give yourself to God; but it is a sacrifice of the lower for the higher, the earthly for the spiritual, the perishable for the eternal. God does not design that our will should be destroyed, for it is only through its exercise that we can accomplish what He would have us do. Our will is to be yielded to Him, that we may receive it again, purified and refined, and so linked in sympathy with the Divine that He can pour through us the tides of His love and power. However bitter and painful this surrender may appear to the willful, wayward heart, yet "it is profitable for thee."

Not until he fell crippled and helpless upon the breast of the covenant angel did Jacob know the victory of conquering faith and receive the title of a prince with God. It was when he "halted upon his thigh" (Genesis 32:31) that the armed bands of Esau were stilled before him, and the Pharaoh, proud heir of a kingly line, stooped to crave his blessing. So the Captain of our salvation was made "perfect through sufferings" (Hebrews 2:10), and the children of faith "out of weakness were made strong," and "turned to flight the armies of the aliens" (Hebrews 11:34). So do "the lame take the prey" (Isaiah 33:23), and the weak become "as David," and "the house of David . . . as the angel of the Lord" (Zechariah 12:8).—Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing, p. 62.

## Thursday, February 9: Moses in Egypt

Moses was a man of intelligence. In the providence of God he was given opportunity to gain a fitness for a great work. He was thoroughly educated as a general. When he went out to meet the enemy, he was successful; and on his return from battle, his praises were sung by the whole army. Notwithstanding this, he constantly remembered that through him God purposed to deliver the children of Israel.—The Youth's Instructor, January 29, 1903.

The strength of Moses was his connection with the Source of all power, the Lord God of hosts. He rises grandly above every earthly inducement, and trusts himself wholly to God. He considered that he was the Lord's. While he was connected with the official interests of the king of Egypt, he was constantly studying the laws of God's government, and thus his faith grew. That faith was of value to him. It was deeply rooted in the soil of his earliest teachings, and the culture of his life was to prepare him for the great work of delivering Israel from bondage. He meditated on these things; he was constantly listening to his commission from God. After slaying the Egyptian, he saw that he had not understood God's plan, and he fled from Egypt and became a shepherd. He was no longer planning to do a great work, but he became very humble; the mists that were beclouding his mind were expelled, and he disciplined his mind to seek after God as his refuge.—Ellen G. White Comments, in *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 1, p. 1098.

The faith of Moses led him to look at the things which are unseen, which are eternal. He left the splendid attractions of court life because sin was there. He gave up present and seeming good that flattered only to ruin and destroy. The real attractions, the eternal, were of value to him. The sacrifices made by Moses were really no sacrifices. With him it was letting go a present, apparent, flattering good for a sure, high, immortal good.

Moses endured the reproach of Christ, considering reproach greater riches than all the treasures of Egypt. He believed what God had said and was not influenced to swerve from his integrity by any of the world's reproaches. He walked the earth as God's free man. He had the love of Christ in his soul, which not only made him a man of dignity, but added the luster of the true Christian graces to the dignity of the man. Moses walked a rough and perilous path, but he looked to the things unseen and faltered not. The recompense of reward was attractive to him, and it may be also to us. He was familiar with God.

The work is before you to improve the remnant of your life in reforming and elevating the character. A new life begins in the renewed soul. Christ is the indwelling Saviour. That which may be regarded as hard to give up must be yielded. The overbearing, dictatorial word must be left unspoken; then a precious victory will be gained. True happiness will be the result of every self-denial, every crucifixion of self. One victory won, the next is more easily gained. Had Moses neglected the opportunities and privileges granted him of God, he would have neglected the light from heaven and would have been a disappointed, miserable man. . . . Man has light and opportunities, and if he will improve them he may overcome. You may show by your life the power of the grace of God in overcoming.—*Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 345.

**Friday, February 10: For Further Reading**

*This Day With God*, "Settling Into Salvation," p. 95;

*The Story of Redemption*, "Prevailing Faith," pp. 95, 96.