

Jesus and the Nobleman's Son

MEMORY VERSE: “Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen” (Ephesians 3:20, 21).

“Not because we see or feel that God hears us are we to believe. We are to trust in His promises. When we come to Him in faith, every petition enters the heart of God. When we have asked for His blessing, we should believe that we receive it, and thank Him that we have received it. Then we are to go about our duties, assured that the blessing will be realized when we need it most.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 200. [Author's emphasis.]

Suggested Reading: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, pp. 107, 108, 164–166

1. DRAWING ATTENTION

Sunday, Mar 2

a. After spending two days with the Samaritans, where did Jesus go—and who was drawn by this news? John 4:43–46.

John 4:43–46

Now after two days he departed thence, and went into Galilee. **44** For Jesus himself testified, that a prophet hath no honour in his own country. **45** Then when he was come into Galilee, the Galilaeans received him, having seen all the things that he did at Jerusalem at the feast: for they also went unto the feast. **46** So Jesus came again into Cana of Galilee, where he made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman, whose son was sick at Capernaum.

“The news of Christ’s return to Cana soon spread throughout Galilee, bringing hope to the suffering and distressed. In Capernaum the tidings attracted the attention of a Jewish nobleman who was an officer in the king’s service.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 196.

b. Why did the officer go to see Jesus? John 4:47.

John 4:47

When he heard that Jesus was come out of Judaea into Galilee, he went unto him, and besought him that he would come down, and heal his son: for he was at the point of death.

“A son of the officer was suffering from what seemed to be an incurable disease. Physicians had given him up to die; but when the father heard of Jesus, he determined to seek help from Him.”—*Ibid.*, p. 197.

a. Describe how Christ revealed the inner agony of heart in the nobleman who sought Him to heal his son in Capernaum. John 4:48.

John 4:48

Then said Jesus unto him, Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.

“The child was very low, and, it was feared, might not live till his return; yet the nobleman felt that he must present the case in person. He hoped that a father’s prayers might awaken the sympathy of the Great Physician.

“On reaching Cana he found a throng surrounding Jesus. With an anxious heart he pressed through to the Saviour’s presence. His faith faltered when he saw only a plainly dressed man, dusty and worn with travel. He doubted that this Person could do what he had come to ask of Him; yet he secured an interview with Jesus, told his errand, and besought the Saviour to accompany him to his home. But already his sorrow was known to Jesus. Before the officer had left his home, the Saviour had beheld his affliction.

“But He knew also that the father had, in his own mind, made conditions concerning his belief in Jesus. Unless his petition should be granted, he would not receive Him as the Messiah. . . .

“Notwithstanding all the evidence that Jesus was the Christ, the petitioner had determined to make his belief in Him conditional on the granting of his own request.”—*The Desire of Ages, pp. 197, 198.*

b. When tempted to seek signs, what should we recall? Matthew 12:38, 39.

Matthew 12:38, 39

Then certain of the scribes and of the Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from thee. **39** But he answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas:

“Christ was pained that His own people, to whom the Sacred Oracles had been committed, should fail to hear the voice of God speaking to them in His Son.”—*Ibid., p. 198.*

“The people want a sign, as in the days of Christ. Then the Lord told them that no sign should be given them. The sign that should be manifest now and always is the working of the Holy Spirit upon the mind of the teacher, to make the Word as impressive as possible. The Word of God is not a dead, dry theory, but spirit and life. Satan would like nothing better than to call minds away from the Word, to look for and expect something outside of the Word to make them feel.”—*Selected Messages, bk. 2, p. 95.*

a. Explain the difference between the Jews and Samaritans in regard to their belief in Jesus. Mark 6:2–6; John 4:40–42.

Mark 6:2–6

And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands? **3** Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. **4**

But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house. **5** And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them. **6** And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

John 4:40–42 **40** So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days. **41** And many more believed because of his own word; **42** And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

“How eagerly the Pharisees sought to prove Christ a deceiver! How they watched His every word, seeking to misrepresent and misinterpret all His sayings! Pride and prejudice and passion closed every avenue of the soul against the testimony of the Son of God. When He plainly rebuked their iniquity and declared that their works proved them to be the children of Satan, they angrily flung back the accusation, saying, ‘Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?’”—*Selected Messages, bk. 1, p. 70.*

“The Saviour contrasted this questioning unbelief with the simple faith of the Samaritans, who asked for no miracle or sign. His word, the ever-present evidence of His divinity, had a convincing power that reached their hearts.”—*The Desire of Ages, p. 198.*

“Though [Jesus] was a Jew, He mingled freely with the Samaritans, setting at nought the Pharisaic customs of the Jews with regard to this despised people. He slept under their roofs, ate at their tables, and taught in their streets.”—*The Acts of the Apostles, p. 19.*

b. Describe the experience of many who have spoken present truth to God’s professed people throughout the ages. Jeremiah 20:8–11.

Jeremiah 20:8–11

For since I spake, I cried out, I cried violence and spoil; because the word of the LORD was made a reproach unto me, and a derision, daily. **9** Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But his word was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not stay. **10** For I heard the defaming of many, fear on every side. Report, say they, and we will report it. All my familiars watched for my halting, saying, Peradventure he will be enticed, and we shall prevail against him, and we shall take our revenge on him. **11** But the LORD is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten.

“All the arguments urged against Christ were founded in falsehood. So was it in the case of Stephen, and of Paul. But the weakest and most unreliable statements made on the wrong side had an influence, because there were so many whose hearts were unsanctified, who desired those statements to be true. Such are ever eager to fasten upon any supposed error or mistake in those who speak to them the unpalatable truth.

“It should not surprise us when evil conjectures are greedily seized upon as undoubted facts by those who have an appetite for falsehood. The opposers of Christ were again and again confounded and put to silence by the wisdom of His words; yet they still eagerly listened to every rumor, and found some pretext to ply Him again with opposing questions.”—*Selected Messages, bk. 1, pp. 70, 71.*

a. When the nobleman’s faith took hold of Christ, how did he reiterate his plea? John 4:49.

John 4:49

The nobleman saith unto him, Sir, come down ere my child die.

“Like a flash of light, the Saviour’s words to the nobleman laid bare his heart. He saw that his motives in seeking Jesus were selfish. His vacillating faith appeared to him in its true character. In deep distress he realized that his doubt might cost the life of his son. He knew that he was in the presence of One who could read the thoughts, and to whom all things were possible. . . . His faith took hold upon Christ as did Jacob, when, wrestling with the Angel, he cried, ‘I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me.’ Genesis 32:26.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 198.

b. What should we learn from what Jesus did instead of going to the nobleman’s home? John 4:50.

John 4:50

Jesus saith unto him, Go thy way; thy son liveth. And the man believed the word that Jesus had spoken unto him, and he went his way.

“Jesus had a greater gift to bestow. He desired, not only to heal the child, but to make the officer and his household sharers in the blessings of salvation, and to kindle a light in Capernaum, which was so soon to be the field of His own labors. But the nobleman must realize his need before he would desire the grace of Christ. This courtier represented many of his nation. They were interested in Jesus from selfish motives. They hoped to receive some special benefit through His power, and they staked their faith on the granting of this temporal favor; but they were ignorant as to their spiritual disease, and saw not their need of divine grace. . . .

“The Saviour cannot withdraw from the soul that clings to Him, pleading its great need. ‘Go thy way,’ He said; ‘thy son liveth.’ The nobleman left the Saviour’s presence with a peace and joy he had never known before. Not only did he believe that his son would be restored, but with strong confidence he trusted in Christ as the Redeemer.”—*Ibid.*, pp. 198, 199.

“We all desire immediate and direct answers to our prayers, and are tempted to become discouraged when the answer is delayed or comes in an unlooked-for form. But God is too wise and good to answer our prayers always at just the time and in just the manner we desire. He will do more and better for us than to accomplish all our wishes. . . . These experiences that test faith are for our benefit.”—*The Ministry of Healing*, pp. 230, 231.

5. CURE AND SALVATION

Thursday, Mar 6

a. In what manner did Jesus heal the nobleman’s son? John 4:51–53. What reality does this call to mind? Ephesians 3:20, 21.

John 4:51–53

And as he was now going down, his servants met him, and told him, saying, Thy son liveth. **52** Then enquired he of them the hour when he began to amend. And they said unto him, Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him. **53** So the father knew that it was at the same hour, in the which Jesus said unto him, Thy son liveth: and himself believed, and his whole house.

Ephesians 3:20, 21

Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us, **21** Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.

“At the very moment when the father’s faith grasped the assurance, ‘Thy son liveth,’ divine love touched the dying child.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 199.

“At the same hour the watchers beside the dying child in the home at Capernaum beheld a sudden and mysterious change. The shadow of death was lifted from the sufferer’s face. The flush of fever gave place to the soft glow of returning health. The dim eyes brightened with intelligence, and strength returned to the feeble, emaciated frame. No signs of his malady lingered about the child. His burning flesh had become soft and moist, and he sank into a quiet sleep. The fever had left him in the very heat of the day. The family were amazed, and great was the rejoicing.”—*Ibid.*

b. How does Jesus respond to anyone pleading for help? Matthew 11:28–30.

Matthew 11:28–30

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. **29** Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. **30** For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.

“The Saviour cannot withdraw from the soul that clings to Him, pleading its great need.”—*Ibid.*, p. 198.

“Do you feel that because you are a sinner you cannot hope to receive blessing from God? Remember that Christ came into the world to save sinners. We have nothing to recommend us to God; the plea that we may urge now and ever is our utterly helpless condition, which makes His redeeming power a necessity. Renouncing all self-dependence, we may look to the cross of Calvary and say:

“ ‘In my hand no price I bring; Simply to Thy cross I cling.’ ”—*The Ministry of Healing*, p. 65.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

Friday, Mar 7

- 1. Why are prophets generally not well received in their own lands?**
- 2. What words of the nobleman revealed his unbelief?**
- 3. How did Christ react to the unbelief of the people?**
- 4. Who displayed greater faith in Jesus—the Jews or the Gentiles?**
- 5. What does Jesus promise to all who accept His invitation?**

Suggested Reading: Testimonies for the Church, vol. 9, pp. 107, 108, 164–166

Let us begin to work for those who have not had the light. “All power is given unto Me in heaven and in earth,” the Saviour declares, “and, lo, I am with you alway.” Matthew 28:18, 20. What we need is a living faith, faith to proclaim over the rent sepulcher of Joseph that we have a living Saviour, one who will go before us and who will work with us. God will do the work if we will furnish Him the instruments. There needs to be among us a great deal more of prayer and much less of unbelief. We need to lift up the standard higher and still higher before the people. We need to remember that Christ is always at our right hand as we proclaim liberty to the captives and deal the bread of life to hungry souls. When we keep before our minds the urgency and importance of our work, the salvation of God will be revealed in a remarkable manner. (9T 107.1)

God help us to put on the armor and to act as if we were in earnest, as if the souls of men and women were worth saving. Let us seek a new conversion. We need the presence of the Holy Spirit of God with us, that our hearts may be softened and that we may not bring a harsh spirit into the work. I pray that the Holy Spirit may take full possession of our hearts. Let us act like children of God who are looking to Him for counsel, ready to work out His plans wherever presented. God will be glorified by such a people, and those who witness our zeal will say: Amen and amen. **(9T 107.2)**

“Awake, awake; put on thy strength, O Zion; put on thy beautiful garments, O Jerusalem, the Holy City.... How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace; that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation; that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth! Thy watchmen shall lift up the voice; with the voice together shall they sing: for they shall see eye to eye, when the Lord shall bring again Zion.” Isaiah 52:1, 7~8. **(9T 108.1)**

“Break forth into joy, sing together, ye waste places of Jerusalem: for the Lord hath comforted His people, He hath redeemed Jerusalem. The Lord hath made bare His holy arm in the eyes of all the nations; and all the ends of the earth shall see the salvation of our God.” Isaiah 52:9~10. **(9T 108.2)**

Conditions of Answered Prayer

In order to be purified and to remain pure, Seventh-day Adventists must have the Holy Spirit in their hearts and in their homes. The Lord has given me light that when the Israel of today humble themselves before Him, and cleanse the soul-temple from all defilement, He will hear their prayers in behalf of the sick and will bless in the use of His remedies for disease. When in faith the human agent does all he can to combat disease, using the simple methods of treatment that God has provided, his efforts will be blessed of God. **(9T 164.1)**

If, after so much light has been given, God’s people will cherish wrong habits, indulging self and refusing to reform, they will suffer the sure consequences of transgression. If they are determined to gratify perverted appetite at any cost, God will not miraculously save them from the consequences of their indulgence. They “shall lie down in sorrow.” Isaiah 50:11. **(9T 164.2)**

Those who choose to be presumptuous, saying, “The Lord has healed me, and I need not restrict my diet; I can eat and drink as I please,” will ere long need, in body and soul, the restoring power of God. Because the Lord has graciously healed you, you must not think you can link yourselves up with the self-indulgent practices of the world. Do as Christ commanded after His work of healing—“go, and sin no more.” John 8:11. Appetite must not be your god. **(9T 164.3)**

The Lord gave His word to ancient Israel, that if they would cleave strictly to Him and do all His requirements, He would keep them from all the diseases such as He had brought upon the Egyptians; but this promise was given on the condition of obedience. Had the Israelites obeyed the instruction they received, and profited by their advantages, they would have been the world’s object lesson of health and prosperity. The Israelites failed

of fulfilling God's purpose, and thus failed of receiving the blessings that might have been theirs. But in Joseph and Daniel, in Moses and Elijah, and many others, we have noble examples of the results of the true plan of living. Like faithfulness today will produce like results. To us it is written: "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should show forth the praises of Him who hath called you out of darkness into His marvelous light." 1 Peter 2:9. **(9T 165.1)**

Self-Surrender and Rest

Oh, how many lose the richest blessings that God has in store for them in health and spiritual endowments! There are many souls who wrestle for special victories and special blessings that they may do some great thing. To this end they are always feeling that they must make an agonizing struggle in prayer and tears. When these persons search the Scriptures with prayer to know the expressed will of God, and then do His will from the heart without one reservation or self-indulgence, they will find rest. All the agonizing, all the tears and struggles, will not bring them the blessing they long for. Self must be entirely surrendered. They must do the work that presents itself, appropriating the abundance of the grace of God which is promised to all who ask in faith. **(9T 165.2)**

"If any man will come after Me," said Jesus, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me." Luke 9:23. Let us follow the Saviour in His simplicity and self-denial. Let us lift up the Man of Calvary by word and by holy living. The Saviour comes very near to those who consecrate themselves to God. If ever there was a time when we needed the working of the Spirit of God upon our hearts and lives, it is now. Let us lay hold of this divine power for strength to live a life of holiness and self-surrender. **(9T 165.3)**

The word of God is to be our lessonbook. The Lord is our helper and our God. Let us look to Him to open the way for the carrying out of our plans. **(9T 166.1)**