

## Living the Life of Faith



**MEMORY VERSE:** “The Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is just [fair], to show constant [continuing] love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God” (Micah 6:8, TEV).

**SAB PM** **THIS QUARTER WE HAVE LOOKED** at one of the basics of the Christian faith—forgiveness. Without forgiveness we would have no hope beyond this life. And that is not just any forgiveness. It is the forgiveness that a perfectly holy God gives to unholy<sup>1</sup> people. This forgiveness leads people to a life of holiness that reflects the holiness of God Himself. (But keep in mind that our human holiness is not a perfect example of God’s holiness.)

We have learned, too, that being forgiven by God brings about a great change in a person’s life. This great change influences every part of our life, because our relationship to our Creator (God) has been changed.

This week we will take one more look at what forgiveness means in the lives of people who are unworthy<sup>2</sup> but who have been forgiven.

**THE WEEK AT A GLANCE:** What does it mean to live by faith? How are we complete in Jesus? What are some of the blessings we have received through Jesus? How should these blessings influence the way we treat other people? Salvation is free, but what costs are still involved in salvation? How do we show our love for God because of what He has done for us?

\*Study this week’s lesson to prepare for Sabbath, September 27.

<sup>1</sup>unholy—not holy.

<sup>2</sup>unworthy—not worthy.

**SUN LIVING BY FAITH.**

**“For the gospel reveals [shows] how God puts people right with himself: it is through faith from beginning to end. As the scripture [Bible] says, ‘The person who is put right with God through faith shall live’ ” (Romans 1:17, TEV).**

Romans 1:17 is one of the most well-known verses in the Bible. Romans 1:17 changed Martin Luther’s<sup>3</sup> life and the history of the Christian church.



Martin Luther.

The question is, if a person “is put right with God through faith,” what shall a person have faith in? Read Romans 1:17 again. Also read Habbakuk 2:4; Galatians 3:11; Hebrews 10:38. Then write out what you think the answer to this question is.

Whatever answer you gave, one thing is sure. If your answer did not include the idea that our sins are forgiven by God, then your answer is *not* complete. Being right with God suggests He has forgiven us. Good deeds, kind words, and a loving heart, are important in Christian living. But they do not make a person right with God. Only people whose sins have been forgiven, only people who have accepted Jesus’ sacrifice for them are right with God.

How do we know our sins are forgiven? Do we hear a voice from heaven telling us our sins are forgiven? Does God write letters in the sky promising us forgiveness?

We believe our sins are forgiven by faith. We claim that our sins are forgiven by faith. We accept that our sins are forgiven by faith.

This is why forgiven people live by faith. We who are forgiven have faith in the promise of forgiveness made to us through the life, death, and high-priestly ministry (work) of Jesus. We have hope and peace, because of the forgiveness that is ours only by faith.

**Why is the understanding that our sins have been forgiven so important to the Christian? Think of what it would mean if we did not have that promise of forgiveness. Why must our forgiveness be based only on what Jesus has done for us at the Cross?**

<sup>3</sup>Martin Luther—1483–1546. Leader of the Reformation in Germany. This reformation began when Bible students did not agree with the Roman Catholic Church’s belief in how we are saved.

**MON IN UNION WITH JESUS.**

**“You have been given full life [made complete] in union with him [Jesus]. He is supreme over every spiritual ruler and authority [power]” (Colossians 2:10, TEV).**

Read Colossians 2:1-9. The NIV says “for in Christ [Jesus] all the fullness of the Deity [God] lives in bodily [human] form” (Colossians 2:9). And now we, through faith, become united with Jesus! We are given a full life in Him. A full life in Jesus is easier to understand when we know who Jesus is. He is the One who has the fullness of the Godhead in Him. Talk about knowing people in high places! Talk about making friends with people in power!



**Jesus is the key to God's wisdom and knowledge.**

Jesus has all power in heaven and in earth. We have been given the right to depend on His power!

“Shall we not work hard to make use of the little time we have left in this life? Shall we not add grace to grace, power to power, making it clear that we receive power from the heavens above? Jesus says: ‘All power is given unto Me [Jesus] in heaven and in earth.’ Matthew 28:18. What is this power given to Him for? For us. Jesus wants us to understand He has returned to heaven as our Older Brother. He wants us to know that the unlimited<sup>4</sup> power given Him has been given to us to use.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 9, p. 186.

Think about what we have through Jesus. First and most important, we have forgiveness of our sins (Colossians 1:14). We have the promise of “no condemnation [punishment]” (Romans 8:1). We have the promise, now, of eternal<sup>5</sup> life (1 John 2:25). We have the promise of the Holy Spirit (John 14:26). We have the promise of power to overcome sin (Jude 1:24). We have the promise of His righteousness (holiness) (Romans 1:17). We have the promise that no matter what happens, we can trust that our Lord is good and kind (Romans 8:28).

Because God offers us forgiveness, we have a God who loves us, who died for us, and who offers us the promise that we will live with Him forever. It will be in an eternal place where there will be no more pain, no more suffering, no more of the terrible things that we suffer in a world of sin.

<sup>4</sup>unlimited—having no limits.

<sup>5</sup>eternal—forever; without beginning or end; lasting forever.



Eternal life is one of the blessings we have through Jesus.

With all these promises in Jesus, Christians should be the most loving, giving, and self-sacrificing of all people in the world. Because Jesus has given us so much, we should be giving so much. Because Jesus has given us so much help, comfort, and hope, we should be the most generous in giving other people help, comfort, and hope. If you are not giving freely to other people, could it be because you have not fully understood and claimed by faith the promises Jesus offers you? If so, what can you do to change?

#### **TUE** TO FOLLOW JESUS.

“The only man who has the right to say he is justified (made holy) by grace alone is the man who has left all to follow Jesus.”—Dietrich Bonhoeffer; adapted.

<sup>6</sup>reverence—deep respect for God.

Jesus has given us so much. As sinners, we cannot begin to understand the blessings we have in Jesus. And when we wonder about what happened at the Cross, we can begin to understand how much those blessings cost.

But those blessings come with a cost for us too. The separation between heaven and earth was caused by sin. The separation was way too great for us to bridge ourselves. That is why Jesus had to bridge it for us. Only people who have surrendered to Jesus in faith will be saved in the end.

Read again the quote by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Do you agree with the quote? How do the following verses help us understand what Bonhoeffer wrote? Luke 9:23; Luke 18:22; Galatians 6:14; Philippians 3:8; Colossians 2:20. What does being justified by faith alone cost us as Jesus’ followers?

Salvation by faith alone could cost us everything. Salvation by faith alone means dying to self and living a new life in Jesus. This is a life of faith, humbleness, obedience, reverence,<sup>6</sup> and self-denial. Faith, humbleness, obedience, et cetera, are not easy for people who are selfish and greedy and who have too much pride.

Look at your own life in the past 24 hours. In what ways have you shown, either in words, actions, or

**thoughts that you have died to self?**

**WED MAH TOV. (WHAT IS GOOD?)**

**“The Lord has told us what is good. What he requires of us is this: to do what is good [fair], to show constant love, and to live in humble fellowship with our God” (Micah 6:8, TEV).**

We are living in the Information Age. We struggle with having so much information. But information is not the same as knowledge or truth. With so much information coming from so many directions, some of the most basic and important questions can get confusing or buried under facts that often come with opposing viewpoints. One of those crucial questions is: How do we know what is good or evil?

Micah 6:8 comes with the simple Hebrew words, *Mah Tov*, which means “What is good?” And how fortunate for us that the answer comes from God Himself.

**What are the three things God says are good?**

These three things deal with our attitudes<sup>7</sup> and actions toward people and our attitudes and actions toward God. This is no surprise, because the Ten

Commandments (Exodus 20) and the words of Jesus deal with these same attitudes and actions (read Exodus 20:1-17 and Matthew 22:37-40).

What is interesting, too, is the balance between justice (fairness) and mercy<sup>8</sup> in Micah 6:8. Justice and mercy are, in some ways, opposites. You can be just (fair), and give someone his or her punishment. Or you can be merciful,<sup>9</sup> and save someone from being punished. But God tells us here to do justly and to love mercy. How are we supposed to do both?

**Jesus came to show us the Father (John 14:9). The Father is a God of mercy and justice (Psalm 89:14). What happened at the Cross that shows both God’s mercy and justice?**

The third thing that is required of us is to walk humbly with God. That should not be too hard, should it? Fallen sinners in front of the Creator of the universe? Walking humbly before Him should be easy.

**But could one of the ways we walk humbly with God be to do justice and to love mercy? Is how we treat other people a good example of walking humbly before God? Explain. How are the first two requirements connected with the third requirement?**

<sup>7</sup>attitudes—how a person thinks or feels about something.

<sup>8</sup>mercy—kindness we do not deserve; being kind to people when they do not deserve kindness.

<sup>9</sup>merciful—full of mercy.



#### **THU** FEAR AND LOVE.

**“There is no fear in love; perfect love drives out all fear. So then, love has not been made perfect in anyone who is afraid, because fear has to do with punishment” (1 John 4:18, TEV).**

God loves us. Because of His love, Jesus died for us. As a result of His death, we stand before God with all our sins forgiven. Because of God’s love, kindness, and forgiveness, we should pour out love, kindness, and forgiveness on other people. That should be easy for us, because we have experienced God’s love. God’s love drives fear from our lives and frees us to help other people. So we have nothing to fear now or in the judgment (1 John 4:18).

**Read 1 John 4:19-21. How do these verses compare<sup>10</sup> with what we studied yesterday? How does John connect love for God with love for fellow humans?**

**Read 1 John 4:21 again. Why does John say that people who do not love other people cannot love God?**

Anyone can say she or he loves God. Almost anyone can do things he or she believes show love for God. But that is not what John is talking about. We love God because of what He has done for us. Because of what God has done for us, we show His love to other people.

Sometimes showing God’s love to other people is not easy. Some people are not easy to love. But we are told to love our enemies (Luke 6:35). God has shown His love for us. Now we must love other people.

**Why should we spend as much time as possible thinking about Jesus on the cross? How does remembering what He has done for us help us learn to love other people? Take some time to think prayerfully and seriously about what God did for us through Jesus. Praise God for this. Worship Him for this. Your thinking about Jesus, your worship and praise of Him will lead you to be more kind, loving, and gentle.**

<sup>10</sup>compare—show how things are the same.

**FRI** **ADDITIONAL STUDY:** Ellen G. White, *Thoughts From the Mount of Blessing*, pp. 146, 147.

“Your hope is not in yourself. Your hope is in Jesus. Your weakness is united to His strength. Your ignorance is united to His wisdom. So you are not to look to yourself. You are not to let your mind focus on self. Look to Jesus. Let your mind focus on His love, on the beauty, the perfection, of His character. The many parts of Jesus’ character—His self-denial, humbleness, holiness, and unlimited love—are the subject for the soul’s deep study. By loving Him, copying Him, depending wholly upon Him, you are to be changed into being almost the same as He is.”—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ* [Jesus], pp. 70, 71.

“Our natures are sinful. We cannot make ourselves righteous (holy). We cannot perfectly obey the holy law. We have no righteousness (holiness) of our own to help us meet the requirements of God’s law. . . .

“But Jesus changes the heart. He lives in your heart by faith. You are to keep this connection with Jesus by faith

through continuing your surrender to His will. So long as you surrender to His will, He will work in you to do His will. . . .

He desires to restore<sup>11</sup> you to Himself. He wants to see His own purity and holiness shown in you. And if you will surrender yourself to Him, He will carry forward the good work He has begun in you until He returns.”  
—Adapted from Ellen G. White, *Steps to Christ*, pp. 62–64.

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1. Read Galatians 6:7, 8. In these verses, Paul is teaching how important obedience, holiness, and victory are in the Christian life. Do we understand his words about people who plant “in the field of the [Holy] Spirit” (TEV)? What promises do we have that encourage us to “plant in the field of the Holy Spirit?”
2. Write in one paragraph the important points of what you have learned this quarter. If possible, have members of the class read and compare their paragraphs. Is there any one special point each paragraph shares? If so, what?

<sup>11</sup>restore—to bring us back to God.