

Lesson 12 What Have They Seen In Your House?

Theme: Man's relationship with God

The title for this week's lesson comes from the healing of king Hezekiah and his subsequent response to the emissaries from the king of Babylon, and the lesson continues with man's relationship to each other and ultimately to God.

King Hezekiah became ill and was told he would die. He wept and prayed to the Lord and the Lord heard him and sent the prophet Isaiah to inform him that God would extend grace and give him a further 15 years. Hezekiah's recovery is an assurance for us that God not only hears but also answers the sincere prayer of His saints. His subsequent recovery became known to the king of Babylon who sent him presents and to enquire about the miraculous healing. Hezekiah was silent on the matter. Instead he showed him everything that was in his house (The story is found in Isaiah Chapter 38).

What can we learn from Hezekiah's mistake?

He should have used the opportunity to extol his God, and to witness to His mighty power. It was a good time to uplift the name of God, but instead he lifted up himself. The fact that the king of Babylon should send ambassadors to him with gifts filled him with pride and he forgot his purpose and forgot his God (Pride goeth before destruction, and an haughty spirit before a fall).

We should not get so caught up with the accolades of men that we forget who we are. Flattery is an instrument of the devil which causes one to build an altar to self. The apostle Peter says, "you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, holy nation, His own special people, that you should proclaim the praises of Him who called you out of darkness to His marvellous light. (I Peter 2:9). Jesus says; Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven. (Matthew 5:14-16) desiring to be at the top when God has not put you there is a dangerous thing. Unlike Hezekiah, Jesus healed a blind man who just couldn't stop talking about Him (John 9:25) He was as expressive to the high priest as to his neighbour or the man in the street. In matters of faith we should show no partiality for God is no respecter of persons.

So, what do they see when they come to your House. Do they see: Love, respect, peace? In other words, do they see Christ.

When we have found something good the first person we ought to tell is our immediate family. In Luke we find the story of three men who on their way to Emmaus meet Jesus, they were so excited that they went about telling others how they meet Jesus on the way and how He broke bread with them Luke 24:35. There is no greater joy than to see our loved ones accepting the truth we so lovingly espouse. John (the apostle) tells us that when Andrew heard John (the baptiser) speak he was so impressed that he went straight away and told his brother Simon. Come! We have found the Messiah, not only did he find him, but he brought him to Christ. Are

you like Hezekiah or like Andrew? We should not neglect the children, they may be modeling your behaviour, but it is also important to verbalize the message to them. God said to the children of Israel, these words which I command you today shall be in your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk about them when you sit in your house, when you walk by the way, when you lie down and when you get up (Deut. 6:6,7). The story of Ruth is a fitting testimony of someone who modeled her mother-in-law. Even though imperfect in many ways, Naomi was able to set an example which led Ruth to say *your God shall be my God*.

There are blessings which accrue as a result of ones relationship with the Lord, and there is no better place for this to be displayed than in a marriage. In 1 Corinthians 7:12-15, Paul expounds the blessings of a Christian partner. Where one partner is not of the faith, the sacredness of the marriage vow should be maintained as long as the unbelieving partner is willing to continue in the marriage. Although the home may be spiritually divided, the believing partner should adhere to the Word of God and make every effort to live in peace. Paul's point is that marriage is sacred and the believing spouse sanctifies both the unbelieving partner and their children. However, if the unbelieving partner wishes to go, there should be no objection. Faithfulness to Christ does not require a spouse to suffer abuse at the hand of an unfaithful or violent partner.

So, what have they seen in your house? Do they see: Togetherness, friendliness, happiness?

Living for Christ does not mean that we should be fools for men. The apostle Paul says we are made a spectacle to the world, even so we must be wise in Christ, we may be weak but He is strong! (1 Cor. 4:9,10) but you still need an earthly father to imitate, someone with a physical presence, so the apostle advises the Corinthians to imitate him, a follower of Christ. 1 Cor. 4:16, 17b. Who are you imitating or who are you setting examples for?

People tend to become like those significant others who play an important part in their lives. Children imitate their parents, and older siblings. To a large extent society is influential in shaping behaviour. Ellen White suggests that social influence is a wonderful power. We can use it if we will as a means of helping those about us. *The Ministry of Healing*, p.354. Parents are the first teachers for the young child and therefore have the greatest potential for Christian modeling.

Considering the power of social influence, what should the Christian avoid?

We should avoid the deceptions of would-be teachers, those who speak falsely. Jeremiah 17:9 says that the tongue is a very deceitful organ. Therefore one should only imitate or follow believers who follow Christ for as John 2:25 makes it clear, only Jesus knows the heart of man, and He says I am the way the truth and the life John 14:6.

What have they seen in your house? Do they see: Long suffering, gentleness, goodness?

God not only give gifts to everyone, but He also provides opportunities to be a blessing to others. Among the many gifts is the gift of hospitality, as expressed in their liberality and neighbourliness. The scriptures tell us that a young man came to Jesus seeking to justify himself asked, who is my neighbour? (Luke 10:29-37). Jesus did not answer him directly but guided him theologically so that the young man was lead to express the truth, your neighbour is *He that shewed mercy*, in other words he who shows hospitality. Giving hospitality is a tangible expression of sacrificial love. Jesus attached great theological significance to hospitality in

Matthew 25. In verses 34-40 He commended one group for their acts of service done to Him (whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me). True hospitality springs from the heart of those who have been touched by the love of God and want to express that love in tangible ways. Following Christ will always lead us into all truth.

What are some ways in which one can display hospitality?

Consider the following ideas:

- Using the home as a place of ministry. This could simply be inviting someone to a meal, or for prayer, or Bible study.
- Feeding the hungry
- Attending to the needs of those rejected by society
- Helping families who for one reason or another are finding it difficult to manage.

When hospitality becomes an expression of God's grace to those who are outcasts, it has been reconstructed from standard cultural practices, (where even the Gentiles do the same Matt. 5:47) to a moment with potential eternal significance. As the title of this week's lesson asks: What have they seen in your house? Well, nothing if you have not invited anyone. If you have, did they see Christ in all you said and did? If you have, the invitation itself can be like God's gracious call to all, regardless of their past or present condition. When a vibrant love is seen in the family, a love shared in the name of Christ, it can be enough to create an insatiable appetite for the word and a new life. Through much fasting and prayer let Christ be seen in you and in your house.