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IMPROVED UNIFORM INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

By REV. F. B. FITZWATER, D. D., Teacher of English Bible in the Moody Bible Institute of Chicago. (Copyright, 1918, Western Newspaper Union.)

LESSON FOR OCTOBER 6

ABRAM LEAVING HOME.

LESSON TEXT—Genesis 12:1-9. GOLDEN TEXT—Be thou a blessing.—Genesis 12:2. DEVOTIONAL READING—Hebrews 11:1-19. ADDITIONAL MATERIAL FOR TEACHERS—Genesis 11:27-32; Hebrews 11:8-16.

1. Abraham's Call (v. 1).

The new era inaugurated with Noah at its head ended in a colossal failure. In view of such failure God turned aside from the nation as such, and called Abram out from his kindred and land, and placed him at the head of a new nation which he would train for himself. This call involved: 1. A call to separation. He was to leave the place of his fond associations for a land unknown to him. Obedience to this command meant the severance of three ties.

(1) "His country in the widest range of his affections, (2) His place of birth and kindred, which comes closer to his heart, (3) His father's house, as the inmost circle of all tender emotions." All this must be cast off before the Lord could get him into the place of blessing. When kindred and possessions stand in the way of love and service to Christ, one must renounce them (Matthew 10:37).

2. A call to heroic tasks. For Abram to go into a strange land and take possession of it for God called for the heroic in him. It costs much to live the life of separation, but it is the only way to have God's favor. Those who are children of faithful Abram must trust God.

11. God's Promise to Abram (vv. 2-3).

God's demand for separation was followed by a seven-fold promise—a gracious engagement on the part of God to communicate certain unmerited favors and to confer blessings upon him.

1. "I will make thee a great nation." (v. 2). This in some measure compensated for the loss of his country. He escaped from the defiling influences of his own nation, and became the head of a chosen nation. This was fulfilled in a natural way in the Jewish nation and in Ishmael (Gen. 17:20), also in a spiritual sense embracing both Jews and Gentiles (Galatians 3:7-8).

2. "I will bless thee" (v. 2). This was fulfilled (1) Temporally (Gen. 13:14-17:24-35). He was enriched with lands and cattle, silver and gold. (2) Spiritually (Gen. 15:6; John 8:56). He was freely justified on the grounds of his faith. The righteousness of Christ was imputed to him.

3. "And make thy name great" (v. 2). He renounced his father's house, and became the head of a new house which would be venerated far and wide. He is known as the friend of God (James 2:23).

4. "Thou shalt be a blessing" (v. 2). It was a great thing to be thus honored and blessed by God, but to be the medium of blessings to others was greater still. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

5. "I will bless them that bless thee" (v. 3). God so identified himself with his servant that he regarded treatment of Abram as treatment of himself. Christ so completely identifies himself with his people that he regards wrong done to them as done to himself. Since he was God's friend, God regarded acts performed toward Abram as performed toward himself. In all ages since then the nations and individuals that have used the Jew well have been blessed.

6. "And curse him that curseth thee" (v. 3). The nations that have been prospered. While God at different times used the surrounding nations as scourges of Israel, he in turn punished them for their mistreatment of Israel.

7. "In thee shall all families of the earth be blessed" (v. 3). This has been fulfilled (1) In the Jewish nation being made the repository of the Oracles of God. Through them the Bible has been given to the world. (2) The bringing into the world of the Redeemer.

(3) In the future time when the Jews shall be God's missionaries in carrying the good tidings of the Gospel to the ends of the earth.

III. Abram's Obedience (vv. 4-9).

Abram at once departed out of his own land. He proved his faith by his works. He did not argue or parley. Neither did he demand some guarantee, but stepped out upon God's naked word. There were difficulties in his way, but faith in God made him brave. Faith in God gives victory over the world. He worshiped God. To go into a heathen land and establish true worship requires a courageous faith.

Read This Slowly—And Think. Does my life please God? Am I studying my Bible daily? Am I enjoying my Christian life? Is there anyone I cannot forget? Have I ever won a soul to Christ? How much time do I spend in prayer?

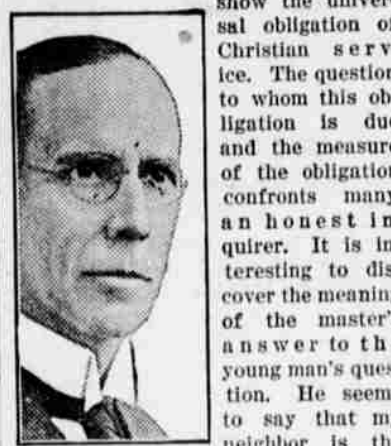
Am I trying to bring my friend to Christ? Have I ever had a direct answer to prayer? Is there anything I cannot give up for Christ? Just where am I making my greatest mistakes? Am I doing anything I would condemn in others? How does my life look to those who are not Christians? How many things do I put before my religious duties? Have I ever tried to give one-tenth of my income to the Lord? How much of my time and money do I give to Christ? Is the world being made better or worse by my living in it? —Maryland Tract Society.

Who Is My Neighbor?

By REV. ED. F. COOK, D. D., Director Missionary Course, Moody Bible Institute, Chicago

TEXT—Who is my neighbor?—Luke 10:29. Read Luke 10:25-37.

In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus is clearly undertaking to show the universal obligation of Christian service. The question to whom this obligation is due and the measure of the obligation confronts many an honest inquirer. It is interesting to discover the meaning of the master's answer to the young man's question. He seems to say that my neighbor is the man in need, the man in need of what I have to give, and whose need arises and is made known to me at a time when I am able to give it.



If this be true, how amazing and wonderful has become the world neighborhood, and how clearly is the Christian's duty to make Christ known emphasized by the universality of human suffering. Like the man on the way to Jericho, nations lie stricken, bleeding, hungry and ready to die.

Over against this appalling fact, the like of which the Christian never faced before in all the history of the world, stands Christ, God's only answer to human need. We of America know him. We have him enthroned in many an earnest heart. We have throughout the land the open Bible, God's word spoken to sinful and suffering man everywhere and in all ages, words of love, words of hope and words of comfort. How mightily it behooves us in this time of world tragedy and suffering to study the parable of the Good Samaritan and to search our own hearts to know whether or not we as individuals are rendering that ministry to the suffering which human need requires, and our knowledge of human suffering and our ability to alleviate it insistently requires.

What a reproach that in the master's parable the representatives of religion—the servants of the Temple of God—passed by the sufferer. Each knew of the case of human need, each looked upon the torn and bleeding form. Each possessed the resources from which to help. Yet each turned away passing on the other side, deliberately walking away from this revelation of suffering and need, deaf to this cry. So proud, so self-righteous, so exclusive, were these servants of religion, and so devoted were they to the forms and ceremonies of their service, and so filled with the thought of their own importance, that there seemed to be no place in either heart for the milk of human kindness. Will we ever again permit this reproach to be laid at the door of the representatives of religion? Can it be possible that those who profess to be followers of Jesus Christ, and who are the exponents and advocates of the Christian religion, shall fall to exemplify that high and holy love wherewith the master loved men? Shall we forget in the days to come that the master himself in answer to the doubt of John the forerunner announced as the evidence of his divinity and gave as the proof of his adequate ministry to men, that "the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good tidings preached to them."

Shall we not, as we journey toward the day of world peace, in our comfort of circumstances, in our amplitude of resources, think of the peoples who have fallen by the way? Will not Belgium and France and Roumania and Armenia and great, old, riven, torn and demoralized Russia, draw out of the Christian heart of America the ministry of healing, the ministry of money, the ministry of a Christly love? Surely the great lessons of self-denial and self-sacrifice which we are learning as a people in this great war will in God's good providence prepare us for that new neighborhood created by the universality of suffering and the heart hunger of the world. May God in his providence preserve the faith and love of our people and protect our resources in men and money, for a world-wide campaign of evangelism after the war, and above all preserve in the heart of our nation that reality of spiritual experience that will make our world ministry as beautiful and effective as was that of the humble man of Samaria, who helped his brother in need, when that need was discovered and the humble traveler had the means at his hand to render the succor which human suffering called forth.

Force of Habit. "Is your husband going to claim exemption?" "I guess so; he claims everything else in sight."

Kansas City this year grew \$1,354 worth of wheat in Swope park.

Doing Their Bit. Two young men, glancing in the knowledge they were in a deferred class because of industrial duties, ignored patriotic requests to conserve gasoline Sunday and ventured forth in an automobile. They approached two young women near the Emmerichville bridge. "Have a ride?" one brazenly called. "Not with slackers," they replied. And an hour later the two young men were seen hoofing it to town like thousands of other patriots.—Indianapolis News.

Had to Be Abandoned in Face of Hun Advance, but Served a Useful Purpose.

Yankee ingenuity has developed a new weapon for use against the Hun. No; it will not be used very often, yet there are times— An American unit of engineers (railway) was hauling ammunition and supplies for the French in the face of one of the German drives this year.

At the height of things, when the Hun was coming over in force and advancing in a way which meant the loss of anything that could not be moved promptly a \$15,000 locomotive jumped the track.

Sergeant Robertson, in charge, watched the battle for a moment, looked at his steam gauge, screwed the safety valve down tight, turned the oil fuel reserve supply into the fire-box, and then effected a solitary and successful retreat.

Half an hour later some sixty Germans were standing about the stranded locomotive when the boiler did the one thing which Sergeant Robertson hoped for—blew up.

It had all the effects of a 14-inch shell.

Incidentally, Sergeant Robertson is now wearing the croix de guerre.

Boy Couldn't Understand Why So Many Telephone Callers Failed to Leave Any Message.

He was as bright as a new whistle, from his neatly blacked shoes to his shock of vermilion hair (relates Freddy Senior, referring to the new office boy in his office). Quickly he learned his duties—sticking on postage stamps, sorting out mail and answering the telephone. We had stumbled upon a treasure.

But strangely enough, with his arrival the number of telephone calls diminished. "Business depression?" we asked ourselves. But on the second morning we heard the bell ring and listened.

"Hello!" said our hero.

"Who is it?" was the evident reply from the other end of the wire.

"Mike Golinski," answered the youthful prodigy. Then he spelled it. Then, after a pause, he hung up the receiver.

Locomotive Not Total Loss Had to Be Abandoned in Face of Hun Advance, but Served a Useful Purpose.

DIDN'T SEEM TO WANT MIKE Boy Couldn't Understand Why So Many Telephone Callers Failed to Leave Any Message.

Something Lacking. "Nobody seems to object to prohibition," said the visitor at Crimson Gulch.

Misery Either Way. Debutante Daughter—Shall I marry the poor young man whom I love or the rich old banker who dotes on me?

At the Theater. He—This play actually takes my breath away. She—I wish it would.

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WHO IS TO BLAME

Every Woman Wants Partine ANTISEPTIC POWDER

Your Eyes

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