

***Sabbath School Today***  
**With the 1888 Message Dynamic**

***The Least of These:***  
***Ministering to Those in Need***  
**Lesson 3: Sabbath: A Day of Freedom**

Many of you have heard this story of the beloved Nduri, but it's worth repeating in the context of the Sabbath, a day of freedom:

Nduri was an African widow living in a village on the slopes of Mount Kenya who had been taught by the Presbyterian missionaries to reverence the Bible and the worship of God (thank God for their work!). In her "family worship" one day she read Hebrews 7, the story of the strange man, "Melchizedek," who served God all alone, "without father, without mother" (vs. 3). She marveled that any one *could* serve God all alone like that.

Then she hurried to sell her beans in the market, but had no success for three days. In desperation, she walked many miles to Tharaka, where people always had cash for beans. There she listened to Pastor Solomon explain Bible truths she had never dreamed were therein—the second coming of the Lord Jesus, the thousand years of Revelation 20, the glorious new earth yet to be created, and the news about the holy seventh-day Sabbath of the Lord.

As he pleaded with the congregation for a decision to follow Jesus all the way, renouncing the world and its sinful ways, trusting in Him, taking up the cross to follow Jesus, her heart thrilled; she wanted to say "Yes!" but then she thought, "How can I serve the Lord all alone in my village? I would be the only one there who kept the Sabbath as the Bible says we should; no, I'm afraid that being all alone I might not remain faithful!"

But then like a flash there popped into her mind that story about that strange man, "Melchisedek." "If he could serve the Lord all alone, I can, too!" Then came that smile of victory.

When I met her, she asked me to baptize her, to seal her decision to follow Jesus every step of the way. (I'll never forget that clear ice water in the stream that flowed from Mount Kenya's snow.) Until her death, Nduri remained an inspiration to many in Kenya, and those around the world who have heard her story.

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Like Nduri, as a member of the "body" of Christ, you will "grow up into him." You are like a branch united to the Vine. By faithful attendance at worship on the holy Sabbath day, the true "Lord's day," you gain an ever greater knowledge of his holy truth, and a closer,

warmer fellowship with others of your brothers and sisters in faith. Thus, as a branch united to the Vine, you will “bear fruit” in holiness and purity of life, and in willing others to eternal life through faith in the Savior. [1] When you appreciate the Redeemer’s love for you, you automatically find it possible to love others, even those who are unlovely, yes, even your enemies. [2]

You have begun to love God’s law, His Ten Commandments as ten promises of victory over temptation Satan may bring against you; you love obedience to the fourth, keeping holy His blessed seventh-day Sabbath as a precious gift from Him.

But how is the Sabbath part of the 1888 message?

The sinner has no merits of his own, as he has no good works of his own; but to be reconciled means he is “*made obedient*.” This is the 1888 idea of being “made righteous.” The sinner has “received the atonement” [3] and his deep-seated enmity against the law has been removed by the “mighty argument of the cross.” [4] In justification by faith “the love of Christ constraineth us” and becomes the new motivation to holy living (2 Cor. 5:14, 15). Lukewarmness is done forever! Grace being stronger than sin, the 1888 messengers (A. T. Jones and E. J. Waggoner) grasped the astonishing idea that it’s easy to be saved and hard to be lost *if one understands and believes “the truth of the gospel”* (Gal. 2:5, 14).

Ellen White was overjoyed when she heard the two messengers tell this. She clearly said the message went beyond what she called “the good old doctrines,” for it was “fresh light.” This “justification by faith” will be “fresh” to us and to the Evangelical world for it’s “the third angel’s message in verity.” [5]

“Every fiber of my heart said amen,” she said, because here at last was the unique, distinct Seventh-day Adventist idea of the everlasting gospel “which is made manifest in obedience to all the commandments of God.” [6] Thus it had to go beyond that of the popular Sunday-keeping churches.

The Sabbath truth is embedded in a full and complete view of justification by faith because the Sabbath is the “sign” of that true faith. [7] Where the Sabbath truth is denied, there has to be either a counterfeit or an immature view of justification by faith. [8] Rightly conceived, justification by faith itself becomes the message that will raise up people all over the world to “keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus.”

But when we begin to exercise faith, we “cease” from our own works because we enter “into His rest” (Heb. 4:10). The Lord then works within us both to will and to do of His good pleasure. When all our works are wrought in Him, they are right. *This is indeed rest*. It comes when we realize that the Word which made the heavens and the earth and which upholds them has also redeemed us personally. This rest comes through the Sabbath. The same power that sanctified the Sabbath sanctifies the believer in Christ.

The Sabbath is the seal of a new creature in Christ, one who is united with Him by faith. Born a creature of the dust, He is now a newly born member of the heavenly family. The Sabbath is therefore the “seal of God” which is placed upon “the foreheads” of God’s servants in these last days (Rev. 7:1-4). It came from Paradise and marks those who are destined to live eternally in Paradise. As they assemble through eternity from Sabbath to Sabbath, they will “sing for joy” because of what their Savior has done for them:

*Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches  
and wisdom, and strength, and honor, and glory, and blessing.*

—From the Writings of Robert J. Wieland

### **Endnotes:**

[1] See John 15:1-3; Ex. 20:8-11; Rev. 1:10; Isaiah 58:13, 14; Psalm 92; Luke 4:16; Acts 2:46, 47; Heb. 10:22-25; Rev. 14:12.

[2] See Matt. 5:43-48; 1 John 4:11-13, 19, 20.

[3] See Rom. 5:1-11 for the heart of Paul’s view of “justification by faith.”

[4] Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 4, p. 375.

[5] Ellen G. White, *Review and Herald*, April 1, 1890.

[6] Ellen G. White, Manuscript 5, 1889; *Testimonies to Ministers and Gospel Workers*, pp. 91, 92.

[7] See Ellet J. Waggoner, *Christ and His Righteousness*, pp. 37-45, Glad Tidings ed. (1999); “The Rest That Remains for the People of God,” *Bible Students Library*, Jan. 1893; *The Glad Tidings*, pp. 140-144, CFI ed. (2016).

[8] See A. T. Jones, 1893 *General Conference Bulletin*, pp. 243-245, 261, 262, 342-343, 358.

### **Notes:**

Pastor Paul Penno’s video of this lesson is on the Internet at:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PKJFOFovLcs>

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