

What Is Gospel Ministry?

“Ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good” (Mark 14:7).

“The fallen, the erring, and the sinful, Christ’s love embraces; and every deed of kindness done to uplift a fallen soul, every act of mercy, is accepted as done to Him.”—*Lift Him Up*, p. 82.

Suggested Reading: *The Desire of Ages*, pp. 637–641.

1. We are God's Stewards

- a. From the abundance with which God blesses the earth, what provision has He made for sustaining the poor? Psalms 65:9–11; 68:10; 107:9.
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a. Psalms 65:9-11 Thou visitest the earth, and waterest it: thou greatly enrichest it with the river of God, which is full of water: thou preparest them corn, when thou hast so provided for it. 10 Thou waterest the ridges thereof abundantly: thou settlest the furrows thereof: thou makest it soft with showers: thou blessest the springing thereof. 11 Thou crownest the year with thy goodness; and thy paths drop fatness.

Psalms 68:10 Thy congregation hath dwelt therein: thou, O God, hast prepared of thy goodness for the poor.

Psalms 107:9 For he satisfieth the longing soul, and filleth the hungry soul with goodness.

1. We are God's Stewards

- b. What duty does Christ enjoin on His followers when He says, "Blessed are the merciful"? Matthew 5:7.
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"There never was a time when there was greater need for the exercise of mercy than today. The poor are all around us, the distressed, the afflicted, the sorrowing, and those who are ready to perish.

"Those who have acquired riches have acquired them through the exercise of the talents that were given them of God, but these talents for the acquiring of property were given to them that they might relieve those who are in poverty. These gifts were bestowed upon men by Him who maketh His sun to shine and His rain to fall upon the just and the unjust, that by the fruitfulness of the earth men might have abundant supplies for all their need."—*Welfare Ministry*, p. 15.

- b. Matthew 5:7 Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

2. Our Duty to The World

- a. Since, according to 1 John 5:19, the whole world is under the control of the power of darkness, what misery exists even in so-called Christian countries?
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“While God in His providence has laden the earth with His bounties and filled its storehouses with the comforts of life, want and misery are on every hand. A liberal Providence has placed in the hands of His human agents an abundance to supply the necessities of all, but the stewards of God are unfaithful. In the professed Christian world there is enough expended in extravagant display to supply the wants of all the hungry and to clothe the naked. Many who have taken upon themselves the name of Christ are spending His money for selfish pleasure, for the gratification of appetite, for strong drink and rich dainties, for extravagant houses and furniture and dress, while to suffering human beings they give scarcely a look of pity or a word of sympathy.

“What misery exists in the very heart of our so-called Christian countries! Think of the condition of the poor in our large cities. In these cities there are multitudes of human beings who do not receive as much care and consideration as are given to the brutes. There are thousands of wretched children, ragged and half starved, with vice and depravity written on their faces.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, pp. 274, 275.

- a. 1 John 5:19 And we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedness.

2. Our Duty to The World

- b. What blessings does God want us to impart to the world besides the knowledge of the way of salvation? Isaiah 58:7; James 1:27.
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“Some think that if they give money to this work, it is all they are required to do; but this is an error. Donations of money cannot take the place of personal ministry. It is right to give our means, and many more should do this; but according to their strength and opportunities, personal service is required of all.

“The work of gathering in the needy, the oppressed, the suffering, the destitute, is the very work which every church that believes the truth for this time should long since have been doing.”—Ibid., pp. 275, 276.

“Heavenly angels are waiting for human beings to cooperate with them in the practical carrying out of the principles of truth. It is through the agency of our sanitariums and kindred enterprises that much of this work is to be done.”—Ibid., vol. 7, pp 58, 59.

b. Isaiah 58:7 Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? when thou seest the naked, that thou cover him; and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh?

James 1:27 Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.

3. "Thou Halt Love Thy Neighbour As Thyself"

- a. What kind of self-sacrifice is a genuine representation of the character of Christ? Galatians 6:9, 10; Romans 12:20.
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"We are to show the tender sympathy of the Samaritan in supplying physical necessities, feeding the hungry, bringing the poor that are cast out to our homes, gathering from God every day grace and strength that will enable us to reach to the very depths of human misery and help those who cannot possibly help themselves."—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 276.

"The lesson [in the story of the good Samaritan] is no less needed in the world today than when it fell from the lips of Jesus. Selfishness and cold formality have well-nigh extinguished the fire of love and dispelled the graces that should make fragrant the character. Many who profess His name have lost sight of the fact that Christians are to represent Christ. Unless there is practical self-sacrifice for the good of others, in the family circle, in the neighborhood, in the church, and wherever we may be, then whatever our profession, we are not Christians."—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 504.

a. Galatians 6:9-10 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. 10 As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

Romans 12:20 Therefore if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink: for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.

3. "Thou Halt Love Thy Neighbour As Thyself"

- b. How can we best arouse the religious interest of our neighbors? 2 Thessalonians 3:13.
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“Every church member should feel it his special duty to labor for those living in his neighborhood. Study how you can best help those who take no interest in religious things. As you visit your friends and neighbors, show an interest in their spiritual as well as in their temporal welfare. Present Christ as a sin-pardoning Saviour. Invite your neighbors to your home, and read with them from the precious Bible and from books that explain its truths. This, united with simple songs and fervent prayers, will touch their hearts. Let church members educate themselves to do this work. This is just as essential as to save the benighted souls in foreign countries. While some feel the burden of souls afar off, let the many who are at home feel the burden of precious souls around them and work just as diligently for their salvation.”—*Testimonies*, vol. 6, p. 276.

- b. 2 Thessalonians 3:13 But ye, brethren, be not weary in well doing.

4. A Special Blessing To The Merciful

- a. When Christ shall come in His glory, how many classes of people will there be? What will He say to those on His “right hand”? Matthew 25:34–36.
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“Those whom Christ commends in the judgment may have known little of theology, but they have cherished His principles. Through the influence of the divine Spirit they have been a blessing to those about them. Even among the heathen are those who have cherished the spirit of kindness; before the words of life had fallen upon their ears, they have befriended the missionaries, even ministering to them at the peril of their own lives. Among the heathen are those who worship God ignorantly, those to whom the light is never brought by human instrumentality, yet they will not perish. Though ignorant of the written law of God, they have heard His voice speaking to them in nature, and have done the things that the law required. Their works are evidence that the Holy Spirit has touched their hearts, and they are recognized as the children of God.

“How surprised and gladdened will be the lowly among the nations, and among the heathen, to hear from the lips of the Saviour, ‘Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these My brethren, ye have done it unto Me’ (Matthew 25:40)! How glad will be the heart of Infinite Love as His followers look up with surprise and joy at His words of approval! . . .

“[Christ] identifies Himself with every child of humanity. That we might become members of the heavenly family, He became a member of the earthly family. He is the Son of man, and thus a brother to every son and daughter of Adam.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 638.

- a. Matthew 25:34-36 Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: 35 For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: 36 Naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.

4. A Special Blessing To The Merciful

- b. Why should we be merciful to all kinds of sinners? Matthew 25:37–40.
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“[Christ’s] followers are not to feel themselves detached from the perishing world around them. They are a part of the great web of humanity; and Heaven looks upon them as brothers to sinners as well as to saints. The fallen, the erring, and the sinful, Christ’s love embraces; and every deed of kindness done to uplift a fallen soul, every act of mercy, is accepted as done to Him.”—Ibid.

- b. Matthew 25:37-40 Then shall the righteous answer him, saying, Lord, when saw we thee an hungred, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? 38 When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? 39 Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee? 40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.

5. LET US BE UNSELFISH WORKERS

- a. How does the apostle Paul admonish us to cooperate with the angels of heaven in their ministry for sinners? Hebrews 13:1, 2.
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“As you open your door to Christ’s needy and suffering ones, you are welcoming unseen angels. You invite the companionship of heavenly beings. They bring a sacred atmosphere of joy and peace. They come with praises upon their lips, and an answering strain is heard in heaven. Every deed of mercy makes music there. The Father from His throne numbers the unselfish workers among His most precious treasures.”—*The Desire of Ages*, p. 639.

“Many feel that it would be a great privilege to visit the scenes of Christ’s life on earth, to walk where He trod, to look upon the lake beside which He loved to teach, and the hills and valleys on which His eyes so often rested. But we need not go to Nazareth, to Capernaum, or to Bethany, in order to walk in the steps of Jesus. We shall find His footprints beside the sickbed, in the hovels of poverty, in the crowded alleys of the great city, and in every place where there are human hearts in need of consolation. In doing as Jesus did when on earth, we shall walk in His steps.”—*Ibid.*, p. 640.

“In all who suffer for My name, said Jesus, you are to recognize Me. As you would minister to Me, so you are to minister to them. This is the evidence that you are My disciples.”—*Ibid.*, p. 638.

- a. Hebrews 13:1-2 Let brotherly love continue. 2 Be not forgetful to entertain strangers: for thereby some have entertained angels unawares.

PERSONAL REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What duty is implied in the words, "Blessed are the merciful"?
2. Describe the far-reaching scope of true evangelism.
3. What kind of self-sacrifice is a genuine representation of the character of Christ?
4. How can we best arouse the religious interest of our neighbors?
5. When Christ shall come in His glory, what will He say to those on His right hand?