



More Blessed to Give

Message for January 2019 – 14

**International Missionary Society
Seventh-Day Adventist Church
Reform Movement**
YOUTH DEPARTMENT OF THE GENERAL CONFERENCE

My dear youth:

I greet you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and ask that His blessings, love, and direction be upon you in abundance.

A deplorable condition

Today I would like to share with you the text from Acts 20:35, **“I have shown you in every way, by laboring like this, that you must support the weak. And remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’”**

If we take a look at the world around us, we will observe that nature gives us everything we need to live in the midst of it: water, sunlight, wind, food, beauty, and much more. However, we humans only want to receive. After sin, our moral structure is based on selfishness and not on giving. In fact, we have lionized the ego in our hearts to such an extent that we are able to ignore or destroy those who do us good. Returning to the example of nature, by impetus of depleting and mistreating it, pollution has reached such a degree that we have crossed the line of no return. This is the case with human beings, as consequence of our ambition and selfishness, we provoke wars, we cripple and injure ourselves, we distance ourselves, and sever relationships that should last a lifetime.

Note that before sinning Adam and Eve loved each other; they only sought the happiness of the other. After their Creator, the other was everything to them and bestowing happiness and well-being was part of their priorities. However, after sin this ceased. Adam, to justify himself before God of the sin he committed, accused Eve, and Eve the serpent. Their daily reality changed radically, and their existence became exceedingly harsh, since only selfishness arose in their lives.

The Great Giver of the Universe

Jesus became incarnate and became a human being to show us the divine generosity in all its potentiality, because being God he became man to reach us in our poverty and give us back our lost dignity. The Savior had the full right to receive from His earthly creatures all the honor, respect, love, service, and consideration, however we turned our backs on Him.

Smitten by selfishness for millennia after creation, humans became more and more like the devil, the one who had been the protective cherub (Ezekiel 28:14, 15), and who having everything in heaven, surmised that all was missing if he did not possess the throne of God. Those who follow him show that unequivocal feature of selfishness. They live to receive, they are not interested in giving, and if they give it is to receive something in return. But they do not understand that they have a virus that is destroying them spiritually, because the human being can only be fully happy when he gives.

God is the great Giver of the universe—par excellence—and has implanted that precious feature in human nature. Even though sin has taken us away from our Maker and our holy nature suffered damage, it is God's plan that each son and daughter of His reveal in their character the light of the precious gem of generosity. The closer we are to God, the further we will be from selfishness. The inspired pen presents the perfect x-ray of our inner spiritual system: “Your very self-complacency shows you to be in need of everything. You are spiritually sick and need Jesus as your physician.” *Testimony Treasures*, vol. 2, pg. 98).

Learning to give

Yes, dear youth, we need Jesus if we want to overcome the disease of selfishness. This topic is not easy to address, because the author must also fight to overcome all traits of selfishness; it is not easy because we carry it in our genes. Selfishness is sin and overcoming all sin requires an onerous and constant struggle: “You have not yet resisted to bloodshed, striving against sin.” Hebrews 12:4. It is an absolute impossibility to overcome selfishness if Jesus does not help us. Through His divine grace we receive the necessary power that will enable us to overcome in every situation in which selfishness wishes to emerge and dominate the situation.

The life of Jesus was characterized by a demeanor of giving. His work was a total surrender of His love to those around him: He healed, consoled, forgave, dignified, helped, guided, advised, fed... It is said that He dedicated much more

time healing than preaching, and spent entire nights praying for lost sheep of Israel. We may not come to imitate Christ in all aspects of His life, such as performing miracles or reading the human mind; He possessed a mingled human and divine nature. What He did for each of us He did in His humanity, and this is the role model for each one of us, but sometimes He used His divine power to provide special help to those hurting or to show His messianism, but never to benefit Himself.

Jesus urges us to imitate Him: **“Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”** Matthew 11:29. In the Word we find this constant invitation: **“He who says he abides in Him ought himself also to walk just as He walked.”** 1 John 2:6.

Imitating Jesus in the extraordinary work of magnanimity is a duty of utmost priority in the life of every christian. This should begin during childhood in a christian home. “One of the characteristics that should be especially cherished and cultivated in every child is that self-forgetfulness which imparts to the life such an unconscious grace. Of all excellences of character this is one of the most beautiful, and for every true lifework it is one of the qualifications most essential.” Education, pg. 237.

Conclusion

Dear youth, we have an elevated spiritual duty ahead of us: to grow in likeness to Christ in His devotion towards others. As we have already seen, this is not an easy task, if it were so the world would be paradise. Nevertheless, God gives us His Holy Spirit, generating in our heart those celestial notes that will flood our soul with peace and brighten the lives of those that surround us. Let us begin to distance ourselves from the culture of self, that erroneous and dangerous theory that presents man as the center of all and the absolute end of creation. The center of all is Christ, “Jesus Christ, and him crucified.” 1 Corinthians 2:2. There is no one and nothing that exists capable of transforming our lives, but the grace of the Savior implanted in us by the work of the Holy Ghost.

Allow, dear youth, the Savior to be enthroned in the dominion of your heart. “Let your heart be softened and melted under the divine influence of the Spirit of God. You should not talk so much about yourself, for this will strengthen no one. You should not make yourself a center and imagine that you must be constantly caring for yourself and leading others to care for you. Get your mind off from yourself into a more healthy channel. Talk of Jesus, and let self go; let it be submerged in Christ, and let this be the language of your heart: “I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” Galatians 2:20. Jesus will be to you a present help in every time of need. He will not leave you to battle with the powers of darkness alone. Oh, no; He has laid help upon One that is mighty to save to the uttermost (Testimonies for the Church, pg. 320).” *Mind, Character, and Personality*, vol. 1, pg. 272. I invite you to live with the marvelous conviction that it is much better to give than to receive. May God grant us this grace and bless us. Amen.

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