

SHARING SCRIPTURE

Discover • Jesus • Together



Living the Gospel

For use: Sept. 1 - 7

Texts: Romans 8:20-23; John 3:16, 17; Matthew 9:36; Ephesians 2:8-10; 1 John 3:16, 17; Revelation 14:6, 7

Greta Thunberg is on a mission. After becoming convicted over the worsening climate crisis, she says, “I’m going to do everything I can to change things.” She is scheduled to speak later this month at the United Nations Climate Action Summit. [1]

Last Wednesday, the 16-year-old Swedish climate activist sailed into New York Harbor after a distressing two-week trip across the Atlantic.

Sadly, the day before Greta arrived, a lifelong peace activist—Frances Crowe—passed away at the age of 100. She was described as a “firebrand, a nonviolent warrior for justice, arrested countless times protesting war, nuclear weapons, nuclear power plants and more.” After the United States dropped the atomic bomb on Hiroshima, she “never relented in her pursuit of peace and justice.” [2]

The online *Santa Cruz Sentinel* says, “The departure of one elder activist on the eve of the arrival of one so young symbolizes, bittersweetly, the passing of a torch.” [3]

Regardless of your views on climate change, we see in the lives of these two daring women a passionate burden that went deeper than intellectual conviction. They lived what they believed.

This week’s Sabbath school lesson, *Living the Gospel*, emphasizes this same point. Seeking to follow God’s law of love in order to gain merit and earn our way to heaven is fruitless. “For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Ephesians 2:8, 9).

But the next verse provides balance to our human tendency to react and swing the pendulum too far in one direction. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them” (v. 10). In other words, God’s saving grace changes the heart and motivates us to *live the gospel*, something we cannot do in our own strength.

While a symbolic torch was passed, this last week, between two climate activists, how

much more are we privileged to “grow in our understanding and appreciation of salvation.” And as we do so, “the link between God’s love and His concern for the poor and oppressed will be passed on to us, recipients of His love” (*Adult Sabbath School Bible Study Guide, 3rd Quarter 2019, Lesson 10, “Sabbath Afternoon.”*). It’s a link that will transform us to be activists for heaven.

~Curtis Rittenour

[1] <https://www.santacruzsentinel.com/2019/08/30/greta-thunberg-frances-crowe-and-a-passing-of-the-torch-democracy-now/>

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

For Reflection

Connecting: Have you ever participated in any type of activist activities? What was your experience like? How deeply did you feel about the cause?

Sharing: When you look at the radical activities of Christ, which of these have you participated in (at some level) and which would you like to get involved in some day?

1. Christ confronted hypocrisy in those who were not protecting the rights of the marginalized.
2. Jesus was willing to touch the untouchables.
3. The Savior freely walked over barriers based on racism.
4. Though criticized by religious leaders, Jesus freely healed others on the Sabbath.
5. Christ laid down His own rights in order to stand up for the rights of others.
6. Other...

Applying: Plan one community activity for this coming week where your group where can “live the gospel.”

Valuing: What one way, this coming week, do you feel the Holy Spirit is calling you to live the gospel? Pray with one other person in your group asking God to empower you to “walk the talk.”

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Paul Richardson
Executive Director

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