

## Where Did We Go Wrong?

### Passing the Baton series

by Chris Famisaran

Well, for those of you who are joining us for the first time, or have been out, we're starting, we started a new series last week called Passing the Baton. Bill mentioned it in his children's story. And we're taking lessons from the early Church. Today we're going to talk about the early Adventist pioneers of our faith and also part of we're going to continue on next week. And then we're gonna wrap it up at the end of the month of what are.... or how do we take these lessons? And not only apply it to our present context? But more importantly, how do we face the future? Where do we go? Is our world changing? Amen. So though our world may be changing the principles that we can learn from the early believers, from the Bible, and also from our early Adventist Pioneers are also just as relevant even for today. So let's go ahead and let's begin with a word of prayer. I'm just going to stay off to say off the bat, we're probably going to go over a little bit just because I'm cramming as much. I'm cramming a couple 1000 years of history into 25 minutes. All right, let's pray.

Father, we thank you for your goodness, as we dive deep now into the lessons of our early church. Lord, it's important that we look back and reflect because we need to remember the lessons. Otherwise, Lord, what are we bound to do? We're bound to repeat them. So be with us now in Jesus name, amen.

There once was a young man named Johnny. And Johnny had a girlfriend. Johnny loved his girlfriend. He wanted to take his girlfriend out on a date. And so they went to the movies. He stood in line actually, they both stood in line, they waited, they bought their tickets. He went then went to the refreshments stand. And he went to go get some popcorn and a soda while his girlfriend went into the grab their seats. So he waited the requisite five minutes to get the popcorn and the soda. He got it. He went into the theater. And as he was in the theater, he realized the previews were already in full force. And you realize, oh, there was his girlfriend. So he walked up, five rows up, he turned, he tried to avoid stepping on people's toes. He sat down, he just he was so excited to watch this movie. He was so joyful and exuberant, he turned around and he kissed his girlfriend. Lo and behold, as he was kissing her, his girlfriend who was actually standing behind him, said, Johnny, I'm sitting behind you. You're kissing the wrong woman. Anybody ever do that? I would hope not. To which Johnny then quoting the great movie. Oh, I can't even remember that. Oh, do I feel sheepish... "Emperor's New Groove". Some of you remember that movie? Well, I feel sheepish today.

Our sermon title is where did we go wrong? You know, I love our church. Amen. But did our church always get it right? Know who we met a few bumps long and some egregious errors along the way. And I think that's something that we have to be mindful of. We have to be honest, look, our forefathers were faithful, God bless them. didn't always have the whole picture at the very beginning. And I think that's true of actually that's life. That's history. God revealing God's wisdom and plans. Slowly but surely, but we have to be faithful and sometimes even Bible characters that they always have it right. Absolutely not.

So let's go into a little bit of our story. Now, the administration county church, where does it come from? Well, it's part of the Seventh Day Adventist church denomination and where did this

denomination begin? A long, long time ago in the 1800s. There was a man named William Miller, who started the Millerite movement. Okay, the roots of the Adventist Church began with the Millerite movement, William Miller. He was a what we call a reluctant prophet. He was actually a deist. And a deist was at one point this belief that they reject Christianity with all of its miracles and supernatural Revelation are actually more of argues for a distant God who does not actively participate in earthly events or affairs. However, in 1812, the War of 1812 his life was forever changed because as he experienced life as a soldier, he began to question his beliefs and his assumptions and his thoughts. Well, eventually, he went in turned to the Bible, and he began this very rigorous Bible study, he was a zealous student. He started in Genesis and continued to go through the Bible verse by verse, to me, I love this guy. He's a good student. Uses concordance and after two years, though, after very, as it says, solemn conclusion that and about 25 years about that time in 1843, all affairs of our present state will be wound up, and Christ would come. Okay, so he felt with great conviction that Jesus was coming back. Now, Miller, base this assumption off of the passage that many are probably familiar with, in Daniel 8:14, and Daniel and Revelation, Revelation, play a strong, have a strong presence in his thoughts. And as we begin this, this movement, so in Daniel 8:14, it says unto 2300 days, then shall the sanctuary be cleansed, and also using the year and day principle in numbers, and he's equally concluded that Jesus is going to come about 1843. So he spends another five years studying his Bible, he comes convicted, new realizes he needs to share this with others. So as it's recorded, here, I'm reading. Miller entered into a solemn covenant with God. And if God opened the way he would, it would be his duty to share essentially, Jesus returned, feeling he needed to be more specific Miller promised God that if he would receive an invitation to speak publicly, in any place, he would go and teach about the Lord's Second Coming. Instantly, he penned all of my burden was gone, and I rejoice that it would not probably be best called upon, for I had never had such an invitation. So he thinks he's in the clear. How long do you think it took for an invitation to come? Anybody want to guess? It says within 30 minutes, somebody knocked on Miller's door and says, Hey, I gotta place. See, I want you to speak for me. So what was Miller's response? He was like, what? He was a little upset and says, How could this be? No, no, no, no, because he thought he was clear he was good. Well, he couldn't go against his covenant with God. And so he begins to speak and people start to believe they start to follow this guy, William Miller. He's, they're sharing he's coming. Jesus is coming in 1843, it can't be.

Well, there are people though, who heard about him wanting to help them. Joshua v. Himes. He was a pastor at the chartered St. Chapel invited Miller to teach and wanted him to help him. See, Himes was a man though who he knew how to get things going. He actually used the printing press. Well, I guess you could say was the social media, the news, the, the the ability, the public relations to share about Jesus is returning. And eventually, William Miller goes, what they consider what we consider now viral, that they use the these publications of Signs of the Times and Midnight Cry. In over the next four years. Everybody worldwide heard about Miller believing that Jesus was coming in 1843. Himes was also a brilliant organizer. He organized these general conference meetings of the believers and Adventist Camp Meetings. In between 1842 and 1844, over 130 camp meetings took place, and oh, it's estimated over 500,000 people attended these camp meetings.

But what Miller was talking about also contradicted what the general belief was that Jesus would return after the millennium after 1000 years. So but yet, well, time goes by. 1843 Miller did not necessarily set a specific date, but he thought between March 20, something I think, to March 21, 1843, to 1844, Jesus would come.

Time went by Jesus didn't show up. They considered the tertian time and they spoke, they deliberated. They tried to recalculate. They tried to come back together and then they concluded that October 22, 1844, was the day that Jesus would return. So people start with anticipation. Seven months go by and everybody's wondering, is this really going to happen? People literally sell everything! They give up their retirement, they give up their home, they give up on their possessions, because they believe that Jesus was coming soon, they were putting all of their eggs in one basket. And on October 22, 1844, many people actually would were meeting in fields waiting to see this great cataclysmic event take place. 10s of 1000s hoped with anticipation. But it was not to be. October 22, 1844 came. And at midnight, there was an awful cry amongst all the believers, what had happened? Where was Jesus? It said, our fondest hopes and expectations were blasted in such a spirit of weeping came over us as I had never experienced before, it seemed that the loss of all earthly friends could have no comparison. We wept and wept till the day dawned.

Hiram Edson who would eventually come to a different conclusion about what happened on October 22. So what happened? Many of these people had to rebuild their lives. Can you imagine selling everything? Unfortunately, some it was too much. And they took their own lives. Imagine all of the villainy that they experienced because they had been claiming that Jesus was returning. And when somebody says something, and it doesn't prove to fruition, what do we tend to do? We zone in on them and make fun of them. Amen. Not saying it's right. But that's what tends to happen. There was hazing. And the question that everyone was on everybody's mind was, Where did we go wrong? What happened?

Well out of this, there were some lessons. There was some lessons that we can learn. But there's also a couple of things that we need to point out and that several groups emerged from the great disappointment. There were some who believe that just nothing ever happened. There was also another group that will call the spiritualizers, they believe that Jesus had returned, but it was in a spiritual return. And then the third group, which our church came out of was something did happen, but it wasn't the second advent. Hiram Edson again, who I quote that I just read was a Methodist farmer, he was in a prayer session with some friends with some other believers. They had to figure out what did we get wrong, he was crossing the field. And as he stopped in the middle of field there, he had this vision. He says, I was stopped midway and heaven seemed open to my view I saw distinctly and clearly that, instead of our high priest coming out of the Most Holy of the heavenly sanctuary to come to this earth, on the 10th, day of the seventh month, at the end of the 2300 days, that he for the first time entered on that day, the second apartment of that sanctuary, And that he had a worked to perform in the most holy before coming to this earth. And so his conclusion was that, instead of Jesus coming here, he moved into the second apartment of this holy sanctuary. And that, as it says, The sanctuary would be cleansed. So Edson , he's walking, his buddy, who was with him, he turns around and says, Hey, what are you doing? Come on, let's go. They continue their walk. He then meets with Oral Crozier, and Han, and they conclude that the sanctuary plans was not on the earth, or the church, but the sanctuary in heaven. So they came to this conclusion after also reading Hebrews, Leviticus and Daniel and this kind of it eventually becomes the foundational teaching of the Adventist Church.

But the Advent is the early believers had to come to this conclusion that you had to have an open mind to be flexible and united in purpose for the key characteristics of the early church and the Advent as pioneers. Edson realized, we got it wrong. So what did they do? And much like the principles that we talked about last week of teaching of Scripture, of prayer, of fellowship, and the fourth one, which isn't here in this story, but it's also across the board important amount of food. They didn't forget those

principles, rather than just giving up. They went back to the Bible. And they didn't give up they learned, okay, we got it wrong, and they had to admit it, but that's okay. But what can we learn from this experience? And how can we move forward? So they were faithful to the early church principles of prayer and teaching of fellowship. Early Church leaders are pioneers had to swallow truth that they had been mistaken. How hard of a pill do you think that was the swallow. That was a hard pill to swallow. And often times, I think, you know, even as a church, we look back on this part of the period where we were actually even't formed. But it's an important part of our history that we have to recognize it. And look, we got it wrong. And one of the glaring things that we have to remind ourselves to have, what does Matthew 26? Revelation 3, talk about? Do we know exactly when Jesus is coming? 2 Peter 3:10. No one knows the day, or the hour, when who will come? The Lord. So well, in their intensity and desire to know, we have to remember across the board and multiple times, Jesus and other authors in the Bible say, Hey, buddy, we don't know exactly when Jesus is coming. But God is faithful. Because remember, as we also talked about, God told the disciples to go teach, preach, baptize, and lo and behold, guess what I am what? I will never leave you or forsake you. Amen. So that is a promise that God will be with us. And though we have this great desire to see Jesus, look, we don't know exactly know when Jesus is going to return, but he will return. But this sets off a movement. And actually, we weren't considered a movement, they didn't want to be called a church, because for many of the early church pioneers, they were, they were a little, let's just say they were a little hesitant to want to bring in an organization because many of them have had a bad experience with organized church. But as we'll talk about next week, why did we actually have to come together and organize? Well, ultimately, it was in the best interest to be able to bring the church the movement, to the best way to be able to share the gospel. But this is pre actual incorporated church, between 1844 and 1863. The early believers, they continue to meet in small groups across the country. And then they eventually decided to get together in these called general conferences they would meet, they would share ideas, they would come together, they would study, in fact, some of our most important beliefs that we now believe over the intervening years, such as Christ's Second Coming as a literal event, the Sabbath. When people die, they're simply asleep. And the prophetic gift, all of these beliefs were articulated, and realize in between the intervening years of the time of 1844, and 1863. So you have these small band groups, working together, sharing the good news, and putting in as we talked about last week, their own money, raising money, but they many of them spent their own money to succeed in sharing the good news that Jesus was returning, but more importantly, that Jesus had died and desires to save you. Amen.

So along the way, we also learn of a prophet, Ellen G White emerged as a leader and a prophet to help guide the Seventh Day Adventist Church and also mentioned to she was just like William Miller sheep, she was a reluctant prophet. She did not want to be considered or called a prophet. But God used her in a mighty way. I, you know, as I was studying and reminding myself of all this history, Ellen White was 17, at the time of the great disappointment, and for time, at the very beginning, she lost faith and thought, Oh, well, it's over. But in December, she has her, I believe it was her first vision. And we'll talk about that a little more next week. But it was a catalyst. And she would be a strong proponent and help us to move this movement to becoming not just a movement, but a church. And it would be this good news will be spread throughout the world. So she is also a key contributor, along with her husband, James White and Joseph Bates, who is also a sea captain. Suffice it to say, I think without her, I don't know that there would be an Adventist Church.

So the other thing that I also want to during this time, and because it's education Sabbath, wanting to dedicate, another key component was education and health. Were topics and ideas that were they fully the early pioneers believed in they wanted to make sure that their children and people could be able to learn not only the Bible, but also be able to take care of themselves. I believe our first official school was not built until I think 1872. But the proponents it started in the 1850s. So education and health as as somebody who might have been actually Ellen White have been left and the right hand of the gospel of ministry moving forward, because how can you just like Jesus, minister to others, if you don't meet the needs of people who are in need, until people really know that you care about them and love them? Will you then be able to earn the right to earn their trust and that they will want to follow you? They were also involved in the temperance movement, realizing hey, alcohol is not necessarily tobacco, not the best things. Diet. But we were also heavily involved in the Underground Railroad movement to there was a social justice component to making sure that people can be treated with fair, fairness and love and respect because God has staved not just a few. But everyone, Amen.

Now, oh, I've said a lot. What can we take away from this? Number one? Do we always get it right? No. So what do we do? Let's own our mistakes. Let's do better. Yes, it is embarrassing to be wrong at times. But we have to be adaptable and to learn. Just like the early believers, well, did they always get it right? Was everything great? No. Let's look at Acts 6. When the widows were being left out the Greek Jewish believers, what was happening to them? Their needs, were being sidestepped, When the real, "Jewish Believers" those widows were being helped first. And so when you're banded together, when you're trying to look out for one another, how can you have harmony when once one pert, one group's needs are being met, and the other is not? So the apostles, they were busy trying to teach, everybody's like, look, we can't do everything. So they got together, they came up with seven deacons, the people who would help lead and take matters, they handle the practical logistics of this movement that they were moving forward with. So that they could make sure that they could dedicate their time, the full time to preaching and teaching. Even the early church faced discrimination. Even the early church didn't always have it together. But they were open minded, they were flexible. This is just one incident. And they were united in purpose, much like our early church pioneers, they were united in the purpose and the calling that Jesus was returning. So as we move forward, it really reminded that sorry, I missed this part. The Advent movement was a series of small groups sharing around the country collectively that the good news that Jesus was returning soon. And that education and health had been rooted from the very beginning in our Adventist Church.

Now, this week, reflection, where have you been wrong? And how did you respond? Where have you been wrong? And how did you respond? I was wrong once. I assumed that my wife and I were dating. According to me, it was August 4 2002. However, a couple of weeks later, one of her dear friends asks, So what's going on? Like, what? Are you guys dating or not? Yeah. She said no. She told me you haven't asked me properly. So 20 years ago, today, August 13. I asked my beloved wife, if she would be my girlfriend. So I love you. She's very mad at me playing 20 years today is our being together anniversary. Next month will be 15 years being married. But folks, we all make mistakes along the way. The question is, how are you going to respond to it? Are you going to have too much pride to say Nope, it's not my fault or reading get it wrong, you got it wrong. One of the greatest lessons we can take is learn from the humility of our early church, the early church, believers and also our Advent as pioneers that along the way, we're going to make mistakes. But it's what we learned from them and how we move forward.

So our challenge, find someone or something that you disagree with. And I want you to intentionally listen to their point of view. And afterwards, reflect and see if there's anything that you may have misunderstood where they're coming from, after and before, got it? That's a hard pill to swallow. How many of you can tolerate listening to somebody that you vehemently disagree with? I have a hard time. I'll be the first to admit, right. But we're not going to get anywhere. If we don't take the time to listen to one another. And understand, before we make our own conclusions about what they're trying to say, or do. Our early admin as pioneers, did they always agree? No, they disagreed. The early church always agree or disagree. All they disagreed, Peter and Paul, I think at one point they wanted to, they were ready to throw down. It got so vehemently heated. That God has called us even in our own brokenness, in our imperfections. And thank God still wants to use us, despite the fact that we are broken in sinners. And if God can use us, anything is possible. God wants to use us anything is possible. So may you go forth Have courage, take time to listen. Take time to ask myself. Am I doing everything right? Am I thinking everything correctly? Have I always got it right? Or is there something to learn? And may you be reminded of the love and the grace that Jesus desires to share with all of us.

Father in heaven, thank you for your grace, and your love and your wisdom and the promise, Lord, that you will return soon. Help us, Lord, to learn from the lessons of the past that we may not repeat them. Their big lessons, Lord, but you are a God, who understands and see through everything. So be with us. Help us to know how to go forth to be your ambassadors to lead into guidance to share with us the words of wisdom that you want us to share with others. And above all, Lord, may we represent you faithfully, here in our homes, and our work and at the grocery store and the post office, and neighborhood wherever we go that others may see that you are real and desire to know more about you and Lord ultimately, to give their life and follow you in Jesus name. Amen.

Grace and peace everybody