

**CALVARY BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
(PANDAN)**

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3166]

DHW Bible Class

LESSON 12

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

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INTRODUCTION

We have followed Jesus in His first preaching and teaching tour of Galilee. At this point of time, Jesus began His second tour of Galilee, which took Him to every city and village. His ministry in Galilee was drawing to a close. His ministry thus far had been opposed by the Jewish religious leaders, and many hearers were puzzled by His preaching and teaching. However, there were others who heard and believed. He chose twelve apostles, who followed Him in His tour, and Jesus focused on training and

equipping them to preach the gospel of life and to continue His mission of advancing the kingdom of God.

This second tour records more of Jesus' preaching and teaching, and as usual, Jesus also healed many who came to Him for healing. The Pharisees and scribes still dogged Him and in one case of exorcism, they charged Jesus for casting out demons by the power of Satan. When these people sought a sign, Jesus refused their request and instead rebuked them. Then Jesus taught the meaning of true spiritual relationship over natural relationship on earth.

UNDERSTANDING

Jesus Preaches Throughout Galilee the Second time
Luke 8:1-3

The Twelve whom Jesus had chosen accompanied Jesus in His second tour of preaching and teaching in Galilee. His ministry and mission would soon be drawing to a close. He now turned to training His disciples so that when He was gone, they would be equipped to continue His work. Among His "crew", there were a number of women. This was uncommon among the Jews because the women usually stayed at home. Women did not follow their men folks. But interestingly, the women who are mentioned here did not stay at home instead they went with Jesus and His apostles on their preaching tours! These women spent their time, energy and money looking after Jesus and His band of apostles. Luke

singled out three of them. There was Mary Magdalene who was delivered from seven demons. She must not be confused with the sinful woman who anointed Jesus' feet in Simon's (the Pharisee's) home. Joanna was another woman, and she was from a higher social and privileged group. Her husband, Chuza, served as a steward in Herod's palace. There were also Susanna and many others. Little is known of Suzanna. But all these women had one thing in common. They were all grateful to Jesus for saving them from diseases and they thank Him for saving them from sin and death. They willingly undertook this tiresome work at their own expense!

Teaching of the Unpardonable Sin

Matthew 12:22-37, Mark 3:22-30

Jesus healed a man who was demon possessed. The people were amazed and wondered whether Jesus was truly "the Son of David". This title was a Messianic title. But their concept of the title carried a more nationalistic fervour, which was different from the biblical meaning. They expected their Messiah to come and destroy the oppression of the Roman government and set up an Israeli kingdom. But the Pharisees disagreed that Jesus was the Messiah. They declared that Jesus exorcised in the power of Beelzebub.¹ Knowing their

¹ The title Beelzebub was an adaptation of the words Baal-Zebub, the fly god of Ekron (1 Kings 1:2-3, 6, 16). Baal was the pagan god of the Canaanites. The name

thoughts, Jesus called them and openly refuted their charge against Him. Jesus reasoned with them on the absurdity of their reasoning. If the charge was true, then Satan was defeating himself. His kingdom would not stand. Why would Satan do anything that would weaken his kingdom or his position? Jesus then called their attention to their "children". The "children" referred to the students of the Pharisees. They too practised exorcism. Jesus' simple question was directed at the Pharisee by way of their students. By whom do you cast out demons? Jesus' question to the Pharisees argues that if by the mere fact of casting out demons [Jesus is not here saying that their disciples actually did] you conclude that I am doing it by the power of Satan, then how do you explain your students casting out demons? Their actions condemn your arguments against me, says Jesus Christ.

If this were not true, then the students of the Pharisees stood in judgement against their charge that Jesus cast out demons in the name of Beelzebub. In other words, either they themselves were in league with Beelzebub, or else the charge against Jesus could not hold. Jesus continued His rebuttal. If He cast out demons by the Spirit of God, and indeed it was, then the logical explanation was that the kingdom of God is greater than the

means "lord". This was the god whose worship was brought into Israel by Jezebel. The Jews in later years showed their contempt for this pagan god "Baal" and attributed this name "Beelzebub" to Satan (Hobbs, *Matthew*, 150).

kingdom of Satan. The Spirit of God is more powerful than Satan. Hence Satan was being driven out when the Spirit of God entered in!

Jesus then issued a warning. Any kind of sin or blasphemy against men can be forgiven, even if it is against the Son of man. The reason is that you can find that man and apologize to him. Whatever restitutions you need to make to him in your act of apology can be made and be found on earth. But the sin and blasphemy (slander, defamation) against the Spirit of God, who is God Himself, cannot be forgiven. Where can you find Him to make your apology? What restitution can you make to Him as all things that you possess are of this world? Do not be too quick to condemn the work of God when you see one before your very eyes? Is there such a sin as the unpardonable sin? The Christian can never commit the unpardonable sin.

Jesus continued His rebuttal. He used the simile of trees to show the error of the Pharisees' charge against Him. Jesus declared that a tree is known by its fruit — a good tree produces good fruit; and a bad tree produces bad fruit. This principle is applicable to human lives. Jesus reasoned that if the Pharisees' charge that He was possessed by Beelzebub was true, why was not His fruit evil? They had called Jesus "good master" and yet they maligned His good work. Jesus exposed their inconsistency — either make the tree good and his fruit good; or else make the tree bad and its fruit corrupt. Jesus was

telling them to make their position clear; be consistent.

To this group of Pharisees and scribes who confronted Him, Jesus called them a brood of vipers. This is a very strongly worded condemnation. Vipers are very poisonous and deadly snakes. A bite from them will seriously harm a person. This was the character of these Pharisees, vicious and malicious. They were undermining the work of Jesus. Jesus therefore warned that a day of judgement would come when every word they uttered would be held accountable against them on the Day of Judgement.

Teaching on the Sign of Jonah *Matthew 12:38-42*

The Pharisees and the scribes came again to Jesus, addressing Him as "Master". They demanded a sign from Him because some had looked upon Him as the Messiah. The Messiah was expected to perform special signs. Jesus did not oblige them. Instead in an indirect way, Jesus related them to an "evil and adulterous" generation of people. These are strong words. Jesus could see the insincerity of their hearts when they asked for a sign. Jesus had performed many signs [miracles] but their hearts were hardened and their eyes blind. These Pharisees professed outwardly to worship God, but inwardly were unfaithful to God.

However, Jesus gave them a sign. It was "the sign of the prophet Jonah". Jesus declared: as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so also would the Son

of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. They knew about Jonah, but the interpretation Jesus gave would have perplexed them. Today we can understand what Jesus meant. He was referring to His death, burial and resurrection. That was the sign. But they could not have known. Jesus then compared them to the Ninevites. Jesus said that the Ninevites would rise up and condemn them because they repented when Jonah preached to them. Jonah was a reluctant preacher, and here before them was One who was greater than Jonah, and yet they repented not. Jesus then cited another Old Testament episode. The queen of Sheba would also rise up and condemn them because she came from a far country to see the wisdom of Solomon. And the Pharisees and scribes were having One who was greater than Solomon and yet they failed to recognize Him. Jesus was referring to Himself and His mission, but these Jewish leaders failed to respond accordingly. These two examples were cited by the LORD to teach the Pharisees that they have hardened hearts. These Gentiles had so little and yet they believed, you have the perfect teacher and perfect miracles done before your very eyes and yet you will not see and believe.

Teaching on Spiritual Relationships

Matthew 12:46-50, Mark 3:31, Luke 8:19-21

Jesus was still preaching and teaching the people. His mother and brothers came to him wanting to speak to Him. They

could not get near Him because of the crowd. Then someone told Him that His mother and brothers desired to speak to Him. Jesus' answer seems very strange. "Who is my mother? And who are my brothers?" Jesus could not be accused of disowning His mother and His brothers, could He? Then Jesus with outstretched hands pointing towards His disciples who were sitting around Him said, "Behold, my mother and my brethren." Jesus was calling His disciples His "mother" and His "brothers". Jesus immediately explained that those who hear the Word of God and do the will of His Father in heaven are His brothers, sisters and mother. His mother and His brothers would now have to see Him as their Saviour and Lord.

This is a new relationship which is thicker than blood relationship. His disciples were those who had heard His Word and followed Him. They were His brothers. Jesus' own blood step-brothers were not believers at first. Jesus was teaching a new relationship, that is, the family of God. Jesus was not teaching the "universal Fatherhood of God". Neither was He teaching the universal Brotherhood of men. Only those who heard the Word of God and do His Will are brothers and sisters and God is their Father in Heaven. Jesus would not call an unbeliever who rejects Him a brother, sister or mother.

All believers in Jesus Christ enter into a new and everlasting relationship which nothing can divide or separate. Forever that relationship would be secured unlike human blood relationship

which would be severed the moment death occurs. James the half-brother of Jesus who later was converted and became the leader of the church in Jerusalem, and the author of the epistle that bears His name, addressed himself as a “servant of God and of the Lord Jesus Christ”.

SUMMARY

Jesus’ ministry of preaching, teaching and healing were far-reaching. It touched many people of different walks of life and status, even to royalty and people in high positions. What is significant were some women who were healed by Him and who willingly accompanied Him and His Twelve disciples to care for them at their own expense, thus playing an important part in Jesus’ mission.

In confronting the Pharisees and the scribes who were relentlessly trying to trap Jesus and malign His works, Jesus had a grave warning for them. They were in danger of committing a sin against God. A person can harden his own heart and blind his eyes to the extent that he sees good as evil and evil as good. A tree is known by its fruit. The sign of Jonah is explained by Jesus. People today have no excuse for rejecting Jesus as the Son of God and Saviour and Lord of the world. The same words and reasons that Jesus used to condemn the unbelievers of His days are as relevant today. People today have the whole revelation of God and the irrefutable historical and infallible records of the person, word and

work of Jesus. The Ninevites and the queen of Sheba stand in judgement against those who do not believe and reject Jesus Christ today.

In human relationships, Jesus considered all men and women who do the will of God as His brothers, sisters and mother. They belong to the family of God, who is the heavenly Father. Jesus placed greater meaning in believers’ spiritual relationship with one another over their natural blood relationship.

PRACTICAL VALUE

The women set an example for all of us to show our gratitude to the Lord Jesus Christ who has saved us from eternal damnation. We should love Him with all our heart, mind and soul, and not just words and emotions, but in more concrete and measurable terms.

In our relationship with one another, we must always remind ourselves that whatever we say or do, there will be a day of accountability even for Christians (2 Corinthians 5:10).² In addition, we learn that Christians are eternally bonded together and nothing can sever that relationship. That should teach us in practical terms to love and care for one another. Whatever bond we have on earth is temporal and will end except the bond in Christ. **AMEN**

² KJV 2 Corinthians 5:10 For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad.

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LESSON 12

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

**DAILY READING &
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Luke 8:1-3.

**TUESDAY: Matthew 12:22-37;
Mark 3:19-30.**

WEDNESDAY: Matthew 12:38-42.

**THURSDAY: Matthew 12:46-50;
Mark 3:31; Luke 8:19-21.**

**FRIDAY: Jeremiah 17:9;
Proverbs 4:23; Psalm 139: 23-24;
Hebrews 12:15.**

Discussion Questions

1. What two significant features of Jesus' ministry are indicated in v.1?

2. What evidence does the text show the method by which Jesus trained His twelve disciples?

3. What strikes you about the "crew" that travelled with Jesus?

4. God is both loving and forgiving; how is it possible to be in a state where forgiveness is beyond the grace of God?

5. How did Jesus refute The Pharisees' and the scribes' charge against Him that He was in league with Satan?

6. What can we learn from Jesus about the kingdom of

God and the kingdom of Satan?

7. What important truth did Jesus teach about a tree and its fruit?

8. How do Jesus' three illustrations from the Old Testament support His rebuke against the scribes and Pharisees who asked for a sign?

9. Was Jesus rejecting His family? What is Jesus' teaching?

10. What was Jesus' teaching when He said that His true family members are those who do the will of God?

11. What important truth or lesson have you learned this week that has changed your thinking or life?
