

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

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-  
Presbyterian Church, 10 Downing  
St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

**DHW Bible Class**

**LESSON 15**

**THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

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**INTRODUCTION**

Jesus was nearing the end of His ministry. He spent more time with His disciples. He revisited Nazareth because it was His hometown where He lived His first thirty years. He knew the people there. The people were privileged that He revisited them. He had a purpose but the result was sad. Jesus then set the example and took His disciples along with Him

touring the region preaching, teaching and healing people. Jesus next sent His twelve disciples to proclaim the message of the kingdom of God. Jesus' teaching method is exemplary. The disciples had on-the-job experience. He gave them specific instructions.

Mark recorded how John the baptizer died. It was a sad and sobering incident, but it reveals that the servants of the Most High God, the Creator of Heaven and Earth, are not exempt from trouble and tribulations, and even death.

This study should teach us many valuable and precious lessons about Jesus and the cost of discipleship.

**UNDERSTANDING**

***Second Rejection at Nazareth***  
*Mark 6:1-6a, Matthew 13:54-58*

Jesus went to his hometown of Nazareth. His disciples followed Him. This was his second visit. We remembered the first visit when He was in Nazareth. At that time, He opened the book of Isaiah (61:1-2) and preached and taught that He was the fulfilment of Isaiah 61:1-2. The town people of Nazareth rejected Him and His teaching and attempted to cast Him headlong down the edge of the hill. But Jesus "passing through the midst of them and went His way."

The differences in the details show that this was Jesus' second visit to Nazareth and another attempt to win the people of Nazareth. As was customary, on the sabbath day, He went to the

synagogue. He came as one who was widely known as a Rabbi, a teacher of the Word. Many who heard Him were astonished at His teaching. From their rhetorical questions we observed that they recognized the authority and wisdom of Jesus' knowledge and teaching. They also acknowledged the great miraculous works which were done by Jesus. They asked good questions: "From whence hath this man these things? What wisdom is this which is given to Him, that even such mighty works are wrought by His hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and Juda, and Simon?"

We can categorise these questions into three: (1) Who is this Man? In other words: Is Jesus human or a deity? (2) What is His wisdom? Are Jesus' words eternal truth or man's philosophy? and (3) Where does He get His power? Is Jesus' power to work miracles natural or God-given? The answers to these questions are crucial for anyone to put his faith in Jesus. If Jesus is not the Son of God, then He is a lunatic. If Jesus' words are not the Truth, He is a liar. If Jesus' power is not given by God, He is in league with the devil (McKenna, *Mark*, 124). If Jesus is not what He claimed to be, then faith in Jesus is vanity and useless.

While the town people of Nazareth asked the right questions, their attitude was wrong. They were prejudiced against Him. They had known Jesus for thirty years. Jesus grew up in Nazareth and learned the

trade of Joseph, His earthly father, a carpenter. They referred to Him as "the son of Mary", a derogatory term. Jews always refer a man as the son of his father not his mother, even though his father had died. So this term placed on Jesus was disparaging. Their mention of the names of Jesus' brothers indicates their scepticism about Jesus. Since Jesus' brothers were ordinary people, they thought that Jesus was not different from them. They were actually prejudiced and unbelieving. In addition Jesus' brothers were not believers too (John 7:5).<sup>1</sup> It was only after Jesus' resurrection that they came to believe on Him. One significant point is that all the people who ridiculed Him did not say any thing sinful about Jesus, given the fact that He had lived with them for thirty years!

This prompted Jesus to repeat the saying: "A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house." Jesus was amazed at their unbelief. They had the great opportunity of seeing, knowing and "rubbing shoulders" with Jesus. They should have noticed in Jesus something that was different through His character, conduct and bearing. All these should have made them think more deeply, but they did not. And in spite of the

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<sup>1</sup> John 7:5 For neither did his brethren believe in him.

things that they had heard of Him concerning His preaching and teaching, and the mighty and miraculous works that He did, they were unbelieving. Jesus marvelled at their unbelief.

Jesus could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief. This does not mean that Jesus was unable to do mighty deeds which He had done in other places. The reason why Jesus could do no mighty works there was because of their unbelief. The miracles would be wasted on them. It was an issue of faith, not that Jesus was incapable of performing mighty works. Jesus could have done them if He had wanted to. But Jesus did not do because the people were unbelieving. The people did not deserve to receive the blessings that Jesus came to give. Unbelief always stops the flow of blessings from God.

***Jesus Preaches throughout Galilee the Third Time***

*Matthew 9:35-38, Mark 6:6b.*

Shaking off the dust of unbelief in Nazareth, Jesus “went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.” This passage summarizes the three-fold ministry of compassion of Jesus. He taught with authority the Scriptures (the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings). He preached the “gospel of the Kingdom”—the good news of the Kingdom of God. The good news of the Kingdom of God is the rule of God in the midst

of His people which is now actualized in the Person and presence of Jesus Christ (Augsburger, *Matthew*, 129). The needy multitude that was flocking to Him and following Him always moved Him to compassion.

Jesus looked at the people as sheep without a shepherd. They “fainted.” The word means they were vexed and bewildered. Their so-called shepherds, the Pharisees, had imposed upon them a burden too heavy for them to bear—the legalistic rules about keeping the Sabbath, fasts and washing of hands before eating. They were “scattered.” The word is used of men cast down and lying prostrate on the ground suffering from mortal wounds. The wolves dressed in shepherd’s clothing had ravaged the flock (Hobbs, *Matthew*, 115). These poor people were “fatigued and forlorn.” They were like sheep which are tired, and are exposed to all kinds of danger from beasts, the weather, hunger and thirst. Indeed, they needed a good shepherd who was true and honest, to lead and guide them.

Then Jesus turned to His disciples and said, “The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.” Jesus had chosen twelve disciples to be with Him for on-the-job training. They now shared his concern and compassion for the throngs of people. The spiritual condition of the multitude moved Jesus to see an abundant harvest waiting to be

gathered. To all these people, the gospel of the Kingdom had to be preached. But the labourers were few. Jesus made an earnest appeal for more labourers to reap the harvest. But notice that they must be sent by the “Lord of the harvest”, meaning that they are the Lord’s servants who would respond to this call of service. We should pray often to the Lord to send more labourers into the field. We should pray that those of us, who hear the call, will not be disobedient.

### ***Evangelistic Ministry of the Twelve***

*Matthew 10:1, 5-11:1, Mark 6:7-13, Luke 9:1-6.*

Jesus, the Lord of the harvest, now sent forth His twelve disciples into the harvest field. These disciples had been specially set apart from the larger group of His followers. Jesus gave them “power” which was for the purpose of authenticating their mission. The word “power” (Greek: *exousia*) which means “authority.” The twelve disciples went in the name of Jesus Christ. Matthew named the Twelve Apostles (Greek: *apostellos*, one who is sent). In other words, the Apostles’ mission was Jesus’ mission. Those who received them were receiving Jesus; and those who rejected them were rejecting Jesus.

This sending forth was to the “lost sheep of the house of Israel”. They were not to go into the way that would lead them to the Gentiles. This indicates that the present evangelistic campaign

was restricted to the regions around Galilee. Jesus was not being narrow minded and nationalistic in His approach here. In fact He had reached out to the Samaritans. Jesus’ purpose was to present the gospel of the Kingdom of God to the Jews first because they were His own people in the flesh. It was a logical approach in His evangelistic mission. The Jews were given the Scriptures and it was natural to start with them first. They were commanded to go on preaching the gospel of the Kingdom. They were to go empty handed devoid of any material belongings. **Mt 10:9-10**, “Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, Nor scrip for your journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.” When Jesus said that the “workman is worthy of his meat,” He gave them the assurance that He would provide for them through those who benefited from their ministry. The disciples must learn to trust the LORD Jesus Christ completely without a doubt. They must not depend on money or clothing or any man for their support but on Jesus alone.

Jesus also warned them that there would be those who would not receive them and the gospel of the kingdom. Jesus told them to shake off the dust from their feet. This symbolic act signified that the people to whom they had preached the gospel of the kingdom had rejected the message and the messengers, and that in the day of judgement,

the punishment awaiting them would be less tolerable than that on Sodom and Gomorrah which are examples of wickedness. They in turn will be rejected by God on the Day of Judgment.

Jesus said further to them that He was sending them forth “as sheep in the midst of wolves.” They must be prepared to meet with opposition from people who would harm them. Opposition against them would be inevitable because the disciple is no greater than his master. What they did to Jesus they would not hesitate to do to them. They were to be “wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.” The combination of intellectual keenness and shrewdness must be matched with simplicity and singleness of heart. This keenness of mind never means a compromise with evil. And the simplicity or singleness of heart is to be honest and undefiled. In this way, the disciples would avoid the wicked deeds of evil men against them, and at the same time would not be gullible. This quality would produce the same results in any age.

In the face of severe opposition, they were to trust and fear God rather than men who were able to kill the body but not the soul. God was in control and they should not be fearful. If God, their Heavenly Father cares for the sparrows, He would surely care more for them because they were more precious. They should not be afraid to “confess” Jesus to others. To “confess” Jesus is to declare all that is true about Jesus. And if they were bold to confess Jesus

before all men, Jesus would confess them before God the Father who is in Heaven. The gospel message of the kingdom would result in problems and difficulties in the family. But those who would not take a stand and love Jesus more than their parents, siblings and loved ones are not “worthy” of Him. In other words, to be worthy of Jesus means that one’s need of Him should exceed the need of all others.

Jesus further declared that “he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me, is not worthy of me.” The “cross” was a symbol of shame and suffering. Jesus was so precious to His disciples that no shame or suffering should stop them from following Him. If His disciples tried to avoid suffering to save their lives, they would lose their lives. But those who were prepared to lose their lives for His sake, would find it. They would find life more abundantly. With these words, Jesus ended His discourse to His Twelve disciples, and He went about to teach and preach in the cities and healing those who were sick.

### ***Martyrdom of John the Herald***

*Mark 6:14-29, Matthew 14:1-12,  
Luke 9:7-9.*

The Herod mentioned here is King Herod Antipas, the tetrarch of Galilee and Perea. A tetrarch was one who ruled over a fourth of a kingdom. Herod Antipas was the son of Herod the Great. Upon his father’s death in 4 B.C., the Roman emperor, Augustus Caesar appointed him. He reigned until 39

A.D when he was sent into exile to Lyons in Gaul (France). This was the Herod who arrested John the baptizer. Later he beheaded John but his guilty conscience continued to plague him. He heard about Jesus' ministry and works and in his superstitious nature, he believed that John the baptizer had risen from the dead. Other people regarded Jesus as Elijah or some other prophet. But he still thought that John had risen from the dead in the person of Jesus.

At this juncture, Mark gave the historical account as to how John the baptizer was beheaded. Herod imprisoned John because he preached that Herod committed sin by taking the wife of his brother, Philip. Herodias quarrelled with John and would have him killed but she could not because Herod feared John and the people because they considered John a prophet, who was just and holy. Herod celebrated his birthday and invited many dignitaries to his banquet. Herodias' daughter danced before Herod in the banquet. Herod was so touched and happy that he promised her anything even half of his kingdom. The girl went to her mother, who told her to ask for the head of John the baptizer. Herod could not retract his promise. He ordered the execution of John the baptizer and to bring his head to the girl who then gave it to her mother. The disciples of John then came and took his headless body and buried it. Jesus was told of this incident. What we learn here is John's uncompromising stand for what is morally right

according to the Word of God. For this he paid it with his life. This is indeed admirable. Herodias' daughter was an innocent girl used by her mother for her vindictive ends. She is an example of a woman scorned. Herod was pathetic. He was influenced by superstition. He was impulsive. He was weak and irresolute. He suffered for his own folly. Parents who use their own children to commit murder are despicable.

### ***Return of the Twelve from Evangelism***

*Mark 6:30-34, Matthew 14:13-14, Luke 9:10-11, John 6:1-2.*

The Twelve Apostles returned from their mission. They came back to Jesus to report to Him who had sent them. Then Jesus told them to withdraw to "a desert place" and take a rest all by themselves. They could talk there more freely without interruption. But there were many people coming and going, making demands on them so much so that there was no time to eat. When they sailed across the Sea of Galilee and came to the desert place, a great throng of people followed them because they saw His miracles and healed the diseases of the people. Once again, Jesus on seeing them was moved with compassion toward them. He then received them and began to teach them many things of the kingdom of God.

### **SUMMARY**

It is sad that the town people of Nazareth did not change their attitude towards Jesus. He had

gone there before, but this second time when He went there, they had heard of His reputation and the miracles that He did. In fact, they acknowledged all these, and yet they rejected Him. Their hearts were hardened. They were indeed privileged to have Jesus visiting them a second time like giving them a second chance. Many other cities had not heard of Him and had not been visited. By way of application, we too are very privileged. Today many people have the privilege of reading and knowing about Jesus by reading the Bible which has been translated into their vernacular tongue. English-speaking people are the most blessed. Moreover, there are churches which faithfully preach and teach about Jesus and the Word of God. Yet, few care to attend church, to learn the Scriptures and to receive Jesus Christ.

Jesus sent His disciples to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom of God. They needed to learn the important lesson of absolute faith and trust in Jesus Christ for all their needs. Before His ascension, Jesus' command was to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:19).

The gospel message requires the people to repent of their sins and submit to the rule of God in their lives. Today the gospel message has been reduced to a social gospel. This social gospel makes sociological and political factors more important than the redemptive mission of the church. Indeed, if the church does not

preach the pure gospel of salvation, no one can. Christians are the only ones who have the message of salvation.

There are things which Jesus told His disciples to do and observe that were applicable to them only, and there are things that can be applied today. But the important thing as we look at the instructions given to them, is that the mission work needs immediate attention. There was an element of urgency then as well as now. We should spare no effort in preaching and sharing the gospel of salvation to others. May it please the Lord to call some of us to give their life full time to the service of the King.

When the disciples returned after their mission, Jesus suggested to them to take a rest. Jesus knew how hard they had worked. Rest was needed. Rest and recuperation are important. There is a place for legitimate rest and recreation for Christians. AMEN

**DHW Bible Class**

**LESSON 15**

**THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

**DAILY READING & DISCUSSION  
QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

**MONDAY:** Mark 6:1-6a, Matthew 13:54-58.

**TUESDAY:** Matthew 9:35-38, Mark 6:6b.

**WEDNESDAY:** Matthew 10:1, 5-11:1, Mark 6:7-13, Luke 9:1-6.

**THURSDAY:** Mark 6:14-29, Matthew 14:1-12, Luke 9:7-9.

**FRIDAY:** Mark 6:30-34, Matthew 14:13-14, Luke 9:10-11, John 6:1-2.

**Discussion Questions**

**1. In what way were the people of Nazareth offended at Jesus?**

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**2. What lessons did the disciples likely learn from the incident?**

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**3. What prevented Jesus from doing mighty works in Nazareth? Why do you think that made a difference?**

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**4. How does the divine record summarize Jesus' ministry?**

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**5. What was Jesus' response to what He saw in all the cities and villages? How can you apply this in today's context?**

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**6. What activity is suggested by Jesus' words to His disciples**

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**7. What warnings did Jesus give to His Twelve Disciples?**

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**8. What encouragement did Jesus give to His Twelve Disciples?**

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**9. What priorities did Jesus impose on His disciples in preparing them for their ministry?**

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**10. What do you think motivated Herod to put John to death?**

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**11. From Herod's behaviour what do we learn about the way sin operates?**

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**12. What have you learned about Jesus' character, conduct and mission in this lesson?**

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