

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

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

**DHW BIBLE CLASS  
LESSON 20  
THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

**INTRODUCTION**

Having revealed to His disciples of His impending arrest, death and resurrection, Jesus spent more time with His disciples preparing them for the time when He would not be with them. He taught them valuable lessons on how they ought to relate with their fellow believers. They should not despise spiritually young believers. They should learn to forgive sins committed against one another. Jesus spelt out the proper procedure for resolving any wrong committed among themselves. Also, for the first time, we are introduced to His brothers. This means that Mary, after giving birth to Jesus, married Joseph and had children who were Jesus' step-siblings. In making His journey to Jerusalem, Jesus went on preaching and teaching, and healing in Perea, and passed through Samaria. Along the way Jesus met three people who expressed desire to become His disciples. Jesus took the opportunity to show the sacrifices His disciple must be willing to make. Jesus arrived in Jerusalem just when the celebration of the Feast of Tabernacles was about to end.

These are important and valuable lessons on relationships with others and the cost of discipleship.

**OUTLINE**

1. Teaching on Forgiveness (Matthew 18:10-35)
2. Prolonged Sojourn in Galilee (John 7:1-10)
3. Departure from Galilee (Matthew 19:1-2; Mark 10:1)
4. Journey Through Samaria (Luke 9:51-56)
5. Cost of Discipleship (Luke 9:57-62; Matthew 8:19-22)
6. Feast of Tabernacles (John 7:11-52)

**COMMENTARY**

**Teaching on Forgiveness**

Jesus had just used a child as an important reference in his lesson on the need to cultivate spiritual humility. Jesus continued His teaching, cautioning His disciples not to despise one of these "little ones". These "little ones" was a reference not to the physical features of the child, but rather to their childlike faith. In other words, a young believer is like a spiritual infant. When Jesus cautioned them that they should not despise one of these "little ones", He was teaching His disciples that they should not look down with disdain and contempt on believers who were young in the faith. When a Christian despises

another, he is showing partiality. If the Christian were to withhold any help from another brother who is in need when he has the means and the power to help, and he does not do it, it is another form of despising the needy brother. Jesus gave three reasons why a Christian brother should not treat His fellow brethren with contempt.

The first reason is that the angels in heaven are always before the presence of God. We can understand this fact that young believers are under the care of angels. This does not mean that an angel is assigned to each believer, like a guardian angel. It is more correct to understand that angels (plural) are assigned by God to care for His people. These angels are always standing before God, ready to perform the bidding of the Almighty. The second reason is that believers have a very special relationship with the "Son of man", who is none other than Jesus who came to save sinners. Jesus laid down His life for all, and has purchased believers with His precious blood. The parable of the ninety-nine sheep and one lost sheep shows the extent of the shepherd's love for even one lost sheep. Jesus is the Shepherd who loves and cares for His sheep. The third reason is that of the believers' relationship with the Father, which is in heaven. Believers called God, *Abba* or Father. As the Father of believers, God loves and cares for His people. Jesus warned that Christians should be careful that they do not look down on fellow believers,

especially those who are young in the faith.

It is inevitable that when Christians are together, there is bound to be conflicts among them. Such conflicts must not be allowed to simmer and eventually boil over. They must be quickly resolved. Jesus gave the guidelines to settle wrongs that are being done one towards another. There must be discipline in the church. A brother who has wronged another brother needs to be told of his wrongdoing. The person to initiate discipline is the brother who has been wronged. He should approach the guilty brother privately and settle with him alone. But if the brother who commits the wrong rejects the correction, he will be approached again. This time, it will be done in the presence of two or three witnesses who are able to confirm the wrongdoing. If the guilty brother refuses to acknowledge and repent, the matter will be brought up before the whole church. If he is still stubborn and refuses to repent, he will be excommunicated and treated like a non-believer. Note that it is not mentioned that he is NOT a believer or a pagan, but that he should be treated AS or LIKE a heathen or an unbeliever. Although some may think that it is very harsh, this is the teaching of Scripture. It shows that Jesus has a very high regard for the holiness of His Church. This is the process of sanctification or cleansing. Jesus explained the importance of the function of the church. As a community of Christ, the church has this authority to bind or

lose members of the community. The church must exercise this important function to discipline the offending brother. An example of such disciplinary action against another brother in Christ is Paul's rebuke of Peter in Antioch (Galatians 2:11-14).<sup>1</sup> Peter's fault was openly seen and his action would lead to a misrepresentation of the gospel of salvation. Hence, Paul had to discipline him publicly for his sin was public and also for the sake of the gospel to the saving of souls.

Jesus says that He is in their midst when two or three brethren meet together to resolve their conflict. In other words, this is a warning that everything said in the meeting must be honest and truthful. The accuser must not add or subtract in his testimony. The accused must likewise tell the truth and if he has sinned, he repents and seeks forgiveness from God and the people he has sinned against. Dare anyone sin by telling lies for Jesus is present and nothing can be hidden from Him. The one who refuses to tell the truth but lies will have to face the condemnation of the Lord. [NOTE: This passage has

been used constantly to refer to prayer. This ought not to be so as the prayer of a righteous man availeth much, not when two or three are gathered together. To use this in prayer is to use this text out of context.]

Peter then asked an appropriate question. He wanted to know how many times he should forgive a brother who sinned against him. Is it seven times? What should be the attitude of the brother who was hurt by another? Jesus answered that the brother should forgive him "seventy times seven." It is clear that Jesus did not mean literally 490 times only. The phrase expresses the idea that a brother should forgive the offending brother as many times as it is necessary. Jesus illustrated His teaching with the parable, which is commonly known as "the parable of the unmerciful servant." A king decided to write off all the debts of his servant when the latter begged him for mercy. A fellow servant owed this servant some money. It was a small amount compared to the amount he owed the king. However, when his fellow servant begged him for mercy, he flatly denied him mercy. Instead of showing the same mercy, which he received from the king, this man demanded payment immediately although the man begged his indulgence and promised to pay when he was able. This unmerciful servant had his fellow servant thrown into jail. When the king came to know about this incident, the king was very angry. He called his servant and rebuked him. He demanded that the

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<sup>1</sup> Galatians 2:11 But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed. 12 For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision. 13 And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation. 14 But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

servant pay all that he owed him. From this parable, Jesus warned His disciples that if they refused to forgive the one who has done him wrong, God the heavenly Father will not forgive them. Forgiveness is a mark of a believer's salvation. Not to forgive means that the believer does not understand and has not received the forgiveness from God in the first place. All Christians must be ready to forgive another regardless of the sin committed against him.

### **Prolonged Sojourn in Galilee**

Jesus left Judea and returned to Galilee because the Jews sought to kill Him. The Feast of the Tabernacles was near. The feast of the Tabernacles was celebrated on the fifteenth day of the month of Tisri (around the end of September or the beginning of October). The feast is also called by other names: the Feast of Booths commemorating the years of wanderings of the Israelites in the wilderness when they were liberated from bondage in Egypt [they had to live in booths built on top of their flat-roofed houses; the Feast of Ingathering (Exodus 23:16) because it marked the end of the harvest of fruits, oil and wine. This feast was a time of great rejoicing for the people of Israel. As we can see, it is an important day to the Jews. It is a time in which the Jews are reminded of God's care and love for them, and it is also a time when they gather the year's harvest. Jews from all over the country and even those who are abroad would converge in Jerusalem to celebrate this great and joyous feast.

We are introduced to Jesus' stepbrothers. This shows that Joseph and Mary consummated their marriage after Mary had given birth to Jesus. They were blessed with children.<sup>2</sup> But the sad thing we learn here was that neither of Jesus' brothers believed in Him. They told Jesus to go with them to Jerusalem and there He should make a name for Himself by performing miracles and revealing Himself. However, Jesus did not take up their suggestion and said to them that His time had not yet come.

### **Departure from Galilee**

While His brothers made their journey directly to Jerusalem, Jesus started His journey but decided to go to Perea. In Perea, great multitudes flocked to Him. Jesus preached and taught, and healed the people.

### **Journey Through Samaria**

From Perea, Jesus did not proceed directly to Jerusalem. He passed through Samaria. However, He was set to go to Jerusalem for the Feast of the Tabernacles. Jesus entered a village in Samaria. The Samaritans and the Jews were enemies. The Jews despised the Samaritans. There were a few reasons why the Jews of Judah (southern Israel) hated the Samaritans. After the death of King Solomon, the nation of Israel was split into two: the

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<sup>2</sup> Mark 6:3 Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him. {offended: scandalized in, or, by him}

northern kingdom comprising the ten tribes, and the southern kingdom comprising the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The northern kingdom had its capital in the city of Samaria, and sometimes the northern kingdom was referred to as Samaria. The northern kingdom was always at enmity with Judah. Moreover, when the northern kingdom fell to the Assyrians in 722 BC., many Jews in the northern kingdom were deported and they were replaced by conquered pagans from other countries. The remaining Jews in Samaria and these pagans intermarried, and a new class of people who were half Jews emerged. They were then called Samaritans. The Jews of Judah regarded the Samaritans worse than Gentiles. On the other hand, the Samaritans hated the Jews for rejecting them as well as for encroaching on their land. Jews who travelled through Samaria between Galilee and Jerusalem often could not find overnight shelter for the three-day journey because the Samaritans would not house them.

Jesus and His disciples were not received when they entered a Samaritan village. When James and John saw this, they were enraged. They asked Jesus' permission to call on Heaven to rain fire upon these Samaritans and consume them. They remembered how Elijah called fire down to consume the sacrifice on the altar at Mount Carmel. They thought that they had the power to call fire down from heaven to burn these Samaritans. But Jesus turned to them and rebuked them. They were not on the

same wavelength as Jesus was. Jesus told them that He came to save men and not to destroy their lives. Once again, we see that the disciples needed more training and preparation before they could be true ambassadors of the gospel of salvation for Jesus. They abused the power given to them by God to satisfy their own selfish ends. Jesus stopped this immediately. The power or authority given to God's leaders must not be abused. They must be used for the glory of God and the edification of the saints.

### **Cost of Discipleship**

As Jesus and His disciples went on their way, one man expressed his desire to follow Jesus wherever He went. Jesus said to him: "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay His head." Foxes and birds have their settled places of rest and shelter. Do not allow the lack of a physical home stop you from following the LORD. Jesus is not teaching us that we should not sleep on soft pillows or live in a house. When Jesus was in Bethany, he lived in the home of Mary and Martha. He had his home in Nazareth. What it means is that this physical need must not become an excuse not to obey and follow the LORD.

Then Jesus invited another man: "Follow me." The man answered Jesus that he must first perform his filial duty by burying his father when he died. Jesus said to him: "*Let the dead bury their dead: but follow me, and go thou*

*and preach the kingdom of God.*" This man used his responsibility and duty of a son as a lame excuse not to follow the Saviour. When his father died, he must provide a proper burial. After that then he would follow Jesus. Jesus' answer seemed a little strange. Those who were spiritually undiscerning are themselves spiritually dead. Hence, the words of Jesus "let the (spiritually) dead bury the (physically) dead." Jesus is not saying that we should not care for the family. Rather, we should not use our family responsibilities as an excuse not to believe in and follow the Lord Jesus Christ. The father probably had not died yet. The problem was that this man wanted to wait until his father died first and then follow the Lord at his own convenience. This will not do for today is the day of salvation.

Then a third man expressed to Jesus his desire to follow Him, but he had a condition. He asked Jesus to let him first bid farewell to his family members. Jesus responded by saying: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God." This is more than just saying good-bye for that would take a mere moment of time. What this person is requesting from the LORD was that he probably wished to find out from his family or friends if it is all right to follow the LORD. We should not ask family or friends for permission to follow the LORD. Make a decision today and follow the LORD. Do not be half hearted in your decision.

These three men met Jesus and they aspired to be with Jesus. In reality these three were not willing to pay the costs of discipleship to become Jesus' disciples.

### **Feast of Tabernacles**

In Jerusalem, the many Jews who were there expected Jesus to be present. As they were talking among the people concerning Jesus, some remarked that Jesus was a good man. Others accused Him of being a deceiver. Now when the celebration of the feast was towards its end, Jesus entered the Temple and began to teach. The Jews marvelled at His preaching because Jesus had no theological training in any one of their rabbinical schools. Indeed, although Jesus had not such training, He taught not on the authority of the Jewish schools or of His own. Jesus claimed that His teaching was from God. Jesus mentioned that only those who would do the will of God would be able to discern that He spoke from God.

Jesus recalled the controversy over the Sabbath. Jesus reasoned with the people that on the Sabbath day, they would circumcise a man. If a man could be circumcised on the Sabbath day so that the law of Moses should not be broken, why did they censure Him for making a man completely whole on the Sabbath day? On this ground, Jesus called them to judge righteously and not to judge by mere outward appearance. There was confusion among the people. Some pointed out that Jesus was the

man whom the religious leaders wanted to kill, and they did nothing while He spoke boldly to the people. Others noted that Jesus was the Christ, but then could He be the Christ since they knew where he was from, whereas when Christ should come, no one was to know where He came. When Jesus heard this, He decried their false notions. He reiterated that they knew Him and knew where He was from. He did not come by Himself, but God whom they did not know had sent Him. The people wanted to lay their hands on Him presumably to kill Him, but because His hour had not yet come, no man laid hands on Him.

Being aware of the confusion concerning Him, Jesus called upon the people that those who believed in Him, as the Scripture had said that out of them would flow "rivers of living water." This is the life eternal that will be in the believer. As believers, who obey the Word of God, they will be channels of blessings to the people around them by their testimony and the teaching and preaching of God's Holy Word. When the people heard this saying of Jesus, some concluded that Jesus was the Christ. Other pointed out if Jesus was the Christ, He should come from Bethlehem as the Scripture had predicted. But Jesus came out of Galilee. There were differing views among the people because of Jesus. And some of them would have taken Him probably not to kill Him but to make Him their Messiah-King. But His hour was not yet come, and no man laid hands on Him.

The chief priests and the Pharisees had sent the Temple police to arrest Jesus. But the police officers, having heard what Jesus said and what others argued over Jesus, concluded that the chief priests and the Pharisees might be mistaken about Jesus. So they did not arrest Jesus. This was evidence of the sovereignty of God. Jesus' hour had not yet come. Nicodemus, a member of the religious leaders, the one who came to Jesus by night, spoke up. He questioned whether it was right that they should make a judgement on Jesus before hearing Him and finding out what He did. In other words, Nicodemus was questioning the legality of condemning Jesus without giving Him a fair trial. The other Pharisees then chided Nicodemus, and charged him under suspicion as a follower of Jesus. The Pharisees refused to see that Jesus was from Bethlehem for they insisted that He was from Galilee.

### **PRACTICAL VALUE**

There are many practical and valuable lessons that we can learn. The first practical lesson that we can learn concerns our relations with one another as members of the Body of Christ, the Church. In a church, there will always be some who are more spiritually mature and others who are spiritual infants. It is important that those who consider themselves spiritually mature and knowledgeable DO NOT DESPISE or look down on those who are young spiritually. Moreover conflicts do occur

even among Christians as they together worship and serve the Lord Jesus Christ. A brother would wrong another. In this case, Jesus has made it clear that such conflicts must be resolved. He lay down the principles and procedures. DISCIPLINARY ACTION must be taken against those who do not submit to the teachings of the Word. Conflicts among members of a church are not private. They affect the whole church. It is a matter in which the church must be involved. The offending brother who refuses to repent and submit must be disciplined. FORGIVENESS must follow when a brother repents for his wrongdoing against his fellow brethren. A bad practice among Christian circles today is to sweep sins under the carpet and Christians just forgive one another without knowing what wrongdoings have been committed. This is unscriptural. Confess the sin, ask for forgiveness, and forgiveness must be readily given in the name of Christ. Honesty and truthfulness between the parties concerned in seeking to resolve the conflict are important. Jesus declared that He is present in such meetings.

The second lesson is that we should not have a condemning spirit towards others, let alone Christians. Christ came to save sinners and to help those who are spiritually weak to grow and mature. Thirdly, we must be prepared to endure the cost of discipleship. Following Jesus demands the priority of all that we are and we have. Finally we can be assured that Jesus is the Promised Messiah of the

Old Testament, who was revealed in the New Testament with wonders and signs, and that He is the Christ, the Son of the living God who gave Himself a ransom for us all, and that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. He rose from the dead on the third day thus ensuring our own resurrection on the day when He shall return in glory and majesty to receive His own. AMEN



**DAILY READING & DISCUSSION  
QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

**MONDAY:** Matthew 18:10-35; Galatians 2:11-14

**TUESDAY:** John 7:1-10

**WEDNESDAY:** Matthew 19:1-2; Mark 10:1; Luke 9:51-56

**THURSDAY:** Luke 9:57-62; Matthew 8:19-22

**FRIDAY:** John 7:11-52

**Discussion Questions**

1. In what three ways did Christ show the value that each of the believers of childlike faith had in the sight of God?

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2. If a brother has wronged another, what course of action should the blameless brother take? What is the goal?

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3. What guarantee did Jesus give to ensure that “every word may be established”?

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4. How does the parable that Jesus related answer Peter’s question? What lesson does it teach?

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5. What advice did Jesus' brothers give Him? How did Jesus reply?

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8. What costs and risks did Jesus describe in following Him?

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6. In what way do you think Jesus' brothers did not believe in Him?

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9. What did Nicodemus suggest to the Sanhedrin? What cause him to say these words?

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7. What had James and John failed to learn about Jesus and discipleship?

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10. What do people think of Jesus today? How can we have opportunities to tell people about Jesus?

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