

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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

**DHW BIBLE CLASS
LESSON 21
THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

INTRODUCTION

The opponents of Jesus, namely the Pharisees and the scribes, had failed in their earlier attempts to charge Jesus with breaking the Law and arrest Him. They were not going to give up so easily. They made another attempt to entrap Jesus, believing that this time they would succeed. Jesus' reaction to their evil work provides much valuable insight into His Person and character. In His discourse concerning Himself as the Light of the world, Jesus claimed Deity. For those who professed faith in Him, Jesus showed what marks a true disciple of His. The encounter with the man who was blind since birth dispels the false idea that a person who is afflicted with illness and diseases is always because he has sinned against God. Even today, there are those who hold to this notion. Jesus' teaching removes such false idea. Jesus' parable of the Good Shepherd intimates His passion for His people. He revealed His inner feelings and His purpose of coming to seek the lost people of Israel and all the other nations.

This study of the Scriptures will help us know a little more of our Lord Jesus Christ so that our love for Him will deepen. There are also many precious truths, that we can learn, and the truth as Jesus declared, shall set a person free.

OUTLINE

1. The Woman Taken in Adultery (John 7:53-8:11)
2. The Light of the World Discourse (John 8:12-59)
3. Healing of the Man Born Blind (John 9:1-41)
4. The Good Shepherd Discourse (John 10:1-21)

COMMENTARY

The Woman Taken in Adultery

The authenticity of this passage has been disputed. Some rejected its reliability because the two oldest manuscripts do not have it. The oldest does not mean that it is the best nor the most reliable. In fact these two oldest manuscripts, namely, Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, contain more than 3,000 differences between them just in the four Gospels alone! If they are reliable, there should not have been any or at least not so many variant readings between them. However, the passage in question is found in many later manuscripts. The matter can be conclusively resolved if one believes in the doctrine of preservation. What is

recorded is in perfect accord with Jesus and His teaching.

The Pharisees and the scribes kept chasing Jesus. They had just failed in their attempt to apprehend Jesus. The following day, early in the morning, Jesus went into the Temple and there, He preached and taught the people. The scribes and the Pharisees brought to Him a woman who was caught red-handed in adultery. They told Jesus that the woman committed the sin of adultery and according to the Mosaic Law, she should be stoned.¹ They then asked Jesus for His judgement.

John the Apostle commented that they posed this question to Jesus with the intention to entrap Him. They were not actually interested to try the woman in court and pass judgement on her. This is obvious because for one, they did not arrest the guilty man who committed the sin with her. They let the man off. It was clear that they had an ulterior motive. They were bent on finding fault with Jesus so that they could charge and arrest Him. The phrase "tempting him" (8:6) is used in an evil sense. If Jesus were to forbid them from stoning the woman, they would accuse Him of violating the Mosaic Law.

¹ Leviticus 20:10 And the man that committeth adultery with another man's wife, even he that committeth adultery with his neighbour's wife, the adulterer and the adulteress shall surely be put to death.

Deuteronomy 22:22 If a man be found lying with a woman married to an husband, then they shall both of them die, both the man that lay with the woman, and the woman: so shalt thou put away evil from Israel.

And if Jesus should pass the judgement that she should be stoned, Jesus would be charged with breaking the Roman law. Roman law does not have the death penalty for adultery. They were under the Roman law as a Roman province. Whichever way Jesus decides, He will be trapped, and they thought they had Him cornered.

On hearing their question, Jesus said nothing. Instead, He stooped down and wrote something on the ground. They kept on asking Him. Then Jesus stood up and said to them, "He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her" (8:7). After saying this, Jesus stooped down and continued writing on the ground. What did Jesus write on the ground? Some suggested that He wrote a list of sins. Since it is not revealed, it is best to leave it as it is. We do not know what Jesus wrote on the ground. All who heard the words of Jesus were convicted by their own conscience, and one after another left the place, starting from the oldest until there was no one left. Jesus was alone with the woman. Jesus was the only one who could stone her to death for He is without sin. When Jesus asked the woman where her accusers were, and had no man condemned her, she answered, "No man, Lord" (8:11a). Jesus then said to her, "Neither do I condemn thee: go and sin no more" (8:11b). These words of Jesus could be misinterpreted. Some Christians interpret Jesus' pardoning of the woman to be condoning her sin of adultery. This is not true or correct. God is holy and

because of sin the penalty of death has been sentenced upon man (Romans 6:23).² Jesus continued by commanding the woman not to sin again. He came to save the lost. The woman repented and did not commit the sin of adultery again. Jesus could pardon the woman because He is God and she had sinned against Him. He would die on the cross, taking the sin upon Himself, to make possible the forgiveness and cleansing of all her sins.

The Light of the World Discourse

The last day of the celebration of the Feast of the Tabernacles witnessed the illumination of lights across the Temple area. Jesus taught the people, saying, "I am the Light of the world: he that followeth Me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life" (8:12). This is the second of the seven great "I AM's."³ Jesus is the Light of the world that exposes man's sinful state and his need of a Saviour. That Saviour

² Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.

³John 6:35 And Jesus said unto them, **I am the bread of life**: he that cometh to me shall never hunger; and he that believeth on me shall never thirst.

John 10:9 **I am the door**: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture.

John 10:11 **I am the good shepherd**: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.

John 11:25 Jesus said unto her, **I am the resurrection**, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

John 14:6 Jesus saith unto him, **I am the way, the truth, and the life**: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me.

John 15:5 **I am the vine**, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing. {without me: or, severed from me}

is none other than Jesus Himself who came to seek the lost and offer them the gift of eternal life in Him. For those who are in spiritual darkness, Jesus gives the light to see. For those who are impure, He is the light of holiness. For those who are sad and sorrowing, He is the light of gladness. He is the light that leads those who are lost to become sons of God in Him.

When Jesus declared that He is the Light of the world, the Pharisees criticized that Jesus proclaimed Himself as Deity. Self-testimony without the collaboration of two other witnesses is invalid. Jesus responded by saying, "Though I bear record of myself, and yet my record is true: for I know whence I came, and whither I go" (8:14). In effect, Jesus was saying that He knew perfectly and completely about Himself. He knew where He came from; where He was going. His testimony of Himself was based on His perfect self-consciousness. On the other hand, the Pharisees' knowledge of Jesus was worthless because they knew not where He came from, nor where He was going (8:14). The religious leaders were judging "after the flesh" – according to human and earthly thinking and feelings. Jesus mentioned that He did not judge in this way. His judgement was spiritual and heavenly.

Although Jesus mentioned that His testimony of Himself was sufficient, nevertheless He was not alone in His testimony. His Father in heaven is with Him and He too witnessed the same

concerning Him. Jesus and His Father in heaven testified of Him – two witnesses: God the Father, and Jesus Himself. Jesus then declared to His hearers that if they would not believe that “I am he,” the Light of the world, they would die in their sins, and they could not be where He would be going. Jesus was not talking about things on earth, but about things above. Jesus also predicted that while they could not know and understand Him as yet, they would know that He is the “I AM” (the name of JEHOVAH), when He was “lifted up” (8:28), referring to His death and resurrection.

After Jesus said these words, many believed on Him. Strangely, Jesus cautioned those Jews who professed belief in Him. One would have been glad that many believed. However, Jesus knew their hearts. Jesus pointed out that a true believer is the one who continues in His Word. The word “continues” is in the present tense, meaning, “keep on.” A true and sincere believer will keep on believing and practising the teachings of Jesus. His true discipleship will be further evidenced by the full freedom he enjoys because of the truth of Jesus’ Words. Once more, Jesus’ hearers misunderstood Him. They thought that Jesus was speaking about being in prison. They quickly remarked that they were not under bondage because they were the natural descendants of Abraham. Jesus answered that whoever commits sin is a servant (slave) of sin. Jesus then reasoned with them that if they were Abraham’s descendants, they

would be like Abraham. Abraham loved to see Him but they sought to kill Him. Abraham would not do such a thing. Jesus then charged them, “Ye are of your father the devil, and the lust of your father ye will do” (8:44). This was a very serious charge against them. Jesus continued and said that the Devil was a liar from the beginning. Jesus gave them the truth, but they would rather reject the truth. Jesus challenged them to accuse Him of any sin. If they could not, why did they not believe in Him? Jesus showed them that the reason for their rejection of Him was that they were not of God.

The Jews said to Jesus that they considered Him a Samaritan who was demon-possessed. Jesus emphatically denied that, and added that whosoever kept His saying would never see death! The Jews without hesitation thought Jesus was mad because He talked about one who could not die. The Jews considered Abraham and the prophets with very high esteem. They were perplexed that Jesus could claim to be greater than Abraham and the prophets who had all died, and yet Jesus said that whoever kept His word would never die! Jesus replied that the God whom the Jews worshipped is His Father whom Jesus knew and honoured. Jesus made the greatest claim to Deity. He said that Abraham had seen Him and was glad. This clearly was a reference to His pre-incarnate appearance to Abraham ((Genesis 18:1-2).⁴ When the Jews

⁴ Genesis 18:1 And the LORD appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre: and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; 2 And he lift up his eyes

pointed that He was not even fifty years old, and how could He claim to have seen Abraham, Jesus answered, "Before Abraham was, I AM" (8:58). This is one of the statements of Jesus that He claimed Deity – He is God! What Jesus had just declared was blasphemy, according to the Jews. The punishment for blaspheming God was death by stoning. The Jews began to throw stones at Jesus, but Jesus walked away for His hour had not come yet.

Healing of the Man Born Blind

As Jesus walked in the Temple, He saw a man who was blind from birth. His disciples asked Him whether the blind man's affliction was the consequence of his parents' sin or his own sin. Jesus answered that it was neither his sin nor his parents' sin, but God's work of mercy would be shown in the healing of this man. Jesus further remarked that He must do the work of the Father while "it is day; the night comes when no man can work" (9:4). Jesus saw in this an opportunity for Him to do God's work, whereas His disciples were thinking of a theological problem. Jesus then spat on the ground and made clay with His saliva, and then He spread the mud on the man's eyes. He instructed him to wash in the pool of Siloam. The blind man went his way, washed his eyes as he was told to do, and he came back able to see. The

and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him: and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself toward the ground,

source of the power in which the man was healed was in Jesus. Jesus performed the miracle because of the faith of the blind man. He obeyed Jesus. There was no power inherent in the mixture of mud and saliva, or in the waters of Siloam. The source of power was from Jesus and it was effectual because the blind man believed in Him and obeyed His instruction.

The disciples' theological question reflects the common belief among people that the reason why a person is afflicted with sickness or suffering is because he has sinned against God. This was not necessarily so. In the case of this blind man, it was not so as Jesus had explained. The case of Job also refutes this common belief. Job was a righteous man, but he suffered great loss and personal sufferings not because of his sins. God allowed Satan to test his faith in God. On the other hand, there are cases in the Bible of persons who were punished and died because of their sins. Aaron's two sons, Nadab and Abihu, were struck dead because they sinned against God (Leviticus 10:1, 2). The Apostle Paul in his first letter to the Corinthians intimates that many of them were "weak," and "sickly," and "sleep" because these Corinthians partook of the Lord's Supper in a manner which was displeasing in the sight of God. Some people are afflicted with sickness or disease because of their sinful and immoral lifestyle. When a person is afflicted with diseases or suffers as a result of accidents or natural calamities,

we must be careful that we do not quickly jump to the conclusion that he is judged and punished by God. Each case should be judged by its own merits.

The blind man who was healed on the Sabbath day became an object of contention between the Pharisees and himself. The Pharisees asked him how he had been healed and had received his sight. When he testified that Jesus healed him, the Pharisees were not satisfied with his testimony. They denounced Jesus as not a man of God because He did not keep the Sabbath. Other people began to speak up and said, "How can a man that is a sinner do such miracles?" Still dissatisfied, the Pharisees and others began to ask the blind man's parents how he had received his sight. The parents replied that their son was old enough to answer their question. They answered in this manner because they were afraid of the religious leaders who threatened to put them out of the synagogue if anyone confessed that Jesus was Christ (the Messiah). To "put out of the synagogue" is to excommunicate. When the Pharisees tried to persuade the blind man to agree to their charge that Jesus was a sinner, he answered, "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not: one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." What a wonderful testimony! What was important and real to him was that he could now see! Since birth he was blind. He had lived in darkness all those years. The Pharisees and all the other Jews saw him daily all those years. They were powerless to do anything for

him. When the Pharisees asked him again the same question, he retorted, "I have told you already, and ye did not hear: wherefore would ye hear it again? Will ye also be His disciples?" The Pharisees were offended by this last remark. They reviled him. The blind man continued his testimony, "Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes. Now we know that God heareth not sinners: but if any man be a worshipper of God, and doeth His will, him He heareth. Since the world began was it not heard that any man opened the eyes of one that was born blind. If this man were not of God, He could do nothing" (9:30-33). This is solid and sound theology! This blind man not only could now see, his spiritual eyes too were opened to see this great and wonderful truth that has set him free. The Pharisees who boasted of knowing the Holy Scriptures, though they had eyes to see, were spiritually blind to the mighty works of God that were before them. The religious leaders threw him out of the Temple. Jesus found the blind man who had just been thrown out of the Temple. When Jesus saw him, He asked him whether he believed on the Son of God. The blind man asked to know who the Son of God was so that he might believe. Jesus said to him that He was the Son of God. The blind man exclaimed, "Lord, I believe." The man showed evidence of the genuineness of his belief in Jesus by worshipping Him, thus acknowledging that He is Lord, and the Son of God! Jesus then addressed

some of the Pharisees who crowded round Him, saying that they who claimed to know the Scriptures and the sinful state they were in, should be desiring God's offer of salvation. However, their sins remained with them because they rejected God's salvation.

The Good Shepherd Discourse

Jesus began to speak a parable of the shepherd. The sheep know the voice of the shepherd. When the sheep are in the sheep-pen, the shepherd guards the sheep at the only entrance into the pen. That is the only entrance into the sheepfold. The shepherd goes before the sheep whenever he leads his flock, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger but will flee from him.

Jesus then explained the parable to His hearers. Jesus declared that He is "the door of the sheep". Any man who enters in shall be safe and secure. He shall go in and out, and he shall find pasture. But the thief who enters by any other means except the door, comes "to steal, to kill, and to destroy" the sheep. The shepherd comes, that the sheep might have life and have it more abundantly. Jesus declared that He is the true and good shepherd who gave His life for the sheep. The hireling is not a shepherd for he cares for himself and not the sheep. He will flee when the sheep are in danger of being attacked by the wolf. Jesus said that He knows His sheep and His sheep know Him, just as His Father in heaven knows Him, and He knows His Father. Jesus said that

He lay down His life for the sheep (Jews), and there are other sheep (Gentiles) that He has that He will bring, and they will hear His voice (election). On this ground, His Father loves Him because He lay down His life that He might take it again. No man takes it from Him, but He Himself voluntarily lay down His life. He has the power to lay His life down, and He has the power to take it again. Jesus spoke of His death and resurrection. He laid down His life for the sheep so that they might have life, and have it more abundantly.

There are tremendous lessons in Jesus' discourse on the good shepherd. There is only one door to enter into the safety and security of His fold. It is through Him and no other way. Any person who enters into the fold without first entering through Him is a thief, a false shepherd who enters the fold to destroy the flock. An under-shepherd of Jesus, who is the good Shepherd, must come to Jesus first. Jesus clearly revealed that His death for His sheep was a determined and voluntary act and not a historical accident.

Note that His sheep hear His voice. A truly born-again Christian hears the voice of His Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Where is this voice of Jesus found? It is in the Holy Bible, the perfect Word of God. He will desire to obey all of the Word of God. We who profess ourselves as Jesus' sheep should test whether we hear His voice. If we continue in His Word, we are indeed His sheep. There are many who profess to

be His sheep, but they do not hear His voice. They are deceiving themselves. A terrible shock awaits them when the good Shepherd comes to gather His sheep. These self-deluded sheep would be rejected and cast out. The people who heard Jesus' words were divided in their opinion of Him. Some said that He was mad and had a devil. They could not accept Him. Others refuted these people – can one who has the devil open the eyes of the blind? This rhetorical question answers itself.

PRACTICAL VALUE

There will always be people who oppose Jesus. But Jesus sets an example for us. In the encounter with the woman taken in for adultery, Jesus shows us how we ought not to condemn those who fall into sin. Not that we should condone sin, but that we should help such people to reform themselves and give them a second chance in life. This is because the Lord Jesus Christ came to save and not to condemn, for we are already in a state of condemnation. If we have sinned, we need to confess and repent, and not sin anymore.

In His discourse that He is the Light of the world, Jesus claimed Deity – “before Abraham was, I AM.” Jesus invites all to come to Him so that they might have the light – the light of truth that is able to set people free from the bondage of sin. If we profess to have come to Him and have received that Light, we should manifest our

discipleship by keeping and living out His Word.

If we lament that we are spiritually blind, then we need to come to Jesus in humble repentance from our hearts. He will open our spiritual eyes that we might see precious truths that no man can ever give to us. This is so that we may live on this earth as God's children and be His witnesses and enjoy the abundant life He has promised. Lastly, Jesus the Good Shepherd sets an example for all those who are overseeing His flock; He shows what kind of under-shepherds they ought be. They should be willing to lay down their lives, not in the sense of Jesus having laid down His life that we may have the forgiveness of sin, but be willing to make sacrifices when the occasion calls in order to build up the people of God.
AMEN

**DAILY READING & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: John 7:53-8:11

TUESDAY: John 8:12-59

WEDNESDAY: John 9:1-41

THURSDAY: John 10:1-21

FRIDAY: Revelation 7:9-17

Discussion Questions

1. What can we learn from this incident about our attitude to a person who sins?

2. John 8:7 is sometimes used as an argument for condoning sin. What do you think of Jesus' words?

3. Whom did the woman sin against?

4. What do we know about Jesus' identity by His forgiving the woman?

5. How does Jesus show His relationship to His Father and His Father's to Him?

6. What is necessary for one who professes to be a true disciple of Jesus, and what is its resultant benefit?

7. What reason did Jesus give about the Pharisees and the scribes for not believing in Him? What is the consequence of persistent unbelief?

8. What does it indicate to us about the disciples concerning their primary interest in the blind man?

9. What do we learn from Jesus' answer to His disciples' question about the blind man?

10. Why did Jesus heal this blind man in this very unusual way? Is there a pattern in the manner Jesus did His healing miracles?

11. What are the marks of a good shepherd? Should the pastor have all these marks?

12. What proof can we find in John 10:11-18 that Jesus' death was not a mere martyrdom?
