

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
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DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 25 (I & II)

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

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INTRODUCTION

The dominant theme of the passages is the coming kingdom of God. The entrance into the kingdom is freely offered but the gate into it is narrow because there is only one way. Jesus showed that God desires to gather, love and protect His people Israel, in particular and all others in general. In fact, Jesus mentioned that many from all around the world would enter into the kingdom of God. Jesus reminded the people that there are

only two destinations that await them at the end of their earthly sojourn. Man cannot save himself. There is a note of sadness as Scripture shows that people for one reason or another miss the joy of heaven. The various reasons of the people who reject the offer of God are being analyzed by Jesus. His purpose is to warn us not to adopt the foolish and fatal attitudes of these rejecters of God's free offer of salvation. The requirement is to accept the offer given by God in humble repentance and submit to Him. However, Jesus showed that the life of His disciples is not going to be easy. Jesus expects those who profess belief in Him to count the cost in following Him. Jesus is teaching all who follow Him that there are no useless disciples in God's kingdom.

We should take full advantage of these great and precious lessons which are taught by our Lord Jesus Christ.

UNDERSTANDING

From Jerusalem to Perea:
John 10:40-42.

After the Feast of Dedication Jesus went beyond Jordan the place where John first baptized which was east of Jerusalem. John did not work any miracle, but the influence of his testimony concerning Jesus was still strong. When Jesus went there, many believed in Him.

The Narrow Way to Heaven:
Luke 13:22-30

Jesus went through the cities and villages in Perea preaching and teaching, and made His way

to Jerusalem. Then a person came to Jesus and asked, "Lord, are there few that be saved?" Jesus did not directly answer his question and this might be due to the reason that the question was asked out of curiosity. How many are saved is the prerogative of God and it is not the domain of man. However, Jesus spoke about the narrow way to heaven, which should stimulate their minds to think about the matter. Jesus remarked that many would "strive" to enter but shall not enter. The word "strive" (*agonizomai*) from which the English word "agonize" was derived, is a very strong word. It was originally used to describe athletes who "strain every nerve" for the prize of victory. We can understand the truth in Jesus' words that many would seek and strive to enter the narrow and strait gate but were not able. These people tried to enter by their own efforts and works. Scriptures teach that entrance into the kingdom of God is by grace through faith and not of works. It is no wonder that when the Lord Jesus Christ returns, many shall say to Him that they have known Him, but Jesus would turn to them and say that He does not know them. How very sad. Why? These people profess the name of Jesus but deny the power thereof. They are not born-again Christians.

Jesus then mentioned that there would be people from the four winds of the earth that shall sit down with Him in the kingdom of God. These are Gentile believers. The first shall be the last and the last first is a reference to the nation of Israel who was chosen by God first, and the Gentile nations later. Another

sobering truth is the fact that when the Lord comes, there will not be another chance. When the door is shut by the Lord, it will remain shut and no one can open it.

Christ's Third Prediction of His Passion and Resurrection:
Luke 13:31-35

As Jesus was speaking to the people, certain Pharisees came and warned Jesus that Herod intended to kill Him. This was the Herod that beheaded John the baptizer. He feared Jesus because of His popularity and because He might lead a revolution in Israel. Many times Jesus had entered Jerusalem and each time He preached and taught, and performed many sign-miracles to authenticate His Messiahship, but they would not listen to Him. Instead they rejected Him. They would arrest and kill Him. Jesus predicted that they would not be able to see Him until a time when they would shout, "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." Jesus was predicting His death and resurrection.

The Pharisees that warned Jesus of Herod's intention to kill Him could have acted as Herod's messengers in order to compel Jesus to leave Judaea and go to Peraea. Jesus did not panic. Instead He told the Pharisees to go and tell Herod that He had a mission to do and He intended to finish it. By calling Herod "the fox", Jesus recognized him as a cunning person who did not pose any great danger to Him.

In speaking about the completion of His mission, Jesus predicted His death and resurrection. He would be killed

but on the third day He would rise again. In an emotional outburst of love for Israel, Jesus cried out: “*O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, which killed the prophets, and stoned them that are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not.*” Jesus cared and was concerned for the children of Israel. Jesus lamented that Israel would be left desolate, they would not see Him again until they should acknowledge “Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,” a reference to His second coming after His death and resurrection.

The Distortion of Values:

Luke 14:1-24

Jesus was a guest of one of the chief Pharisees (vv. 1-6). When He was there a certain man, who was afflicted with dropsy (oedema = an abnormal build up of fluid between tissue cells), came into the Pharisee’s house. On such occasions, Pharisees usually allowed people to enter their homes. They would like to show off their houses which were usually well furnished. As the man who suffered from dropsy came in, they “watched” Jesus. They were looking at Him on the sly. With such a glance, they were seeking to find room to attack Him if He should heal the man. It was the Sabbath day. Jesus, knowing their thoughts, even before they spoke out, asked them, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?” They had no answer. Jesus then healed the man and let him go. Jesus then answered them, “Which of you shall have an ass or an ox fallen into a pit, and will not

straightway pull him out on the Sabbath day?” They were dumbfounded. Why could they not answer? Because they were guilty of what Jesus had just asked them. Jesus knew their hypocrisy and exposed it. Earlier, Jesus had taught that healing a human being on the Sabbath was lawful and was more important and valuable than to rescue an animal which had fallen into a pit. The Pharisees, who would not hesitate to rescue their ass or ox on the Sabbath, should not criticize Jesus for healing a man on the Sabbath. Once again Jesus teaches us that we need not hesitate or be afraid to do good deeds on the Sabbath so that people will glorify the Father. This teaching of Scripture on how to observe the Sabbath is clear and there is no need to seek the counsel of men. And if any person teaches otherwise, his teaching is unbiblical.

Jesus then put forth to them a parable (vv. 7-15). Jesus saw that the other invited guests, presumably Pharisees, sought to choose the chief seats in the room. Jesus told them that when they were invited to a wedding feast, they should refrain from sitting on the chief seats, lest a more honourable guest came and they had to make way for the important guest. It would be shameful for them to be told to take a lower seat. The proper decorum is to choose the lower seats, and be bidden by the host to a seat higher. It is better this way for you will be seen by others for being honoured. Jesus then taught a principle of life: **“He that humbles himself shall be exalted.”** However, one should not choose to sit on a lower seat deliberately

with the expectation to be raised to a higher seat. This is not honest humility but a hypocritical scheme to secure a higher place of honour. One just goes and sits on a lower seat. Blessed are the meek for they shall inherit the earth!

Jesus then taught them that when they threw a feast, they should call “the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind.” They would be blessed because these people could not possibly repay their kindness. But their recompense would be given to them at “the resurrection of the just.” This seems to be a rebuke of His host because there were many distinguished guests. The host had apparently invited the wealthy people of means to his banquet. It did not appear that the disciples of Jesus were invited. There is no mention of them. How many today are guilty of such action and practices. People readily honour the wealthy and powerful because they hope to receive some gain in return. The poor and needy could hardly have the means to reciprocate in kind.

One of the guests when he heard what Jesus said about inviting the poor and needy to one’s banquet, remarked: “Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God.” This “resurrection of the just” refers to the Lord’s Supper in heaven after the Rapture and the Judgement Seat of Christ. In response to these words, Jesus told them another parable (vv.16-24). A certain man gave a great supper and invited many. But all the invited guests gave excuses for not attending the banquet. One of them said that he had bought a

piece of land, and he must go and see it. He asked to be excused. Another guest said that he had bought five oxen, and he wanted to prove them. He too asked to be excused. A third one said that he had just married and said that he could not attend. He also asked to be excused.

All of them made their excuses together. Their excuses were shallow pretences to hide their unwillingness to come. The truth of the matter is that none of them had a good reason not to come. The first man claimed that he had bought a piece of land before he inspected it. This was absurd. However, even if that was so, he need not have to inspect it immediately as he had already bought it. He could do it after attending the supper.

The second man’s excuse was also flimsy. He bought five oxen without testing them first. That was not the common and wise practice in those days, and even today. Oxen are the most expensive animal in Palestine. It is like buying a Porsche today. To buy five of them without testing them first to see if they are healthy and strong is lame excuse. Like the first, the oxen were already bought he can test them anytime he wanted.

The third man seemed to have a reasonable excuse. But his reason is also weak because he could bring his wife to the banquet. The host would gladly have invited her too. The only biblical exemption when a person gets married is exemption from war, not a banquet. Now the host had prepared the supper at great expense. Their refusal to come display more than a selfish attitude

for not considering the trouble and expense taken by their host but a callous disregard and insult for the host himself.

The master of the house was angry. He told his servant to go to the streets and inner-city laneways, and bring the poor, the maimed, and the halt, and the blind. Having done so, there was still room for more, and the master told him to “compel” those in the “highways and hedges” to come to the great supper. The moral of the parable is simple and clear. Those who reject the invitation are the rich and wealthy. They are satisfied with their life in the world. These people exhibit the ugliness of their self-importance, selfishness and self-sufficiency whereas the other guests that came are the poor and needy, and they responded positively and happily to the invitation. Hence Jesus declares: “That none of those men which were bidden shall taste of My Supper.” When the opportunity is given to enter the kingdom of God, and one rejects it, it is serious, for one might never hear the gospel again.

The Cost of Discipleship:
Luke 14: 25-35

The banquet is free but it does not mean that it is cheap. All of us, who receive salvation as a free gift, must realize that there is a cost to discipleship. Salvation in Christ is free but Jesus teaches here that confession of faith in Him and becoming His disciple may cost us our jobs, friends, family and perhaps life itself. As disciples of Jesus, we must be prepared to make that choice at any time.

Jesus saw a great multitude following Him. He turned and spoke to them: “If any man come to Me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple” (vv. 25-27). Jesus was not teaching His disciples to literally hate their parents, wife and siblings. What is meant here is that when a comparison is made between the love of His disciples for Him and for their parents, wife and siblings, it would seem that His disciples “hate” their loved ones. Jesus is not teaching people to hate their parents for that would be breaking the 5th Commandment. However, He expects His disciples to love and serve Him above everybody and everything else.

Jesus further added that anyone, who is unwilling to bear his cross, and come after Him, cannot be His disciple. The cross is a symbol of suffering. It is a symbol in which Jesus was looked upon as a criminal, who was sentenced to death, and who was deprived of all rights and possessions. Jesus made it plainly clear that becoming His disciples, and confessing faith in Him, would involve a choice between Him and all others. To be a disciple of Jesus is going to be very costly.

Jesus did not hide the fact that it would be costly to be His disciples. He exhorted His hearers with another parable. He said that it is wise for anyone who intends to build a tower to sit down and count the cost. He should consider whether he can or cannot finish the project. Otherwise, if he embarks on the project and cannot

finish it because of the lack of funds, he will be mocked by others. Jesus does not require payment for the sacrifice of His life which He voluntarily laid down for the salvation of man. However, He clearly expects those who become His disciples to accept and acknowledge Him not only as their Saviour but also their Lord. One may not accept Jesus only as Saviour and not also Lord. It is both or not at all. Just like the king who goes to war, he must consider the cost of waging the war against his enemy. The king must be prepared to sacrifice all that he had in order to win the war (vv.31-33). Similarly, those who will receive Jesus must be prepared to accept the cost of following Him. And in order to follow Him one must put Him as the number one priority in his life.

Jesus then explained about being His disciples. Jesus said that salt is good, but if the salt have lost its taste, what is the use of it (vv.34-35). It is useless and not even fit for the "dunghill" (for manure), but to be thrown away. In drawing this analogy, Jesus is teaching His disciples to be a useful disciple, and not be like the salt that has lost its taste.

The Lost and Found Parables:
Luke 15:1-32.

The Pharisees and the scribes began to criticize Jesus for mingling with sinners and the common folks. They criticized Jesus for being morally lax by eating and drinking with publicans and loose-living people. Jesus then narrated three parables to show them that their attitude and criticism of Him were unreasonable.

The three parables project a common theme of the joy of finding what was lost. In the first parable (vv.3-7), a shepherd left his ninety-nine sheep in the fold and went to look for one sheep that was lost. Jesus explained that it is natural for them to do the same. He will look for the lost sheep until it is found. And when it is found, the shepherd will carry it back rejoicing. This is a common occurrence in our lives and we rejoice when we have found something that we have lost. Jesus then revealed that the angelic hosts in heaven would rejoice over one sinner that repents, more than the ninety-nine just persons, who do not need repentance. The Pharisees and scribes could not help but unavoidably identified themselves as the ninety-nine who needed no repentance.

The next parable (vv. 8-10) is about a woman who had ten pieces of silver and she lost one of them. These ten pieces formed a beautiful set, and the loss of one marred its form and beauty. She spared no effort in finding the lost piece, and when she found it, she rejoiced and announced it to her neighbours and friends. Similarly, there is great joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner that repents!

The third parable is the longest of the three (vv.11-32). It featured a man who had two sons. The younger asked his father for the portion of his inheritance for he had decided to leave him and the family. He went to a far country and there he squandered all his money and resources. He was bankrupt and undone. He took a job that required him to feed the

pigs which were unclean animals to the Jew. When he was very hungry, he thought of satisfying his hunger by eating the pigs' fodder. However, at that point, he "came to himself." He thought of his father and the servants who served him and who were better off than he. He decided to return to his father to confess his unworthiness and to ask to be treated as one of his hired servants. He rose up and returned to his father. His father saw his prodigal son coming back a far off. He had compassion on him and ran to him, fell on his neck and kissed him. His father rejoiced by having a banquet and saying that his son, who was dead, was now alive, was lost and now found. And there was great joy and merry-making in the house. But a sad note emerged. The elder son was very displeased and angry. He would not go in and join the party. He complained to his father that he had faithfully served his father and obeyed all his commandments, and his father had never given him a lamb that he could have a merry party with his friends. But as soon as this lousy son of his, who had squandered his money and lived immorally, came home, he would do this great favour for him. The father answered: "Son, you are ever with me, and all that I have is yours. It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this your brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found."

This third parable showed the Pharisees and the scribes that they were out of sympathy with the Father and with the angels. They were in danger of excluding

themselves deliberately from the wonderful joys of the heavenly banquet. These Pharisees and scribes had no happiness in seeing publicans and sinners repent and returning to God. They displayed the same attitude of the elder brother. The elder brother's attitude was sad. He considered himself as a slave of his father instead of as his son. His father, who tried to encourage him, significantly called him "Son." If he had considered himself as his father's son instead of his slave, he would know that he was heir to his father's inheritance. He would have gladly worked and not worked with a view to earn for himself but to be about his father's business, which one day will be his. So he missed the joy of the banquet.

Parable of the Lost Stewardship:

Luke 16:1-13

This parable features a steward who wasted his master's goods. When we have wasted our lives, we may sincerely repent and be accepted by the Father. The wasting of our lives makes no difference with regard to the Father's forgiveness or acceptance. But the lesson in this parable is the teaching on how the disciples of Jesus can be a wise steward of the blessings God bestows on them.

The steward was found wanting in his management and use of the master's goods. The master told him that he would dismiss him. Meanwhile, before he was sacked, he told all his master's debtors to write off fifty percent. In this way, he made friends so that they would treat

him well when he was dismissed. Jesus then told his disciples to make friends of “the mammon of unrighteousness.” Surely, Jesus was not approving of the method of the steward in cheating his master. We are not to imitate him. However, we are to emulate his foresight. Realizing that soon he would not have control over his master’s goods, he used his temporary stewardship of those goods to make friends for himself.

The disciples of Jesus are in the same position. All that we have in this life belong not to us but to God. All that we are and have belong to God. We brought nothing into this world and we shall take nothing out of it (1 Timothy 6:7). We are simply stewards. One day we must go, and we have to leave all behind. While we are in control of our substance, we are to use it, not for buying salvation for it is a gift; but for making friends. The kinds of friends we are to make are not the type of friends whom the prodigal son made, but friends who will welcome us in the eternal world and be our friends forever.

While it is true that when we all get to heaven, we are all brothers and sisters in Christ in one big family of God, this is also true on earth. But how close are we that we can call one another friends in the real sense of the word. Friends are to help one another. Friends are trustworthy and dependable. As we serve the Lord together, we ought to use what the Lord has blessed and prospered us to make many friends here on earth, and this friendship will continue in heaven! Moreover, there is nothing in this temporal world which we live in that we can call

our own. We have possession of the things in trust to be used for the glory of God who gives freely to all. It is only lent to us on trust for the time being. Jesus further mentioned that if we do not use wisely that which has been temporarily given to us on trust, in the eternal realm, we will not be entrusted with greater things. We can use mammon or money to advance the kingdom of God or we can treat it as an end in itself to serve ourselves. The way God sees it, we are despising Him and giving Him second place if we serve mammon and not God. Hence, Jesus said: “You cannot serve God and mammon.”

PRACTICAL VALUE

Concerning whether there are many or few who are saved, the most important thing is whether one is saved. Since there are many who profess to know Jesus and bear His name, mere profession is not enough to secure entrance into the kingdom of God. Jesus warned that there will be many whom He had to say to them, “I knew you not,” and they will be cast into hell. How terribly sad that would be. If we are disciples of Jesus, we need to seriously examine ourselves whether we are truly His disciples, and save ourselves from the terrible shock of being rejected by Jesus on that day.

A person who seeks to enter the kingdom of God needs to repent and submit to God by believing in Jesus Christ as his Saviour and Lord. One cannot accept Jesus as Saviour and reject His lordship in his life. Paul declares: “If thou shalt confess

with thy mouth THE LORD Jesus Christ, thou shalt be saved." Having been admitted into the kingdom and become a citizen of the kingdom of God, Jesus exhorts that we must be useful citizens and not be like the salt that has lost its savour and use. Jesus makes it very clear that He must have the number one priority in our lives above all other people and things – above family ties, self, and possessions. There is no compromise.

The reward is great as promised by Jesus. If one sinner repents and submits to God, Jesus says that there is great joy and celebration by the angels in heaven. That should spur every disciple of Jesus to go and win souls for the kingdom. Let everyone of us be an evangelist. There is someone we can pray for, share the gospel of salvation and lead into the kingdom of God. Remember there will be great joy in heaven and for ourselves too. Once upon a time, someone prayed for us and shared with us the gospel and that was how we were saved. Now it is our turn to do the same so that others might be saved. We should not be discouraged if they reject our testimony. Jesus already showed to us that many will reject for very foolish reasons. But go to the poor and needy, they are the ones that are more open to the call of salvation.

Let us be wise in using all the things that God has blessed and entrusted us. Let us use it to advance His kingdom and not keep them for ourselves. AMEN.

Making the Best of What You Have

There is a vast difference between the man who follows his business with a servile feeling, giving just as little attention to it as he can and yet obtains a living from it, and the man who masters his business, and with enthusiasm seeks to improve it and admire it. John Curzon, a Polish mechanic, who was presented with a gold medal for his inventions, performed a most extraordinary thing when he succeeded in manufacturing a complete watch in the space of eight hours, and from materials on which most watchmakers would have looked with contempt. It appears that the Czar of Russia, hearing of the marvellous skill of Curzon, determined to put him to the test, and forwarded him a box containing a few copper nails, some wood chippings, a piece of broken glass, an old cracked china cup, some wire, and a few pieces of peg-board, with the request that he should transform them into a time piece. Undaunted, and perceiving a golden opportunity of winning favour at the court, Curzon set about his task with enthusiasm, and in the almost incredibly short space of eight hours had despatched a wonderfully constructed watch to the Czar, who was so surprised and delighted at the work that he sent for the maker, conferred upon him several distinctions, and granted him a pension. The case of the watch was made of china, while the works were simply composed of the odds and ends accompanying the old cup. Not only did it keep good time, but only

required winding once in three or four days.

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 25

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

**DAILY READING & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: John 10:40-42; Luke 13:22-35.

TUESDAY: Luke 14:1-24; Philippians 2:7.

WEDNESDAY: Luke 14:25-35.

THURSDAY: Luke 15:1-32.

FRIDAY: Luke 16:1-13.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is meant by the narrow gate?

2. What was Jesus' answer to the question of Luke 13:23?

3. What do you see in Luke 13:34 about Jesus?

4. What attitude and disposition of heart is commended in verses 7-11?

5. What attitude and disposition of heart is commended in verses 12-14?

6. Were the excuses which the guests made genuine? What was their real reason for not coming?

7. Why did Jesus emphasize the cost of discipleship at this time?

8. What, according to verses 26, 27, does discipleship involve? Was the teaching applicable only then or is it always true?

9. Should one count the cost first before becoming a disciple of Jesus Christ? What cost did you count when you became a Christian?

10. What was the Pharisees and scribes criticism of Jesus? How do Jesus' parables answer their criticism?

11. What led the prodigal son to leave home and what led him to return? During all this time how had his father regarded him?

12. In what way is this steward an example to the disciples?

13. How do verses 10-12 show that Jesus was not in any way condoning the dishonest practices of the unjust steward?

14. What have you learned about Jesus in relation to your Christian life?
