

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
[Adapted from Bethel Bible-
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St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 27 A

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

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INTRODUCTION

Jesus realized that He was coming to the end of His public ministry on earth. His miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead in Bethany, which is near Jerusalem, put the Pharisees and the Sadducees in a fix. They had to do something to save themselves. They had to get rid of Jesus before He spoils everything for them. They have made very careful compromises with the Roman Empire in securing their position in the Sanhedrin Council. Jesus will rock their iron boat if He continues in His ministry. He must be stopped at all costs!

On His way to Jerusalem, Jesus was confronted by ten lepers. Jesus healed them but there is a very important lesson that we must learn from the incident. The virtue of gratitude is like rare jewels. Leprosy was an

incurable, very painful and debilitating disease. Anyone who is afflicted with leprosy has only no hope of cure. A lonely and painful life awaits him. He suffers alone because it is extremely contagious. He will die alone very slowly as his body rots away a little at a time. He smells from a distance and people will ostracise him because of the rotting flesh. His voice will croak and his skin will harden and dry up.

Jesus healed ten lepers but only one return to give thanks!! Are we the grateful believers today?

UNDERSTANDING

***WITHDRAWAL OF JESUS FROM THE
PUBLIC BECAUSE OF THE
MURDEROUS PLOT OF THE
PHARISEES:
JOHN 11:47-54***

The resurrection of Lazarus was the seventh and final miraculous sign recorded by John in his Gospel. Some of the people who witnessed the raising of Lazarus in Bethany, a village town about three kilometres from Jerusalem, reported the event to the Pharisees in Jerusalem. Without hesitation, the chief priests, who were the Sadducees and the Pharisees, convened the Sanhedrin, the highest religious council of the Jews, for the purpose of deliberating what should be done to Jesus of Nazareth.

They feared that if they did not do something to stop Jesus from continuing to do miracles, soon all the people would believe Him. The people would make Him king, and start a revolution. This would invite

their Roman masters to march into Jerusalem, quell the rebellion and take away the administration of the city from the religious leaders. Note that the religious leaders were primarily concerned about themselves more than the nation. They said that when the Romans came they would “take away both our place and nation” (11:48b). They put their interest and welfare first before that of the nation. They would think about their prestigious, privileged and powerful position above anything and anyone, even God, therefore something drastic had to be done to Jesus to stop Him in order to save themselves. The Pharisees had tried but failed, and now the Sadducees would take over.

Apparently there was much argument, and Caiaphas, the ruling high priest, spoke out that it was expedient for them that one should die for the people, rather than the whole nation perish. Caiaphas counselled the Sanhedrin to agree to kill Jesus and save the people. Someone commented that this is the oldest trick in the game of politics. In the name of patriotism – that is, the nation perishes not – he actually was seeking to save his own position of power.

John, who recorded the account, comments that Caiaphas had said more than what he knew. It is doubtless that Caiaphas said those cunning words with selfish motives. But he unconsciously had prophesied how Jesus should die, that Jesus “should die for that nation and not for that nation only, but that also he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad” (11:51, 52). What Jesus was going

to die for is significant. He was to die as a substitute for Israel and for all those who might believe on Him wherever they might be. Jesus’ death was a substitutionary death. Without realizing what he was saying, Caiaphas actually spoke the truth about the substitutionary atonement of Christ. This indeed illustrates how God can overrule men’s evil purposes and actions for the fulfilment of His plans and purposes.

Jesus came to know of the decision of the Sanhedrin. He withdrew Himself and walked no more openly among the Jews. He went to Ephraim, a country side near the wilderness, which was northeast of Jerusalem. He continued His ministry with His disciples there. Jesus was not a coward in leaving Jerusalem, not walking among the Jews for the time being. He did not want to tempt God by exposing Himself deliberately to such danger. Moreover, His hour had not come yet. There is an important truth to learn here. While we believe in the power and the sovereignty of God to protect and save, we must always remember that we have a God-given responsibility and duty to take every necessary precaution and care for ourselves. The rest we leave to God.

***RETURN TO JERUSALEM—THE
RETURN OF THE LEPER: LUKE
17:11-19***

Now Jesus returned to Jerusalem. As he was somewhere in the middle of Samaria and Galilee, and as He entered into a certain village, ten men who were lepers met Him. They stood afar off because lepers were forbidden

to come close to healthy men. They were not allowed to associate with them. So they cried out loudly to Jesus, saying, "Master, have mercy on us." This could mean that they recognized Jesus and had faith in Him to heal them. So Jesus told them to go and present themselves to the priests. The reason for telling them to do so was that if they were healed they were required to show the priests. Only the priests had the authority to pronounce them clean and restore them back to society. They obeyed Jesus while they were yet to be healed. Again this indicates their faith in Jesus. They were healed while making their way to see the priests.

When they saw that they were healed, only one of them turned back and came to Jesus. He fell on his face at Jesus' feet and with a loud voice glorified God and "giving Him thanks." Note the present participle tense of the verb "giving thanks" indicating continuous action. He was a Samaritan. We first notice that leprosy, which was an incurable disease then, is no respecter of persons – whether Jews or Samaritans. The Jews had no dealings with Samaritans, but their common affliction broke the walls of discrimination and prejudice and brought them together! People should not pride themselves of the superiority of their race, culture and civilization. All peoples share a common affliction; there is none righteous, no, not one. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. We are all sinners.

This Samaritan returned and drew near to Jesus, even to His feet. Jesus is a Jew. Again all

barriers were broken down when one has tasted of the grace of God. He expressed his gratitude to Jesus. What made him special compared to all the rest is the fact that he came back to thank Jesus personally and glorify God. This Samaritan recognized that God had healed him through Jesus, and it was proper that he came back to Jesus to thank Him.

Without doubt he recognized that Jesus was the Messiah. The healing he received is a miraculous sign pointing to Jesus as One who was sent by God. This miracle confirms the witness and claims of Christ. He came and fell at His feet. Jesus was expecting it. Jesus asked where the nine were. And for returning to Jesus and thanking Him personally, the Samaritan received another blessing. Jesus set him free and said to him that his faith had made him whole. He received forgiveness of sin and the gift of eternal life. The other nine lepers illustrate the kind of people who were interested in their physical healing. They did not see beyond the miracle sign and seek Jesus to whom the sign pointed. They are like the crowds at the feeding of the five thousand. Those crowds saw the miracle, but they were not interested to know who Jesus was, who had performed such a stupendous miracle. They were interested only in getting more bread and fish. Are we like that? They came to Jesus because of material benefits. Once they obtained their wealth and possessions, they forget about God and serving Christ. They are caught up by the cares and riches of the world!!

PRACTICAL VALUE

We have learned many precious truths and lessons in this study. Caiaphas, the high priest, wanted to do the worst to Jesus by having Him killed. Jesus was a threat to their privileged position and power. They managed to carry out their intent, but God was able to turn their evil deeds to fulfil His design for the benefit and blessing of millions of people, that is, through the death and shed blood of Jesus, there is remission of sins and the gift of eternal life in Him. This wonderful power of God that is able to turn evil for good is a great truth and comfort. It reminds us of two passages in Scriptures. The first is Psalms 76:10: *Surely the wrath of man shall praise thee: the remainder of wrath shalt thou restrain.* God restrains the extent to which men will harm his fellow men. But out of his evil deeds, good comes and God is praised. Another passage is an often quoted verse (Romans 8:28): *And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose.* The blessing will be upon those who love God and who are called according to His purpose. The blessing will not be upon those who are disobedient and breakers of His commandments.

Jesus expects His disciples to be grateful to God. Let us not be found lacking in this virtue. We must not take our salvation and the blessings we enjoy for granted. While we sing of the goodness and greatness of God towards us, let us also match our song with works that befit the singer. AMEN

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LESSON 27 A

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

DAILY READINGS & DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Daily Readings

MONDAY: John 11:47-54.

TUESDAY: Luke 11:47-54

WEDNESDAY: Luke 17:11-19; Psalm 76:10.

THURSDAY: Luke 17:11-19; Psalm 76:10.

FRIDAY: Luke 17:11-19; Psalm 76:10.

Discussion Questions

1. How did the Jewish religious leaders react to the truth of the resurrection of Lazarus?

2. What did Caiaphas, the high priest, advice the Sanhedrin to do about Jesus? In what way is it significant? What practical application can we have for believers today?

3. What significant fact do you observe that leprosy did to the ten lepers?

4. What was common about the ten lepers? What was unique about the Samaritan leper?

5. Do you consider yourself as a grateful Christian? How do you express your gratitude to God for what He has done for you?
