

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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

**DHW BIBLE CLASS
LESSON 27B
THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

INTRODUCTION

Once again the topic of Jesus' Second Coming came up. The Pharisees had a question for Jesus, but on the other hand Jesus wanted to prepare His disciples for that great and glorious day when He comes again. What about prayer and the prayerful attitude which His disciples should always have? Jesus told two parables to teach them about prayer. There are many precious spiritual lessons that we can learn from the Master Himself. Let us diligently and prayerfully learn them well.

OUTLINE

1. The Kingdom of God and the Coming of Its King (Luke 17:20-37)
2. Parable on Prayer — The Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8)
3. Parable on Prayer — The Pharisee and the Publican (Luke 18:9-14)

**The Kingdom of God and the Coming
of Its King**

The Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God should come. Jesus answered them and said: "The kingdom of God cometh not with observation: neither shall they say, Lo here! or lo there! for behold, the kingdom of God is within you." Jesus addressed the Pharisees. They wanted to know from Jesus when the kingdom of God would come. Jesus answered that they could be watching for the coming of the kingdom of God, but it would not be visible. They would never be able to see it. It was of no use for them to be looking for a visible appearance or the establishment of the kingdom of God.

Whether this question asked by the Pharisees was sincere or not, it nevertheless served one good purpose. Jesus took the opportunity to teach the true nature of the kingdom of God. Jesus answered the Pharisees that the kingdom of God is "within you". The phrase "within you" can mean "among you" or "in the midst of you" or "before you." The context aptly indicates that Jesus was saying to the Pharisees that the evidence for the coming of the kingdom was actually among them, or in the midst of them or before them. The King of the kingdom was right before them, that is, Jesus the Messiah Himself. For where the king is there will His kingdom is also. They did not realize it. The reason why they could not see it was not because there was a lack of signs that pointed to Jesus as the

promised Messiah sent by God. Jesus had performed many sign-miracles. But they rejected those sign-miracles, even charging Jesus for being a tool of Satan in performing those miracles. They failed to see because they lacked revelation and spiritual insight when they rejected Jesus. They are dead in their sins.

Jesus then turned to His disciples. He explained to His disciples that there would come a day when they would desire to see “one of the days of the Son of man.” This phrase, “the day of the Son of man” apparently means His Second Coming as the promised Messiah to reign on earth. Jesus then gave them the first warning that there would be people who would call them and say, “See here; or, see there.” Jesus told them not to go after them, nor follow them because they would not see it. The reason is that when “the Son of man be in His day” (His Coming) it would be as “the lightning, that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, shineth unto the other part under heaven” (17:24). In other words, the coming of the Son of man would be universally and instantaneously visible. There is no need for a person to tell others. Everyone could see it. They were therefore cautioned not to follow false prophets.

Jesus then gave them a second warning. Before “the day of the Son of man” (His glorious appearing), He must suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation” (17:25). His disciples would soon see His sufferings and

resurrection and that would strengthen their faith. But in the context of Jesus’ words to them, there is another dimension. It serves another purpose.

For many generations since Pentecost, Christians have been preaching and teaching, and yet the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will take people by surprise. The reason is that as long as the Jews and others reject or denounce Jesus’ claim to be the promised Messiah, they would deny the very possibility of His Second Coming. At such a time, “the day of the Son of man” will take place and surprise them, and catch them unprepared. To see His Second Coming, they must see and believe in His First Coming. In His First Coming, He came as the suffering Messiah. In His Second Coming He will come as the conquering Messiah and Judge!

Jesus gave two analogies from the Old Testament as a means of driving home His point. In the days of Noah, the people disbelieved his preaching (2 Peter 2:5).¹ Instead they were only interested in doing their own things, eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, until the flood came and took them by surprise, and they were all destroyed. So it was the same in the days of Lot who lived in Sodom. The Sodomites were eating and drinking, doing their own things, trading,

¹ 2 Peter 2:5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

planting, building, but fire and brimstone rained on them suddenly. The Sodomites were taken by surprise and they were all destroyed. Even Lot's wife, when she looked back at the burning Sodom, apparently regretting fleeing Sodom, was turned into a pillar of salt. The men during Noah and Lot's days were evil and wicked. They were destroyed because of their sins. If the respective generations had heeded Noah's preaching and Lot's testimony, they would have repented and be saved. But they were all destroyed. They were totally preoccupied with life's day to day activities to the complete exclusion of all of God's warnings from His Holy Word (17:27-28).

Human nature has changed very little. Christian preaching has been done for many years, since the time of Jesus Christ. While many have responded positively to the call of the gospel, more have rejected, and are rejecting the Gospel message still. They are totally preoccupied with what they are doing rather than to have any interest in the gospel of Jesus Christ. Some, because of their love for the material things of this world and its comfortable and ostentatious lifestyle, lose their souls and eternal life.

The believing righteous, like Noah and his family, will be left untouched and safe in "the day of the Son of man." It will be the same when the Son of man comes. The righteous will be left untouched and safe, but the evil people will be removed. Two men in

a bed; the one shall be taken, and the other shall be left. Two women shall be grinding together, the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two men shall be in the field; the one shall be taken and the other left. Jesus' disciples, having heard these, asked, "Where, Lord?" Their question suggests that they were still thinking of a particular place when Jesus returns. Jesus answered, "Wheresoever the body is, thither will the eagles (vultures) be gathered together". Scavenging vultures do a very necessary job. They are nature's way of removing masses of decay and corruption of carcasses from the face of the earth. The "day of the Son of man" will not be pleasant for many; but it will be the day God will stop the evil that is corrupting the earth beyond recognition. The evil one will be removed and the righteous remains. Christ will come and "destroy those who destroy the earth" (Revelation 11:18).²

Parable on Prayer — The Persistent Widow

Jesus continued His teaching. The coming of the Son of man will surely take place. No one knows the day and the hour. As Jesus has pointed out it will be sudden like a thief in the night. For the ungodly, Jesus' return will be an

² Revelation 11:18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that thou shouldest give reward unto thy servants the prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them which destroy the earth. {destroy the earth: or, corrupt the earth}

event of irrevocable loss and disaster. For God's elect, that is, Christians, it is the blessed hope and all their sufferings and persecutions and the injustice against them will come to an end.

Jesus then spoke to the people that "men ought always to pray and not to faint" (18:1). The tense of the verb "to pray" is infinitive which means to persist in praying. "Ought" strongly expresses a moral and spiritual obligation. The tense of the verb "to faint" is the same as "to pray." It suggests giving in to evil or to lose heart in the face of great trials and temptations. We, as Christians, are looking for the Second Coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. But the problem is that while His Coming is as certain as the sun rises daily from the east, the hour and the day is unknown. We might be praying and praying for this and that, and going through great tribulations and trials. God seems to remain silent, and we think that it is no use appealing to God. Jesus' return seems very remote. But our Lord Jesus Christ insists that we should persist in praying and not to give up.

In order to encourage us to persist in praying, Jesus told the parable of the unjust judge. Jesus described the judge as one "who feared not God, neither regarded man." This shows that this judge was an unprincipled man. God's Law and Word mean nothing to him neither are the words of man. He was only interested in his own interest and benefit. A poor and helpless widow in the same city came (verb-tense,

imperfect: kept coming) to him, asking him to avenge her of her adversary. The unprincipled judge, at first, ignored her plea. But as she kept on coming to him and pleading him to avenge on her behalf, the judge finally agreed. He did so not primarily for the purpose of justice, but to relieve his own discomfort. Jesus directed His hearers to what the judge said. In application, Jesus explained that God will patiently endure hearing the cries of His people. Jesus further assured that God will avenge the injustice done to His people. Jesus then posed a question: "Nevertheless when the Son of man comes, shall He find faith on earth" (18:8)? We ought always to pray and not to faint. If we have stopped praying, how shall we explain to Him on that day when we have to give an account of ourselves to Him?

Parable on Prayer – The Pharisee

The Second Coming of Jesus Christ to reward the righteous and punish the unrighteous raises the question of who are the righteous and who are not. Jesus spoke another parable – the Pharisee and the publican. The two men went to the temple to pray. The Pharisee was looked upon as a very religious man. He prayed thus: "God, I thank you, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess." It is possible that the Pharisee might have been unjustly treated by publicans (tax-collectors). So he boasted of his good deeds and told God that he was better than the publican.

Indeed, by man's standards he might perhaps have been better than the tax-collector. But he forgot that by God's standards he was no different from the tax-collector, "for all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23). Jesus said that the Pharisee went home from the temple unjustified and still under the condemnation of God. On the other hand, the tax-collector behaved in a different manner. He was "standing afar off," like the ten lepers. He was convicted of the fact that his sins had put a barrier between him and God. He dared not lift his eyes up to God who is in heaven, but kept smiting his breast, and cried: "God be merciful to me a sinner." The tax-collector made no attempt to justify himself with his good deeds and merits in coming before God. Whereas the Pharisee confessed other men's sins, the tax-collector confessed his own. Whereas the Pharisee compared his life with other men, the tax-collector compared himself with God's holiness and righteousness. In utter spiritual bankruptcy, the tax-collector simply cast himself on the mercy of God. Jesus said that the publican went home from the temple justified. On that basis, God accepted the publican.

Jesus ended with the warning: "For everyone that exalts himself shall be abased; and he that humbles himself shall be exalted" (18:14).

PRACTICAL VALUE

We have learned many precious truths and lessons in this study.

Let us earnestly look to the return of our Lord Jesus Christ. He will surely come back as He promised. So let us not be like the people in the days of Noah and Lot. They were totally preoccupied with their life on earth and had no time to heed God's Word and warnings given by many preachers whom He had sent. Let us be always praying and not give up though He tarries in coming. God has promised that He will hear our cries, and He will answer our prayers. Are we attending the church weekly prayer meetings, praying to God together with other brothers and sisters in Christ, or are we wearying and fainting?

Lastly, we are righteous because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. At one point in our life, we realize that our sins separate us from God and we are under God's condemnation. We ask God for His mercy, and rejoice that He has provided the means for all our sins to be completely cleansed. Let us always maintain this spirit of spiritual poverty before God and man. In this way, we will always find favour with God and man. AMEN

The Importance of Prayer

"The church has many organizers, but few agonizers; many who pay, but few who pray, many resters, but few wrestlers; many who are enterprising,

but few who are interceding; people who are not praying and praying. The secret of praying is praying in secret. A worldly Christian will stop praying and a praying Christian will stop worldliness. Tithes may build a church, but tears will give it life. That is the difference between the modern church and the early church. In the matter of effective praying, never have so many left so much to so few. Brethren let us pray" [Leonard Ravenhill].

Don't Switch Channels

When Edmund Gravely died at the controls of his small plane while on the way to Satesboro, Georgia, from the Rocky Mount-Wilson Airport in North Carolina, his wife, Janice, kept the plane aloft for two hours. As the plane crossed the South Carolina/North Carolina border, she radioed for help: "Help, help, won't someone help me? My pilot is unconscious." Authorities who picked up her distress signal were not able to reach her by radio during the flight because she kept changing channels. Eventually Mrs Gravely made a rough landing and had to crawl for forty-five minutes to a farmhouse for help.

How often God's people cry out to Him for help but switch channels before His message comes through! They turn to other sources for help looking for human guidance. When you cry out to God for His intervention, don't switch channels!

**DAILY READING & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Luke 17:20-37; 2
Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2:8-12

TUESDAY: Luke 17:20-37; 2
Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2:8-12

WEDNESDAY: Luke 17:20-37; 2
Thessalonians 1:7-9; 2:8-12

THURSDAY: Luke 18:1-8

FRIDAY: Luke 18:9-14

Discussion Questions

1. In what way is the kingdom of God in the present?

2. What will it be like in “the days of the Son of Man”?

3. What should man always do before the Coming of the Son of man?

4. How is God different from the judge?

5. What is wrong and good about the Pharisee and the publican’s prayer?

6. What character traits are we taught to develop and to avoid?
