

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**
[Adapted from Bethel Bible-
Presbyterian Church, 10 Downing
St. Oakleigh, Vic., 3166]

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 29A

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

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INTRODUCTION

The time had finally come for Jesus to enter Jerusalem and give His life as atonement for the sins of the world. Although Jesus was meek, Jesus showed great courage and strength. Meekness is strength under control rather than being understood as being a weakling.

In this lesson, we learn the importance of faith and salvation. Firstly we “see” the importance of having spiritual eyes. Who is really blind? The ones who see and are blind or the ones who are blind but are the ones who really see? Secondly we witness the conversion of Zacchaeus, a rich man, and the impact it will have in the lives of a transformed soul. Salvation changes lives in ways that we cannot fathom. The power of God through the gospel of Jesus Christ is so potent that it

can change a hardened greedy heart into a gentle generous soul.

UNDERSTANDING

Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus:
Mark 10:46-52; Matthew 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43

Jesus and His companions crossed the Jordan River into Judaea on their way to Jerusalem. He was approaching Jericho. Jericho was about 8 kilometers (5 miles) west of Jordan and about 24 kilometers east of Jerusalem. It was one of the oldest inhabited sites in the world.

The passage we are considering seems a little confusing. Mark recorded that Jesus and His disciples “came to Jericho” and then “He went out of Jericho.” Luke recorded that Jesus “was come nigh unto Jericho.” In this incident, Jesus was approaching Jericho. The truth is that the accounts of Mark with Matthew and Luke were all correct. There were actually two Jerichos, the old town and the new. The older site of ancient Jericho was nearer to the Jordan River. But in later years, Herod the Great built a new, or Roman Jericho, some distance to the west. This explains the apparent confusion. Jesus “came to Jericho” (the old), and He “went out of Jericho” (the same old Jericho), and consequently He was “come nigh unto Jericho,” which was the Roman Jericho.¹

Two blind men were sitting by the highway. One, whose name was Bartimaeus, on hearing that Jesus was passing by, cried out

¹ Hobbs, *The Exposition of the Four Gospels - Mark*, 169.

loudly to Jesus, "O Lord Jesus, thou Son of David, have mercy on me." The crowd charged him to keep quiet, but he cried even louder still. Jesus then stood still and commanded that he be brought to Him. Jesus asked him, "What wilt thou that I should do unto thee?" The blind man replied, "Lord, that I might receive my sight." Jesus had compassion on him and touched his eyes. He immediately received his eyesight. Jesus said, "Thy faith hath made thee whole and saved thee." The blind man, who now could see, was so happy that he followed Jesus and glorified God, and all those who were following Jesus also praised God.

It is important to note that blind Bartimaeus had known about Jesus. He must have heard about Him from others. Unlike the crowd who mingled around Jesus, Bartimaeus believed that Jesus was the only one who could heal him. Bartimaeus was not discouraged by the other blind man who did nothing even when salvation was only a call away. He remained blind whereas Bartimaeus received his sight! Are you such a person who has been given the gospel and have heard of Jesus Christ many times but remained blind because you refuse to call to Jesus to give you your sight?

Bartimaeus was a determined man. He would not be deterred or be dissuaded even though the crowds of people tried to stop him from calling to Jesus in a loud voice to have mercy on him. Observe the threefold title which he called Jesus – "Jesus," meaning Saviour; "Lord," the word used here means "master" or

"rabbi;" and "Son of David," meaning that He is the "Messiah." He displayed a fairly good knowledge of Jesus and at the same time he believed in Jesus. He believed that only Jesus could restore his eyesight. He begged Jesus for mercy. Jesus did not disappoint him. Jesus had compassion and mercy on him and healed him. Bartimaeus asked and he was given! His cry for deliverance from his physical blindness was based upon the spiritual sight that he had already experienced and received from God.

Jesus healed Bartimaeus because of Bartimaeus' faith in Him. He was not only healed but was also saved! The absence or the lack of faith in Jesus would hinder the pouring of divine blessings upon ourselves. Bartimaeus did not just rejoice but he also followed Jesus, became a disciple of Jesus, and glorified God. His testimony impacted those who saw the miracle, and they too praised God.

That this miracle was recorded after the passion of Christ was foretold to the disciples and their response was to fight for position reveals their state of blindness in this situation. It does not mean that they are spiritually blind in terms of dead in sin and having no salvation, but being filled with pride they were not able to see like blind Bartimaeus concerning the importance and blessing of spiritual things such as faith in Jesus Christ.

They followed Christ for personal glory at this juncture, very much like some leaders or Christians who follow Christ for selfish gain rather than the glory of

God. They have hidden agendas and all of them are for self. These are the modern day glory hunters of our time.

Jesus Visits Zacchaeus, the Chief Publican:
Luke 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through the city. There was a chief tax collector, whose name was Zacchaeus. As a chief tax collector he was no friend of the people. He was looked down by the people as an extortioner and a collaborator of the Roman government. He was a despised person. No Jewish home or family would welcome him. But he “sought to see Jesus.” He had a problem. The crowd was very large, and the fact that he was a short man made it impossible for him to get a glimpse of Jesus. His mind worked quickly, and he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore tree. Zacchaeus sat on one of the branches of the tree and waited for Jesus to pass by. Jesus came to where Zacchaeus was, looked up and told Zacchaeus that He was inviting Himself to stay in Zacchaeus’ house that day. Zacchaeus responded instantly. He came down quickly, and received Jesus joyfully.

When the people saw Jesus entering Zacchaeus’ home, they murmured and commented disapprovingly that Jesus “was gone to be guest with a man that is a sinner.” Zacchaeus heard their grumbling. He stood up, and publicly testified that he would help the poor by giving half of his goods. This was a very generous gesture on his part. He also continued and said that “if I have taken any thing from any man by

false accusation,” he would restore the person fourfold. Jesus then responded and said to him, “This day is salvation come to this house.”

The conversion of Zacchaeus provides many valuable spiritual principles. Zacchaeus is an example of the rich man who got through the eye of a needle! As Jesus said, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26). There are many good qualities about him.

First, he did not let the crowd or his short stature hinder him from seeing Jesus. He was not easily deterred or discouraged. Zacchaeus was rich; he could easily stay at home and enjoy the comforts of his home. But he did not. As a chief tax collector, and a rich man, it took a lot of courage to climb the tree, and to be perched on it just to see Jesus, especially in the face of the crowd that was not too friendly to him. When Jesus said, “Zacchaeus, make haste, and come down, for to day I must abide at thy house,” Zacchaeus “made hast, and came down, and received” Jesus joyfully!

Secondly, observe how Zacchaeus responded exactly as Jesus said to him! In other words, Zacchaeus did not hesitate, nor procrastinate, nor delay. Jesus’ call to Zacchaeus required an immediate response, and Zacchaeus responded accordingly. By doing so he got more than he expected—Jesus was coming to stay in his home!

Thirdly, the crowd misunderstood Jesus’ mission. Their grumbling was unjust. However, Zacchaeus heard their

remark about him as “a man that is a sinner.” Zacchaeus stood up and responded appropriately. It is indeed commendable for him to give half of His riches to help the poor and needy. This is a very generous gesture on his part. He is different from the rich young ruler (Luke 18:18-23). He is also unlike that rich man who cared not for Lazarus the beggar (Luke 16:19-31). In this way Zacchaeus demonstrated the new work of Christ in his heart. He not only got right with God but also with all whom he had sinned against. He was prepared to make restitution with all whom he had cheated. He is now a wise man. Matthew 16:26, *“For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

Fourthly, Zacchaeus showed evidence of genuine repentance. He was aware that he had defrauded some people. He then testified that those whom he had extorted he paid them back fourfold. This was required by the law.² He made restitution by righting his wrong doings. That is true repentance—words followed by actions.

Having seen and heard Zacchaeus, Jesus called him “a son of Abraham,” and remarked that “this day is salvation come to this house.” This was a double blessing. Initially, he sought to see Jesus. But Jesus took the initiative

and invited Himself to come and stay in his house. And now Jesus declared that Zacchaeus was blessed with the Abrahamic blessing and salvation.

PRACTICAL VALUE

The spiritual benefits drawn from Jesus’ encounters with the people and His royal entry into Jerusalem are many if we care to look into them more expectantly. Jesus truly authenticated His deity and power. He gave sight to blind Bartimaeus, and compassion towards Zacchaeus, the chief publican.

Jesus always emphasized the importance and essentiality of faith in Him. One must exercise faith in Him in order that God can work for good to them that love and obey Him. The lack of faith will hinder His work of changing us and stopping the flow of blessings coming from Him. Bartimaeus was a blind man with real eye sight after he became a believer. There are many who have eyes but do not see. Sight comes from God and the study of God’s Holy Word.

Then there is Zacchaeus whose character and conduct, teaches us the true meaning of repentance. Repentance is not mere confession with the mouth. Every one can do that. Judas was also sorry that he betrayed the LORD. But true repentance means making appropriate restitution. A truly repentant person will take practical steps to right the wrongs he has done to others. The fact that Zacchaeus was a collector of tax is not a problem. What is exemplary on his part is his honesty and sincerity. AMEN.

² Exodus 22:1 If a man shall steal an ox, or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it; he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep. {or a sheep: or, or a goat}

² Samuel 12:6 And he shall restore the lamb fourfold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity.

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 29 A

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

**DAILY READINGS &
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Mark 10:46-52;
Matthew 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43.

TUESDAY: Mark 10:46-52;
Matthew 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43

WEDNESDAY: Mark 10:46-52;
Matthew 20:29-34; Luke 18:35-43

THURSDAY: Luke 19:11-28.

FRIDAY: Luke 19:11-28.

Discussion Questions

1. Would Bartimaeus have received his sight if he had not cried out?

2. How would you describe Bartimaeus' prayer?

3. Why should our lack of faith hinder the demonstration of God's power and blessings?

4. How did Bartimaeus show his appreciation? How do we show ours?

5. How did Zacchaeus show that he was repentant?

6. To what extent was Zacchaeus willing to go through in order to seek Jesus? To what extent would you go to obey the LORD now that you are a believer?

7. What can we learn from Jesus about soul winning?
