

CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE- PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 31B

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

Lesson 31B is a continuation of where 31A left off. Jesus replied His enemies with parables that were meant to challenge them so that they might wake up from their prideful stupor.

Jesus spoke three parables to them. They are three parables of judgment against the chief priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees. Jesus exposed their hypocrisy, pride, and self-righteousness. Having been chided, they grouped themselves together and hoped to trick Jesus by raising controversial issues. The first was made by the unholy alliance between the Pharisees and the Herodians. Their question was a very cunning one on politics and they thought that they had Jesus trapped. They failed. The Sadducees then made their attempt with a theological controversy about the resurrection. They too failed.

In all these parables Jesus exposed the character and conduct of the religious leaders; and in His direct

confrontation with them, the precious truths and spiritual lessons that emerged from them are valuable and edifying, they are for our learning as much as they were for the people then.

OUTLINE

1. Parable of the Wedding Dinner (Matthew 22:1-14)
2. Jesus Questioned Concerning Caesar's Taxes (Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26)
3. Jesus Questioned Concerning the Resurrection (Luke 20:27-40; Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27)

COMMENTARY

Parable of the Wedding Dinner

Jesus continued addressing the chief priests, the scribes, the Pharisees, and the people. He spoke to them again in another parable. The kingdom of Heaven is like a king who prepared a wedding feast for his son. He sent his servants to invite many to the wedding banquet. But the invited guests insulted the king by treating it of less importance. The invited guests went on their ways. One guest returned to his farm and another to his business. The rest of the guests spitefully treated the king's servants, and killed them. When the king heard it, he sent his armies and put to death the murderers and destroyed their city.

The wedding feast represented God's offer of His plan of salvation, His

Son Jesus Christ. The Jews understood this for God had chosen Abraham and made a covenant with him. Abraham's descendants would be blessed and be a channel of blessing to the rest of the world (Genesis 12:2-3).¹ The king's servants were all the prophets, including John the Baptist. But alas, the indifferent guests were those who were preoccupied with daily living and personal pursuits. This would definitely refer to the pride-filled Pharisees, Sadducees and Scribes. By way of application, they would include today's secularists, materialists, hedonists whose main concerns are going ahead in life and care not for the things of God. Those who reject the king's invitation were punished. The Jewish religious leaders incited the people to have Jesus crucified. They were severely punished. In 70 A.D. the Roman general Titus marched into Jerusalem with his army and killed more than a million Jews, and destroyed the Temple. Another great day of judgment will come when all those who reject God's invitation to receive and believe in His Son Jesus Christ will be appropriately punished.

The king then told his servants to go into the highways and as many as they could find, to bid them to the

marriage feast. This would be the Gentiles. They came. When the king came to the wedding feast to see his guests, he saw a man who was not dressed in the wedding clothes.

Why would the king penalize him for he definitely came at the invitation of his servants? The fact that all the other guests were wearing the wedding clothes shows that the king provided the wedding clothes to all his guests. When the king asked the man why he did not wear the wedding clothes, the man was speechless; he could not give an answer. This shows that he could have come in and be clothed with the wedding clothes provided for by the king, but he was not willing. Instead he wanted to wear his own clothes. He must have thought that he could come to the king's feast on his own terms, in his own clothes. In other words he was proud and self-willed.

"What is good enough for me must be good enough for the king!" This man was thrown out "into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." This is a description of hell. The lesson is plain and simple. For one to enter the kingdom of God and attend the marriage feast of the Lord Jesus Christ, God's Son, without the proper clothes of righteousness provided for by God, will be thrown out. His own clothes of righteousness are not acceptable and he will be rejected and cast out.

Jesus concluded with the words: "For many are called, but few are chosen." God the Creator invites all to the wedding feast which He has prepared for

¹ Genesis 12:2 And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing: 3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

His Son Jesus Christ. The gospel invitation is given to the world, the Jews first and then to the Gentiles. He desires that all should come and that none should be left out. But men choose rather to abide in their own will and ignore the invitation.

So the king compelled the Gentiles to come to His wedding feast, which He has so sumptuously prepared. Those who came on the king's terms; they are provided with the appropriate clothes.² They cannot and do not have to pay for it. It is a gift. Everything is a gift. All they need to do is to come.

Jesus Questioned Concerning Caesar's Taxes

Jesus exposed the hypocrisy, pride, and self-righteousness of the Jewish religious leaders. They envied Him. They wanted to kill Him. They watched Him. They then plotted together to trap Him, and to have Him arrested and be killed. They would bring up a series of controversial issues to Jesus hoping to trap Him. The first such controversy was made by the Pharisees in consort with the Herodians. The Pharisees and the Herodians were sworn enemies. They

² Isaiah 64:6 But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteous nesses are as filthy rags; and we all do fade as a leaf; and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away.

Isaiah 61:10 I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels.

disliked each other. The Herodians favored paying tax so that their pockets would be filled, whereas the Pharisees disliked the paying of tax to Caesar. This first controversy was about politics. They asked Jesus: "Is it lawful to give tribute (or tax) to Caesar, or not? Shall we give or shall we not give?"

Their question is a very cunning one. If Jesus answered that they should not pay tax, He would immediately be liable to arrest. If Jesus answered in the affirmative, He would immediately forfeit popular support. Jesus was caught between two evils. Jesus was in a very difficult situation. Either way He was liable for evil. But Jesus perceived their hypocrisy for they were not really sincere about the question. They were filled with evil thoughts and craftiness. He asked for a denarius. Jesus asked them: "Whose image and superscription?" They answered Him, "Caesar's." Then Jesus said to them: "Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's." The word "render" means to pay back something that is owed. In other words, the tax to Caesar belongs to Caesar. It was owed to Caesar. Therefore, render to Caesar, what was duly owed to him. Jesus did not use the word "give" which was used by the Pharisees and the Herodians.

But Jesus added in his answer by saying something far more important than paying taxes that belong to Caesar. Jesus said that men must render "to God the things that are God's." Roman emperors

required their subjects to worship them as gods. Caesar had the right to collect taxes, but he had no right to command the people to worship him as a god. The domain of human government is social and economic only (as given to them by God) but outside that realm and into the realm of the spiritual, it belongs to God, the Creator of men. Worship belongs to Him – for man must love and worship God with all his heart, mind, soul, and strength. For there is none who is God, but the LORD (Yahweh) the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; He alone is God!

The Pharisees and the Herodians were utterly astonished by Jesus' wisdom. They marveled at His answer. They held their peace and left Him and went their way.

Jesus Questioned concerning the Resurrection

It was still Wednesday. The Herodians and the Pharisees had left Jesus. This gave the Sadducees an opportunity to test and tempt Jesus. Although they were the smallest of the Jewish religious sect, they were the most wealthy and influential. The others had failed and the Sadducees hoped to succeed.

They came to Jesus with a theological controversy. The Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. They flattered Jesus by addressing Him as "Master" (or Teacher). They presented to Jesus the Levitical law of levirate marriage.

The law obligated a man to marry his brother's widow and beget children for him so that the line and the name will not die off. The case they presented to Jesus was that there were seven brothers. In the resurrection, whose wife would the woman be? They must have thought that they had Jesus cornered and there was no way of escaping.

Jesus without hesitation answered them. Jesus said that they had erred because they knew not the Scriptures, neither the power of God. Jesus addressed the issue of marriage in reverse order to their question. Jesus revealed that those who entered into the heavenly state in the resurrection do not marry nor given in marriage. They are equals to the angels, being children of God, being the children of the resurrection. Jesus also taught them something about angels for the Sadducees did not believe in angels. Angels do not marry in heaven and neither are those who are resurrected. For this they had erred not knowing the Scripture.

Jesus also charged them for not knowing the power of God. The Sadducees believed the Law, the five books of Moses. Jesus mentioned that in the book of Moses, it was written to them that God said that "I AM" the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob; and that He is the God of the living and not of the dead.³ Jesus used

³ Exodus 3:14 And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you. 15 And

the present tense "I am;" and if God is living, then the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are living too. The patriarchs are therefore still living and not dead, even though they have long died. The power of God is able to raise them from the dead. The multitude, when they heard Jesus' words, was astonished at His teaching! Who wouldn't? Are you not astonished too at the profundity of His teachings?

PRACTICAL VALUE

In the parable of the wedding feast, we learn that the offer of the gospel was to all, beginning with the Jews and then to the Gentiles. This is confirmed by Acts 1:8. Another lesson is that we cannot come to Jesus on our terms. **We must come to Jesus only on His terms.** There is nothing in us that merits our being accepted by Him. If we want to participate in His program of salvation then we must be willing to obey Him and accept His will and way. There is no other way. Jesus says in **Luke 9:23**, *"And he said to them all, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me."*

In His encounter with the Herodians and the Pharisees who

God said moreover unto Moses, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, The LORD God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, hath sent me unto you: this is my name for ever, and this is my memorial unto all generations.

questioned Jesus concerning the paying of tax to Caesar, Jesus made it very clear that **Christians ought to be law-abiding citizens.** Insofar as the law of the country does not contravene the Law of God, a Christian cannot break the law of a country. Shady presentation of our taxes falls into this categorically of trying to cheat the government of what is due to us. If the country demands that we pay 40% or even 50% of our income then we must pay it cheerfully. Jesus' encounter with the Sadducees concerning the resurrection, teaches us that **we ought to know the Scriptures** if we want to rightly divide the Word of Truth so that we can benefit from it and at the same time help others. All Christians should spend time in reading and knowing the Word of God, especially those who have the responsibility of preaching and teaching the Word. AMEN

**DAILY READING & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Matthew 22:1-14

TUESDAY: Matthew 22:1-14

WEDNESDAY: Matthew 22:1-14

THURSDAY: Matthew 22:15-22; Mark 12:13-17; Luke 20:20-26

FRIDAY: Luke 20:27-40; Matthew 22:23-33; Mark 12:18-27

Discussion Questions

1. What was God's purpose of sending His Son?

2. How did that generation return in kindness to God's invitation?

3. How does the parable bring out that, while the invitation is now made free to all, God's demand for holiness is no less stringent under the gospel than under the law?

4. What is Jesus' teaching concerning our duty to the state?

5. What is Jesus' teaching concerning the resurrection and the life to come?

9. What is Jesus' teaching concerning our duty to God?

7. What precious lessons can we learn about our profession of faith in Christ and our personal evangelistic effort?
