

**CALVARY BIBLE-PRESBYTERIAN
CHURCH (PANDAN)**

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

**DHW BIBLE CLASS
LESSON 6
THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

INTRODUCTION

Jesus and His disciples ministered and baptized the people in Judaea. Jesus learnt that the Pharisees had heard that He and His disciples were baptizing more disciples than John. He decided to head for Galilee. Together with His disciples, He took the direct route through Samaria. There at Jacob's well in Sychar, Jesus revealed His Messiahship to the Samaritans who gladly received Him.

After staying there for two days, Jesus went to Galilee and began preaching the good news of the kingdom of God. He visited Cana again and when He was there, a nobleman from Capernaum entreated Him to heal his sick child. After visiting Cana, He went to His hometown Nazareth. In Nazareth, Jesus experienced His first rejection by His fellow countrymen. He then moved to Capernaum, a busy and prosperous city situated on the north west of the

lake of Galilee (other names: lake of Gennesaret; lake of Chinnereth).¹

Jesus' arrival in Galilee marked the beginning of His great Galilean ministry. Jesus further demonstrated His divine power and authority. In Nazareth, He revealed His person and the purpose of His mission.

OUTLINE

The First Period of the Great Galilean Ministry

1. Arrival in Galilee (John 4:43-45, Matthew 4:17, Mark 1:14-15, Luke 4:14-15)
2. Second Miracle in Cana (John 4:46-54).
3. First Rejection at Nazareth (Luke 4:16-30)
4. Departure to Capernaum (Matthew 4:13-16, Luke 4:31).

COMMENTARY

Arrival in Galilee

The Galileans welcomed Jesus. They made annual trips to Jerusalem to observe the Passover Feast and had seen what Jesus had done in Jerusalem. They were impressed by the

¹ Luke 5:1 And it came to pass, that, as the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he stood by the lake of Gennesaret,

Joshua 13:27 And in the valley, Betharam, and Bethnimrah, and Succoth, and Zaphon, the rest of the kingdom of Sihon king of Heshbon, Jordan and his border, even unto the edge of the sea of Chinnereth on the other side Jordan eastward.

many miracles He had performed (John 2:23). They gladly received Him, hoping that Jesus would perform miracles in their cities. They failed to see the significance of the sign-miracles which testified of Jesus' divinity and authority. While Jesus was in Galilee He remarked that "a prophet hath no honour in his own country."

Jesus began preaching the gospel (glad tidings) of the kingdom of God to the Galileans saying, "**The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the gospel.**" The phrase "kingdom of God" is used frequently in Jesus' preaching and teaching. The fundamental idea of the kingdom of God is God's rule or reign in the hearts of the people. This concept of God's rule or reign is also mentioned in the Old Testament.² God is the King and His people are His subjects.

When Jesus mentioned that the "time is fulfilled," He is referring to His First Coming and the purpose for which He came. The gospel, or the good news, was the message that Jesus preached and taught. Those who had heard the gospel and repented of their sins and believed in Jesus would have a part in the kingdom of God – God is King in their hearts. In this sense the kingdom of God was near or present. Coupled with this concept, the kingdom of God is also

² Exodus 15:18 The LORD shall reign for ever and ever.

Psalm 97:1 The LORD reigneth; let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof.

Isaiah 43:15 I am the LORD, your Holy One, the creator of Israel, your King.

futuristic in the sense that it will be established as a literal political kingdom on earth and the Lord Jesus Christ will reign for one thousand years.³ The only way to be a part of the kingdom of God is for one to repent and believe in Jesus Christ. There is no other way. Jesus preached thus and taught in the Jewish synagogues, and His reputation spread far and wide.

Second Miracle in Cana

Jesus came again to Cana. During His first visit, He attended a wedding. When the host ran out of wine, He performed His first sign-miracle by turning the water into wine. This second visit was also marked with a sign-miracle. While He was there, a nobleman came from Capernaum (modern day Kefar Nahum). The city is on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee. It was an important city in those days. It had a tax office and the city was protected by a garrison of Roman soldiers. [It was most likely that the nobleman was a wealthy official of high ranking as evidenced by the fact that he had servants.] When he heard that Jesus was in Cana, he wasted no time

³ Revelation 20:4 And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, and which had not worshipped the beast, neither his image, neither had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and they lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years. 5 But the rest of the dead lived not again until the thousand years were finished. This is the first resurrection. 6 Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.

in going to see Jesus and asking Him to heal his son who was terminally ill. He had taken the long and arduous journey from Capernaum (about 650 feet below sea-level) to Cana (about 2,800 feet above sea-level) — a climb of about 3,500 feet. The distance is about 20 miles. It would have probably taken him about 3 hours one way.

This nobleman begged Jesus to come to his house and heal his son who was dying. Jesus replied him, “Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.” Jesus’ response may seem abrupt and irrelevant but his apparent rebuff was not addressed specifically to the nobleman. The pronoun “ye” is plural. He was addressing the Galileans at large and it included the nobleman. The Galileans who received Jesus were excited and eager over the prospect of **seeing** Jesus perform miracles in their midst. This nobleman could have shared the same thinking. He too wanted to see Jesus heal his son. He asked Jesus to come down to his house with him and heal his son. There is no doubt that the nobleman had some faith. He rose above Jesus’ rebuff, and humbly repeated his appeal pleading with Jesus to “come down” to his house. Jesus then told him to go his way and that his son would live. In other words, Jesus was saying that He could heal his son by the power of His Word from Cana. It was not necessary for Him to go to his house. The nobleman **believed** what Jesus had told him. He went back and when he was about to reach his house, he was met by his servants who told him that his

son had recovered. When he enquired after the time of his son’s recovery, they told him, “Yesterday at the seventh hour.” The nobleman realized that it was exactly the time when Jesus had told him to go home for his son would live. It was not necessary for Jesus to be personally present to heal his son. The nobleman had heard of Jesus from others but now he personally saw the power of the word of Jesus. He then led his whole household to believe in Jesus also.

In all probability, it is likely that the nobleman had consulted and tried every doctor but to no avail. He was in a desperate situation and this compelled him to seek Jesus as the last resort. He therefore made the trip to Cana where Jesus was. He had heard that Jesus could perform miracles and hoped that He would come to his house and heal his son. The journey was long and tiring by foot or even by riding on a donkey. He could have sent his servant but he must have considered the matter serious enough to require his personal attention. His son was dying. He must have carefully considered the odds and decided to go and plead with Jesus. If Jesus would not heal his son, there was no loss to him for his son would die anyway. But if Jesus were compassionate and heal his son, it would be his great gain. In other words, there was nothing to lose but much to gain. So he went to Jesus even though his faith might have been as small as a mustard seed. He was not disappointed. Jesus could heal his son even from

Cana. Distance was no barrier. Jesus did not have to be with his son in order to heal him. Is it not presumptuous of the nobleman to tell Jesus to come down to his house and heal his son? No, it is not presumptuous because this was what the rich noblemen normally did. Imagine telling the Great Physician what to do! Jesus did not oblige him, but told him to be on his way and that his son would live. There was life-giving power in Jesus' words. This was indeed a demonstration of the power of Jesus Christ, that he was omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent. This same salvation is available to anyone who will humble himself, come to Jesus and humbly accept His Word.

We should also commend the attitude of the nobleman. He loved his son dearly. He was prepared to make the long and difficult trek to see Jesus and ask Him for help. He was a wealthy and high-ranking official and could have sent one of his servants to bid Jesus to come to his house to heal his son, but he did not. He humbled himself and personally undertook the task. When Jesus rebuffed him, he did not react angrily but instead, he pleaded with Jesus by repeating his petition. When Jesus told him to go home and that his son would live, he raised no objections, asked no questions and expressed no doubts or reluctance. He obediently went his way as Jesus told him to do. This is how salvation comes to every sinner. It is simply by taking God at His Word and believing in the heart that His Word is true. The wonderful thing is that

when a person comes to Jesus in this manner, Jesus never turns him away! Money and status are useless. They cannot buy deliverance. Note that although the nobleman did not personally see the miracles that Jesus had done in Jerusalem, he **believed first**, and **then he experienced** the result of his believing heart (cf. 4:50). But many people expect the reverse order — experience first and then believe. This is not God's way. Alas, how many have forfeited themselves of the richest blessings that they can have if only they would believe God.

First Rejection at Nazareth

After this, Jesus went back to His hometown, Nazareth. As was His custom in His younger days, He went into the synagogue on the Sabbath day. He was given the Scriptures to read. The Jewish synagogue was a simple rectangular structure. On the far end directly opposite the main entrance was the place where the sacred scrolls were kept. Directly in front of this place was a raised pulpit or platform from which the sacred scrolls were opened and the Scriptures read. The rulers of the synagogue would be seated facing the assembly, and it was their duty to read the Scriptures and interpret the Law and the Prophets. If there was a visiting *rabbi*, they would invite him to be the speaker on that day.

Jesus' reputation as a Rabbi preceded Him, and on this Sabbath day, they invited Jesus to read the Scriptures and to speak to the congregation. The

scrolls were handed to Jesus who chose a passage from the book of Isaiah. It was understandable why the Lord chose the book of Isaiah – the prophet wrote and predicted many things concerning the sufferings and glories of their long awaited Messiah. Jesus read from Isaiah 61:1-2a:

“The Spirit of the Lord GOD is upon me; because the LORD hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound; To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD.”

Having read it, Jesus declared to the assembly, **“this day is this scripture fulfilled** in your ears.” [emphasis added] Jesus was revealing to them that He was the One of whom the Scripture was predicting and now being fulfilled in Him. As we can see, this Scripture pictures the Messiah as a servant to the sick and afflicted and a Saviour of the oppressed. The people wondered and critically remarked, “Is not this Joseph’s son.” They could not accept the fact that Jesus, whom they knew as the son of the carpenter, Joseph, could be the Anointed One of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke. It was incomprehensible to them. Hence they rejected Jesus who claimed to be their Messiah.

Jesus said that they would say to Him, “Physician, heal thyself: whatsoever we have heard done in Capernaum, do also here in thy

country.” Jesus knew their hearts and their thoughts. They had expressed their scepticism concerning Jesus’ revelation of Himself to them. They were thinking that if Jesus wanted them to believe that He was the Messiah, He must provide enough evidence. Jesus did not oblige them. Jesus never performed miracles to please people or for sensational purposes. Jesus then remarked that truly “no prophet is accepted in his own country.” Familiarity breeds contempt.

Jesus continued and reminded them of two incidents in the Old Testament. In the time of Elijah there were many widows in Israel, and there was a severe famine for three and half years throughout the land. Elijah was sent not to one of the Jewish widows, but to **a Gentile widow in Sarepta (Zarephath)**. The widow honoured Elijah by cooking and sharing her last morsel of meal with God’s prophet. She was richly blessed (1 Kings 17:8-24). The other incident concerned **Naaman, the Syrian military commander**, who was afflicted with the dreadful disease of leprosy. In the time of Elisha, there were many Jewish lepers in Israel, but none of them were healed, except Naaman (2 Kings 5:1-14). This was a stern rebuke to all His hearers for rejecting instead of believing in Him. When they heard these things, they became very angry and violent. They drove Jesus out of the synagogue to the edge of the hill that they might throw Him down to His death. But Jesus passed through the midst of them and went His way. Something must have stopped them from doing

what they intended to do. God's appointed time for Jesus to die for the sins of the world had not come.

Jesus' reading of the Isaiah passage is very significant. We should examine it more closely. Jesus said that His coming into the world had fulfilled God's promises given through the prophet Isaiah. He was God's Anointed. The Holy Spirit had descended at His baptism when God the Father testified concerning Him. Isaiah prophesied a **six-fold mission** of the Messiah: 1) to preach the gospel to the poor; 2) to heal the brokenhearted; 3) to preach deliverance to the captives; 4) to restore sight to the blind; 5) to set at liberty them that are bruised; and 6) to preach the acceptable year of the LORD. At the very outset of His ministry, Jesus announced His mission and work although the primary mission was to die for the sins of the world at Jerusalem. These works, which Jesus proclaimed from Isaiah, should be understood both literally and spiritually. He did not go to those who were poor materially or those who were rich materially but poor spiritually. He brought spiritual healing and peace to those who were troubled and who bore heavy burdens in their heart. He delivered those who were enslaved by evil spirits. He restored the sight of some who were physically blind but more importantly, those who were spiritually blind. He set free those who had been devastated by sin. He declared the acceptable (favourable) year of the LORD which began with His first coming. All these were true then,

are true today and will be true in the future until Jesus returns. Indeed the illustration from the Old Testament is the Jubilee Year of the Lord when the trumpet would sound and liberty proclaimed throughout the land of Israel (Leviticus 25:8-55). Fields were left to fallow; people were given back their homes; debts were cancelled; and slaves were set free. This is the time of God's favour.

Note that in the reading of the Isaiah passage, Jesus stopped in the middle of the sentence of verse 2, which reads: *To proclaim the acceptable year of the LORD, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all that mourn.*" Jesus omitted the latter part of the sentence, "the day of vengeance of our God" which will take place at the second coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. All those who reject and rebel against Jesus Christ will suffer the wrath of God's vengeance! But for now until the return of Jesus, it is the favourable year of the LORD. Now is the day of salvation, the accepted (favourable) time.⁴

Our Lord Jesus Christ clearly identified Himself as the long awaited Messiah, God's Anointed One, the Son of God. He also proclaimed His mission. In citing the two examples from the Old Testament, He was declaring that the

⁴ 2 Corinthians 6:2 (For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.)

poor and the rich both stand equal in the sight of God and both can be recipients of His grace. For the moment, Israel has rejected Jesus as their Messiah and the gospel of salvation is now being extended to the Gentiles.

Departure to Capernaum

Having been rejected in Nazareth, Jesus moved to Capernaum where earlier His mother, Mary, and his brethren and disciples had settled (John 2:12). Jesus made Capernaum His mission headquarters. Capernaum was a thriving coastal town by the north-western shore of the Lake of Galilee. The lake was about 8 miles by 15 miles, teeming with fishes and providing the inhabitants with food and fresh water. There was a synagogue in Capernaum, and Jesus, as His custom was, went there to preach and teach the worshippers. This too was a fulfilment of Isaiah's prophecy (Isaiah 9:1): *Nevertheless the dimness shall not be such as was in her vexation, when at the first he lightly afflicted the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, and afterward did more grievously afflict her by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, in Galilee of the nations. 2 The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light: they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.*

A new period dawned on that region. The people there had walked in spiritual darkness and with the appearance of Jesus on the scene, light (truth) shone on them. The frequent

references to the fulfilment of prophecies in the Old Testament establish the certainty of God's Word and His revealed eternal plan and purpose for man. The appearance of Jesus — His Person, His Word, and His Works — on the stage of human history is not coincidental but the determinate will of God to save sinners and reconcile them to Him to the praise and glory of His Name.

SUMMARY

Jesus came to Galilee and began His ministry. The Galileans received Him gladly because they had seen the miracles which He had performed in Jerusalem. Jesus' opening message was that the kingdom of God is near, and called on the people to repent and believe in the good news which He had brought to them. Jesus revisited Cana. In this visit, He met a nobleman from Capernaum who begged Him to go down to his house and heal his terminally ill child. Jesus did not go to his house but instead sent him away with the assurance that his son would live. He believed. His child was healed at the very hour Jesus spoke to him. After that Jesus went to Nazareth, His hometown. On the Sabbath day, as was His custom, He went to the synagogue. He was invited to read and speak to the congregation. He read from Isaiah 61:1-2a and proclaimed that in Him was the fulfilment of the predictions. The people of Nazareth rejected Him after Jesus related two incidents in the Old

Testament to rebuke them for their unbelief. He pointed out to them that God's grace was given to two Gentiles in the Old Testament. One was a poor widow of Zarepta, and the other was Naaman, a Syrian army officer. They tried to kill Jesus by throwing Him off the cliff, but Jesus walked away from them. Jesus left Nazareth for Capernaum where He established His mission headquarters.

PRACTICAL VALUE

We should not be discouraged when our own loved ones and relatives show strong resistance to our testimony of Jesus Christ. Instead, we should keep on witnessing to and pray for them.

The entrance into the kingdom of God is through repentance and belief in the gospel of Jesus Christ. There is no other way. We have seen that God's grace is given to those who having heard, believed and then experienced the blessings of salvation. In witnessing to others, we can use the examples of the nobleman, the widow of Sarepta and Naaman to persuade them to be wise and believe. The three of them had one thing in common. The widow had only enough to cook a last meal for herself and her son; Naaman was afflicted with the dreadful fatal disease of leprosy; and the nobleman had a son who was terminally ill. They knew that no one could help them and their case was hopeless. In their providential encounter with the servants of God, they were told to do something which deliver. Each of

them responded in a similar attitude. All of them obeyed and they were much blessed.

Finally, Jesus attended worship service every Sabbath day. He sets the example for all of us never to miss or skip worship service on Sunday, the Lord's Day. If we truly love our Lord and seek to honour Him, we should arrange our weekly chores and activities in such a way that we are free to go to church and worship the Lord on Sunday and to be together with our fellow brethren.
AMEN

**DAILY READING & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: John 4:43-45; Matthew 4:17;
Mark 1:14-15; Luke 4:14-15

TUESDAY: John 4:46-54; Isaiah 55:11;
1 John 5:15

WEDNESDAY: Luke 4:16-30

THURSDAY: Matthew 4:13-16; Luke
4:31

FRIDAY: 1 Kings 17:8-24; 2 Kings 5:8-
14

Discussion Questions

1. What was the emphasis of Jesus’
message in His initial preaching?

2. What is the fundamental idea of the
“kingdom of God”?

3. In what way is the kingdom of God
“at hand” or near?

4. What did Jesus think of the belief of
the Galileans?

5. How would you describe the
progression of the nobleman’s faith?
Why is it important?

6. What was the emphasis in the synagogue worship service that Jesus participated?

7. Why did Jesus choose to read Isaiah 61:1-2a?

8. How was the Holy Spirit involved in Jesus' ministry?

9. What was the spiritual condition of the people in the region generally? What was done to alleviate the condition?

10. What were the two incidents which Jesus referred to in the Old Testament? What was Jesus' point?

11. What spiritual truth and lessons can we learn from the nobleman's experience?
