

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

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 7

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

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INTRODUCTION

We have learnt of how our Lord Jesus Christ led the Samaritan woman and the people of Samaria to recognize Him as the Christ and Saviour of the world. Subsequently, Jesus came into Galilee. He revisited Cana where He performed a second miracle there by healing the dying son of a nobleman Capernaum. Then our Lord Jesus Christ returned to His hometown, Nazareth. Sadly, His hometown folks were deeply offended by His preaching and teaching. They rejected Him and drove Him out of the synagogue. Jesus remarked that no prophet is accepted in his own country. He left Nazareth and made His headquarters in Capernaum.

By the Sea of Galilee, our Lord Jesus Christ preached to the multitudes that came to hear Him. He began calling His twelve disciples. The first disciples were Peter, James and John. On the sabbath day, as was His custom, He went to the synagogue in Capernaum where He taught the worshippers with authority and power. He cast out a demon and healed Peter's mother-in-law. In one of the cities of Galilee, He healed a leper. In all His travels and preaching, Jesus demonstrated His knowledge, power and authority over people and the forces of the spiritual and natural world.

UNDERSTANDING

Calling of the Galilean Disciples
Luke 5:1-11, Matthew 4:18-22,
Mark 1:16-20.

A great crowd of people followed Jesus, so much so that it was not possible for Jesus to stand by the shore of the lake of Gennesaret (another name for the Sea of Galilee) to preach and teach the people. Jesus saw two ships standing by the lake -- the fishermen were outside washing their nets. Jesus entered into Peter's boat and requested him to push out a little away from the shore. Jesus used the boat as a pulpit from where He taught the people. After teaching the people, Jesus told Peter to launch out into the deep and cast their nets into the sea. Peter, being a master fisherman, told Jesus that they had toiled all night and caught nothing. Nevertheless Peter let down a net and when they pulled it up, it was so full of fishes that their

net broke and they had to call their partners from the other ship, James and John, to give them a helping hand.¹ Peter saw the hand of God in the current circumstances and was keenly aware of the presence of the One who is holy. He immediately bowed down before Jesus and confessed his sinfulness. Jesus told him that He would make them “fishers of men”. Peter, James and John were the first disciples of Jesus. They left their family and occupation to follow Jesus. Zebedee, the father of James and John, had a thriving fishing business as evidenced by the fact that they had hired servants. They were successful and rich. But James and John forsook all that.

There are several themes in this account. Jesus was always busy preaching and teaching the people. That was His mission. His main message was the nearness of the kingdom of God, and the need for the people to repent. The crowds of people flocked to Jesus to hear the Word of God. His preaching and teaching were powerful and authoritative. The people who heard the Word were tremendously ministered. Today we have the divinely inspired Word of God permanently written and preserved for our learning, comfort, guidance and spiritual growth. Let us reflect the same interest and hunger for the Word like the multitudes that flocked to

¹ The fishes in the Sea of Galilee are an important diet of the people. The sea is teeming with fishes, a particular species called the Tilapia which is popularly known as “St. Peter’s Fish.” In 1965 the sea yielded 304 tons of Tilapia! (*Nelson’s Illustrated Encyclopedia of Bible Facts*, 230). But on that very day, there was none to be caught.

Jesus and followed Him to hear God’s Word!

The highlight of this account clearly was Jesus’ demonstration of His knowledge, power and authority over the master fisherman, who was none other than Peter. It was his ship that Jesus boarded, and he was at the helm listening to Jesus’ teaching. Jesus’ command to let down the nets (note plural) was met with initial scepticism from Peter. Peter replied that they had fished all night and caught nothing. A seasoned fisherman by trade, he reckoned that he knew where and when to cast the net. Nevertheless, Peter let down a net (note singular). By this act, Peter showed some measure of openness and faith. The result was a miracle.

PETER’S RESPONSE was spiritually instructive. His confession of sinfulness was not about his particular sin of scepticism. Rather he was convicted that he was in the presence of One with divine power but he did not know as yet that Jesus was God. He told Jesus to depart from him as he was not worthy to be in His presence. Peter addressed Jesus as “Lord” when earlier he had addressed Him as “master.” It was much later that Peter proclaimed that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus reassured Peter and told him that He would make him a fisher of men. To be a fisher of men is to rescue people out of the world of sin and Satan’s grip. God is in the business of saving people and Jesus called Peter to co-labour with Him. Later Jesus called James and John, sons of Zebedee. All three men

set the example of forsaking all, leaving their families [does not mean physically all the time where they were ignored] and jobs and followed Jesus to become fishers of men which was more profitable than fishing for fishes.

The miracle is parabolic. Jesus preached and taught from the boat, using it as a pulpit. Then Jesus took control and changed the lives of the fishermen, Peter, James and John, not to mention Andrew too. Anyone who meets Jesus and realises his sinfulness and unworthiness will be changed for the better. Jesus shows that He uses repentant sinners to work with Him in the great mission work of saving souls! Peter, James and John had exchanged their jobs and material gains which they knew they could hold only temporarily for the work and benefits which would last forever! That is a wise and intelligent investment of time, energy, talents and possessions. Would you do the same?

Deliverance of the Demoniac in the Synagogue

Mark 1:21-28, Luke 4:31-37

Jesus came down to Capernaum and taught in the synagogue on the sabbath days. The worshippers were astonished at the teaching of Jesus because His word was with power and authority unlike the scribes. He spoke the words of God in truth and with deep conviction. Indeed the scribes and the Pharisees were hypocrites—teachers who taught others to keep the law but did not obey the law themselves. Moreover, Jesus taught things that concerned life and death and

eternity, whereas the scribes and Pharisees focused on trivialities such as the washing of hands before eating.²

Now there was in the synagogue a man possessed by a demon. On seeing Jesus, he cried out loudly, “Leave us alone; what have we to do with thee, thou Jesus of Nazareth? Art thou come to destroy us? I know thee who thou art, the Holy One of God.” These demons knew the true identity of Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus rebuked the demon and commanded him to be silent and to come out of the man. The demon obeyed and the man was safe. All the people in the synagogue were amazed. They were astonished that even the demons obeyed Jesus. The news spread like wild fire throughout the region and the fame of Jesus spread around the Galilee region.

The theme of this miraculous deliverance of the man possessed with the demon is significant. This event demonstrates the power and authority of our Lord Jesus Christ over the principalities and powers of darkness. But before we go further, we should notice that our Lord Jesus made a point to attend worship services on the Lord’s Day (Sabbath day). Our attitude and action in faithfully worshipping God on the Lord’s Day reflect our true respect and relationship with Him. If we call and honour Him as

² Matthew 15:2 Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread.

Matthew 23:23 Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

GOD, we ought to worship and obey Him! Always keep the Lord's Day holy unto Him.

As in the case with Peter who was the master fisherman, so it is with the scribes and the priests in the demon possessed case -- Jesus made it known that He had greater knowledge, and power than they. The demon-possessed man had been in the synagogue for some time, and the scribes and priests were powerless to deliver him.

An interesting thing is that the demons spoke the truth about the deity of Jesus.³ Jesus rebuked him and told him to keep quiet. One would have thought that such a testimony from an enemy would be a plus point for Jesus. Not so. Jesus did not need morally corrupt demons to testify concerning Him. Such testimony by the demons would lead people to believe and trust the demons when they spoke of other things which were false in order to deceive people. That is a very powerful strategy in deception. Truth mixed with falsehood is very dangerous and will lead people astray and even destroy them. So Jesus silenced him.

Healing of Peter's Mother-in-Law

Mark 1:29-34, Matthew 8:14-17, Luke 4:38-41

After Jesus left the synagogue, He entered the house of Peter. Peter's mother-in-law was sick -- this is evidence that Peter was married, although nothing was said about his wife and children.

³ James 2:19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well: the devils also believe, and tremble.

Jesus stood by Peter's mother in law, rebuked the fever (there is no mention that the fever was caused by a demon) and immediately her health and strength were totally and completely restored. This was shown by her grateful response in immediately serving Jesus and His companions! Later in the evening, when the hour struck to end the Sabbath day, the people brought all who were sick and possessed with devils to the entrance of Peter's home. Jesus laid His hands on every one of them and healed them and cast out many demons by the power of His Word.

Jesus had the power to heal and to save. More important than the deliverance from physical illness is the deliverance from the ravages of sin and the eternal damnation in the lake of fire. Jesus had demonstrated His power and authority over the natural world (the catch of fishes on Peter's boat), over the spiritual world (the deliverance of the demon-possessed man) and over physical illnesses. All who humbly came to Jesus seeking His help were not disappointed. Their encounter with Jesus changed and transformed their lives beyond their expectation.

Jesus Preaches Throughout Galilee the First Time

Mark 1:35-39, Matthew 4:23-25, Luke 4:42-44.

It was a hard long Sabbath day. But the next morning, Jesus woke up well before sunrise and went out to a solitary place to pray. Such is the prayer life of Jesus -- after a long day of hard work, He rose very early in the morning to pray. The pressure of work,

instead of causing Him to neglect communion with God, drew Him even nearer to God. Similarly, our responsibility and duty to the LORD our God must come first in our life—praising Him, praying to Him and partaking of His Word!

When Simon Peter and the others woke up in the morning, they found many people waiting for Jesus. Peter and the others searched and found Jesus. But when told of the multitude waiting for Him, Jesus made a surprise suggestion that they move on to the other towns to preach. Jesus was clear about His mission. He came to proclaim the gospel of the kingdom of God, to call men to repent for the kingdom of God is near. He had preached, taught and ministered to the people of Capernaum. Many others had not had a chance to hear from Him yet. So Jesus left those who had heard the gospel of the kingdom of God and moved on. He travelled all over the regions of Galilee and preached and taught the gospel of the kingdom in their synagogues. He healed all kinds of diseases and cast out demons. Everywhere He went, multitudes followed Him.

Healing of the Leper

Mark 1:40-45, Matthew 8:2-4, Luke 5:12-16

In a city in Galilee, a leper came and knelt down before Jesus. He pleaded, "Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean." His prayerful petition was direct and short. Jesus was moved with compassion, touched the leper and said to him with the same brevity and directness, "I will, be thou clean." As soon as Jesus had spoken these words, the leprosy

was gone and the leper was completely cleansed. Jesus charged him not to tell others but to go to the priest to be verified and to offer sacrifices as required under the Mosaic Law. But the man went about telling people how he was healed. Many people came to Jesus and made it impossible for Him to freely enter the city. Jesus had to withdraw into the wilderness to pray.

The leper had heard and sought Jesus. There was no cure for leprosy in those days. When a person was afflicted with the disease, he had to present himself to the priest who would ascertain whether it was leprosy. If certified so, the leper was obliged to cry out loudly, "Unclean; unclean," wherever he went. He had to live outside the city, ostracized from the community. No one would touch him! This leper showed tremendous courage and faith to come to Jesus amidst the great crowd of people whom he knew would despise, dislike and detest him. His request was very brief and to the point. He addressed Jesus as "Lord" recognizing His power and authority, believing in the power of Jesus to heal him. It was not a question of Jesus' ability but His willingness to heal him. This was indeed a cry of genuine need and faith. He came, knelt down in abject humility and begged to be healed. Jesus was moved with compassion and was amazed at the faith of the leper and his confidence and trust in Him. Jesus touched him! Jesus could have spoken the word and healed him without touching him. The leper had missed the touch of other people and even that of his own loved ones. Jesus' touch

must have comforted him greatly. He was immediately healed. Jesus instructed him to present himself as a testimony to the verifying priests so that they would recognise that the Messiah was amongst them. Once again Jesus demonstrated that He had more power and authority than the priests. The priests could only examine and declare that a person was afflicted with leprosy but they could not heal him.

SUMMARY & REFLECTION

Jesus displayed His credentials as One who had power and authority over the physical and spiritual world. Jesus showed that He was better than any expert in his particular area of specialty. Peter was the expert fisherman; the scribes the experts in the Law; the priests the experts in diagnosing a person; but Jesus' knowledge, power and authority were far better. He controlled the fishes. Jesus demonstrated that He is the promised Messiah, the Christ, and the Son of the living God.

Jesus expected His followers to give Him undivided loyalty and service. Peter, James and John gave up everything to follow and serve Him. Indeed, every kind of work, whether secular or spiritual should all be done as unto the Lord Jesus Christ.⁴

⁴ Colossians 3:22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God: 23 And whatsoever ye do, do it heartily, as to the Lord, and not unto men; 24 Knowing that of the Lord ye shall receive the reward of the inheritance: for ye serve the Lord Christ.

When Peter realized who Jesus was, he was convicted of his sinfulness and unworthiness and he repented. The leper knew his need to be delivered from his terrible condition. He came to Jesus in faith and implored Jesus to save him. And whenever people come to Jesus in faith, they are changed and transformed. Christians today must have this kind of mindset and heart. Those who are proud and stubborn in their refusal to come to Jesus suffer loss of their own doing.

When we admit our sinfulness, and our weaknesses, we will draw nearer to the Lord Jesus. We will pray earnestly and seek His healing and strengthening. Very often, Christians today busy themselves with "church" activities but they forget one fundamental thing – not to neglect their first responsibility and duty to worship God, obey His commandments and ensure that their own spiritual growth do not suffer.

AMEN.

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 7

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

**DAILY READING & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: Luke 5:1-11, Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20.

TUESDAY: Mark 1:21-28, Luke 4:31-37.

WEDNESDAY: Mark 1:29-34, Matthew 8:14-17, Luke 4:38-41.

THURSDAY: Mark 1:35-39, Matthew 4:23-25. Luke 4:42-44.

FRIDAY: Mark 1:40-45, Matthew 8:2-4, Luke 5:12-16

Discussion Questions

1. How much faith did Peter show when he said, “Nevertheless at thy word I will let down the net” (Luke 5:5)?

2. What is the significance of Peter’s confession when he knelt before Jesus and said,

“Depart from me; for I am a sinful man?”

3. What was Jesus’ response to Peter’s confession?

4. What did Jesus mean by “I will make you fishers of men”? What was the impact of this calling on the disciples?

5. In what two ways did Jesus demonstrate His power and authority in casting out the demon from the man?

6. In the healing of Peter's mother-in-law, what evidence shows that Jesus' healing was complete?

7. Why did Jesus not allow the demons to testify concerning Him?

8. What things are mentioned about Jesus' prayer life?

9. What aspects of Jesus' authority are shown in the healing of the leper? What is the spiritual lesson of this parabolic miracle?

10. What one thing about Jesus have you learned from this lesson?
