

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

[Adapted from Bethel Bible-  
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3166]

**DHW Bible Class**

**LESSON 8**

**THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

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**INTRODUCTION**

"No prophet is accepted in his own country," declared our Lord Jesus Christ. He was driven out of Nazareth, His hometown, after preaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath Day. Jesus left Nazareth and lived in Capernaum. What a sad day for the people of Nazareth. They had rejected the One who could have given them life and light.

In Galilee, Jesus began gathering the Twelve Disciples (or Apostles). In His initial ministry in Galilee, Jesus made His claim to Deity. The passages which we will consider in this lesson will show that the Lord Jesus Christ is indeed the Son of God. The power and authority which were evident in His preaching, teaching and healing could only come from God.

**UNDERSTANDING**

***Healing of the Paralytic:***

*Mark 2:1-12, Matthew 9:1-8,  
Luke 5:17-26*

Jesus took a boat and returned to Capernaum. A few days later when it was known that Jesus was in town, many flocked to see Him. The crowd was so big that there was hardly any room in the house. Many had to stand at the door. The Pharisees and "doctors of law" (presumably the scribes) from Galilee, Judaea and Jerusalem also came.

The friends of a paralytic tried to lower him from the roof-top of the house so that Jesus could heal him. They had removed the tiles of the roof.<sup>1</sup> Jesus was very impressed and touched by their faith. He said to the paralytic, "Son, be of good cheer, thy sins be forgiven thee." Jesus did not address the physical affliction of the man. Instead He addressed his spiritual sickness. Jesus looked beyond the physical and dealt with the heart of the matter first. The paralytic's greater need was his spiritual healing.

Jesus' words to the paralytic met with disapproval and resentment from the Pharisees and scribes who charged Him for blaspheming God. God alone could forgive sins. Jesus was assuming the role of God and claiming to have the attribute, power and authority which

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<sup>1</sup> The rooftops of the houses in Palestine in those days were flat. The roofs were made of tiles which could be easily removed, and then replaced without damaging the roof. The roof was easily accessible for there was a stairway leading up to the roof top.

belong to God alone. He was a blasphemer in the eyes of the Pharisees and the scribes. Jesus knew their thoughts and He openly confronted them. Jesus had to demonstrate that He is God and that He can forgive sins. Jesus asked them, "Why reason ye these things and think evil in your hearts? Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee, or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sin," Jesus turned to the paralytic and said, "Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house." In one sense, it is easier to say to the man, "your sins be forgiven you" than to heal the paralysis of the man.

If Jesus was only a man, He could still say, "Thy sins be forgiven thee," and no one could prove whether the man's sins had been forgiven or not. In another sense it is not because to forgive his sins you have to be God. If he had sinned against God then only God can forgive him. It was common at that time for the scribes and Pharisees to believe that it was due to our sin against God that we are born lame or blind or a handicap.

In order therefore for Jesus to prove that He had the power on earth to forgive sins as God, He healed the paralytic. This would demonstrate to the religious leaders and all the people that Jesus is more than a mere man or a prophet sent from God, for no prophet can forgive sin. It would prove that He had supernatural power and that He also had the power and the

authority to forgive sins! He is God. The Lord Jesus Himself declared, "that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sin" (Mark 2:10, 11).

The words that Jesus used are rich in meaning. In the phrase "that ye may know," the word "know" (Greek, *oida*) means to have an experiential knowledge or perception. In this case, the Pharisees and scribes saw with their own eyes the healing of the paralytic and they know that the Son of man can forgive sins. Jesus also called Himself the "Son of man." It is a title in which He revealed Himself as One who is related to God and to man. Jesus had proven to the religious leaders using their own words—"who can forgive sins but God only"—that He had the right to His claim of Deity.

***The Call of Matthew: Mark 2:13-20, Matthew 9:9-15, Luke 5:27-35***

Jesus went again to the seaside of Galilee and the multitudes followed Him. As He was walking, He saw a publican named Levi, also known as Matthew, sitting and doing his work of collecting taxes at his table. A publican was a tax collector which was a profitable occupation in those days. The Jews disdained these publicans and considered them as traitors because they worked for the Romans collecting taxes from them. Often the writers of the Gospel used the phrase

“publicans and sinners” linking them with sinners.<sup>2</sup>

Jesus called Matthew to follow Him. Matthew left all and went with Him. Later Matthew threw a big banquet in his home for his fellow publicans, Jesus and His disciples as well as others. The banquet was meant as a farewell to all his friends and also an opportunity to introduce His new found Master to all his guests. Jesus’ willingness to grace the occasion showed His love for him and his friends.

The scribes and Pharisees would not let Jesus off. They dogged Him wherever He went, obviously to find fault with Him. They murmured and complained to Jesus’ disciples that their Master ate and drank with publicans and sinners. When Jesus heard it, He replied, “They that are whole have no need of the physician, but they that are sick: But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” This is an indirect rebuke of them. The “physician” is Jesus; the “whole” are the Pharisees and scribes” who were a self-righteous lot; and the “sick” are the publicans and sinners.

The disciples of John were also present there. They followed the Pharisees in fasting on certain days. Note this strange link between John’s disciples and the Pharisees. The common ground for their coalition was their criticism that Jesus’ disciples did not fast. Jesus replied that His disciples had no reason to fast. Fasting was a

sign of mourning. As long as the bridegroom was still with his friends, the latter should not fast. But the day would come when the bridegroom was no more, then they could fast. In a veiled way, Jesus was predicting His own crucifixion and death.

The Pharisees had reduced the Old Testament laws to mere man-made legalism and ritualism. They had missed the point of God’s original intention of the Law. Jesus used two parables to press His point. No one patches an old worn-out garment with new cloth else the new cloth would shrink and tear the old garment [NO CONNECTION]. No man would put new wine into old wineskins, because the new wine would burst the old bottles when it had fermented and expanded [NO CONTAINMENT]. Jesus was saying that the Pharisees were trying to patch up their man-made legality and ritualism of the Old Testament with what God was revealing in Him. Jesus viewed the two to have nothing in common. Jesus was not against fasting as a spiritual exercise but fasting must be from the heart and not just an outward show. There were times when it was right and proper to fast and mourn [CF. The Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7].

### ***Brief Visit to Jerusalem: John 5:1-18***

After several months of His Galilean ministry, Jesus “went up” to Jerusalem. Jesus was going south and yet John wrote that Jesus “went up.” This is a topographical description because Galilee is about 210

<sup>2</sup> Matthew 9:10, 11; 11:19; Mark 2:15, 16; Luke 5:30; 7:34; 15:1.

metres (690 feet) below sea-level whereas Jerusalem is about 750 metres (2460 feet) above sea-level.

There was a “feast of the Jews” in Jerusalem. This feast was the second Passover feast in Jesus’ ministry. It was a principal feast of the Jews and Jesus interrupted His Galilean ministry to attend this feast.<sup>3</sup> There was by the sheep market a pool which was called Bethesda (meaning: “house of mercy”). At this poolside, there were many sick people. A Jewish belief was that at a certain time each year an angel would disturb the water, and the first person to step into the pool would be healed. John the writer did not comment if this was true. Jesus was also silent on the matter. What was significant was that Jesus approached a man whom He knew had an ailment for thirty-eight years, and asked him, “Wilt thou be made whole?” The man responded by saying that he was too weak to beat the others into the pool when the water was troubled. Jesus told him to rise up, take up his bed and walk. The man immediately regained his strength, rose up, took up his bed and walked. The healing was immediate and complete -- there was no relapse. Jesus reminded the man that since he had been made whole, he should sin no more lest a more terrible ailment might happen to him. Jesus’ remarks implied that this man’s sickness was caused by a particular sin that he had committed.

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<sup>3</sup> Herschel H. Hobbs, *An Exposition of the Four Gospels: John* for a discussion of this “feast,” page 112.

That same day was the Sabbath Day. The orthodox Jews who were there criticized the man for taking up his bed and walk. Instead of praising and glorifying God that this man was miraculously healed, they engaged in criticizing and condemning him because of a “technicality”. They then charged Jesus for breaking the Fourth Commandment which stipulates that men should keep the Sabbath day holy, and should refrain from work on that day.<sup>4</sup> But the Jews had defined the meaning of “labour” with hundreds of man-made regulations. For example: Dragging a stick on the ground on the Sabbath Day was forbidden. That was ploughing. Rubbing out the grain with their hands was threshing. So the man who took up his bed and walked with it was considered to have broken the Fourth Commandment. What warped interpretation had been made to the perfect laws of God!

***Jesus’ Equality with God:***  
John 5:19-47

Since the cleansing of the Temple by Jesus, the orthodox Jews had not ceased to persecute Him. They were trying to find some grounds on which they could pin Him down. They thought they had found one -- Jesus had broken the Sabbath by healing a man and moreover ordering him to take up his bed and walk. These orthodox Jews were constantly persecuting

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<sup>4</sup> Exodus 20:8 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work:

Jesus and finding ways to kill Him. But Jesus had an answer for them, "My Father worketh hitherto, and I work." The Sabbath marked God's rest from His creative work. But God still engages in works of mercy and kindness and redemption even on the Sabbath.

Now the Jews were further enraged that Jesus had called God His Father, thus making Himself equal with God. Jesus not only broke the Sabbath according to their laws but blasphemed the name of God. Jesus had healed the man who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years which was a sign of His Deity but the Jews refused to perceive the miracle as such. Nicodemus, on the other hand, was convicted for he said to Jesus that no man could do all those miracles unless God was with him. The Jews however focused on the fact that Jesus healed on the Sabbath and thus broke the Sabbath. Jesus defended saying, "The son can do nothing of himself, but what he seeth the Father do: for what things soever he doeth, these also doeth the Son." Jesus was saying to the effect that what He did by healing the man on the Sabbath was within the will of God. Jesus reiterated that God the Father loved the Son and had committed everything to Him. God does not judge anyone directly but has committed all judgement to His Son. While the Jews thought that they were judging Jesus, little did they realize that they were being judged by Jesus. All man should honour the Son with the same honour as they honour the

Father. Jesus was clearly declaring that He is equal with God.

Having testified of His equality with God, Jesus remarked that since He was witnessing of Himself, His witness could not be acceptable. According to Jewish, Greek and Roman law, a person's witness by himself is not admissible evidence.<sup>5</sup> The Law of Moses stipulates that one witness alone is not enough evidence to convict a person of wrongdoing. It must be "at the mouth of two witnesses or at the mouth of three witnesses."<sup>6</sup> Jesus now called five witnesses to prove that His testimony of Himself was true.

FIRST, there was the witness of God His Father (v.32). Jesus had already pointed out to them the unity of God the Father with Him. His Father testified of Him in His baptism. SECOND was the witness of John the baptist (vv.33-35). He had witnessed concerning Jesus even to the delegation which was sent by the Sanhedrin. Jesus was the Lamb of God who would baptize them with the Holy Spirit. John admitted that he was not worthy even to loose the strings of His shoes. THIRD there was the witness of Jesus' sign miracles (v.36). They point to His Deity. FOURTH is the witness of

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<sup>5</sup> Hobbs, 118.

<sup>6</sup> Deuteronomy 19:15 One witness shall not rise up against a man for any iniquity, or for any sin, in any sin that he sinneth: at the mouth of two witnesses, or at the mouth of three witnesses, shall the matter be established.

Scripture (vv.39-44). Jesus told them to search the Scriptures for they testify of Him. The Pharisees and the scribes were experts in the Scriptures. They thought that by studying the Scriptures they would have eternal life but they had missed the message which spoke of a Messiah who would come to save souls. Jesus charged them that they did not really love God for if they had loved God, they would not have rejected Him who came in the name of God. Instead they sought glory for themselves. LASTLY, there is the witness of Moses (vv.45-47). They believed Moses but Moses would stand in judgement against them because Moses wrote concerning Jesus. In reality, they did not believe Moses' writings and that is why they could not believe in Jesus.

These orthodox Jews had only textbook knowledge of the Scriptures. They knew the Scriptures in a mechanical way and were spiritually blind.

#### **SUMMARY**

JESUS HEALED THE PARALYTIC and proved His claim to Deity -- that He has the power and the authority to forgive sins. The exercise of faith is essential when we approach Jesus Christ to seek His help. We see that Jesus was moved by the faith of the paralytic's four friends. Without faith, no one can please God.

JESUS CALLED MATTHEW the tax collector. It was common for tax collectors in the days of Jesus to be closely associated with sinners. However no sinner

is a hopeless case. Matthew responded to a higher calling of serving his new Master and Lord Jesus Christ.

Jesus' teaching concerning fasting corrects some misunderstanding about fasting. Fasting is a matter of the attitude of the heart. It should not be a mere external ritual to show off to others.

The orthodox Jews relentlessly dogged and persecuted Jesus who claimed equality with God. Their antagonism against Jesus compelled Him to prove to them that He is the Son of God, and that His testimony is corroborated by five other witnesses, namely, God the Father, John the baptist, the sign-miracles, the Scriptures and Moses.

#### **PRACTICAL VALUE**

Our Lord Jesus Christ has clearly and convincingly proven His Deity, His power to forgive sins and save all those who come to Him in faith. Thus we who believe in Jesus are assured that our faith in Him is not in vain. There is no reason for any truly born-again Christian to be discouraged by the many attacks of others to discredit and destroy Jesus Christ. We should remain steadfast in our faith and preach the Word unashamedly. We are further comforted by the fact that no one can be too sinful to receive the grace of God. With the Lord Jesus Christ there is compassion and nothing is impossible. We should therefore come confidently to Him and

seek His grace and help in time of need.

AMEN.

#### Supplementary Notes

**Leprosy** (Heb. tsara'ath, a "smiting," a "stroke," because the disease was regarded as a direct providential infliction). This name is from the Greek lepra, by which the Greek physicians designated the disease from its scaliness. We have the description of the disease, as well as the regulations connected with it, in (Le 13:1 14:1 ) (Nu 12:10-15) etc. There were reckoned six different circumstances under which it might develop itself, (1 without any apparent cause (Le 13:2-8) (2 its reappearance (9-17) (3 from an inflammation (18-28) (4 on the head or chin (29-37) (5 in white polished spots (38,39) (6 at the back or in the front of the head (40-44) Lepers were required to live outside the camp or city (Nu 5:1-4 12:10-15) etc. This disease was regarded as an awful punishment from the Lord (2Ki 5:7 2Ch 26:20) See MIRIAM See GEHAZI See UZZIAH This disease "begins with specks on the eyelids and on the palms, gradually spreading over the body, bleaching the hair white wherever they appear, crusting the affected parts with white scales, and causing terrible sores and swellings. From the skin the disease eats inward to the bones, rotting the whole body piecemeal." "In Christ's day no leper could live in a walled town, though he might in an open village. But wherever he was he was required to have his outer garment rent as a sign of deep

grief, to go bareheaded, and to cover his beard with his mantle, as if in lamentation at his own virtual death. He had further to warn passers-by to keep away from him, by calling out, 'Unclean! unclean!' nor could he speak to any one, or receive or return a salutation, since in the East this involves an embrace." That the disease was contagious is evident from the regulations regarding it (Le 13:12,13,36 2Ki 5:1) Leprosy was "the outward and visible sign of the innermost spiritual corruption; a meet emblem in its small beginnings, its gradual spread, its internal disfigurement, its dissolution little by little of the whole body, of that which corrupts, degrades, and defiles man's inner nature, and renders him unmeet to enter the presence of a pure and holy God" (Maclear's Handbook O.T). Our Lord cured lepers (Mt 8:2, 3 Mr 1:40-42) This divine power so manifested illustrates his gracious dealings with men in curing the leprosy of the soul, the fatal taint of sin (Easton Bible Dictionary).

**DHW Bible Class**

**LESSON 8**

**THE LIFE OF CHRIST**

**DAILY READING &  
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

**Daily Readings**

**MONDAY:** Mark 2:1-12, *Matthew* 9:1-8, Luke 5:17-26.

**TUESDAY:** Mark 2:13-20, *Matthew* 9:9-15, Luke 5:27-35

**WEDNESDAY:** Luke 5:36-39, *Matthew* 9:16-17, Mark 2:21-22

**THURSDAY:** John 5:1-18

**FRIDAY:** John 5:19-47

**Discussion Questions**

**1. In what way is Jesus' preaching and teaching authoritative? How different is it from other teachings?**

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**2. What were the expectations of the paralytic's four friends when they brought him to Jesus?**

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**3. Why did Jesus ask the Pharisees and the scribes the question: "Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?"**

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**4. How much did Matthew sacrifice and risk in following Jesus Christ?**

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**5. What essentials characterize true discipleship?**

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**6. What principle is being laid down concerning fasting?**

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**7. What is Jesus' purpose in relating the two parables?**

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**8. What do you observe about the healing of the man who had an infirmity for thirty-eight years?**

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**9. Does God work on the Sabbath Day? What was Jesus' attitude towards the Sabbath?**

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**10. Why was it necessary for Jesus to prove His Deity?**

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**11. List the five witnesses. Which argument(s) carries the most weight for witnessing to unbelievers?**

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**12. Beside the five witnesses in question 11, how can we impress unbelievers that Jesus Christ is the Son of God through our way of life, our membership of the church and our profession of the Christian faith?**

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