

**CALVARY PANDAN BIBLE-
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

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

DHW BIBLE CLASS

LESSON 38

THE LIFE OF CHRIST

INTRODUCTION

Life has its many conflicts and challenges. It is a school in which all of us must go through if we want to grow and mature. Our response to the conflicts and challenges will determine the nature and extent of our spiritual growth. Christians are not spared. Christians come under more scrutiny and attacks because they are on the side of God, truth and righteousness. They act in accordance to the will of God His Father in Heaven, and in obedience to His Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. The world is in darkness and the lives of Christians expose this darkness. The world's reaction would be enmity instead of thankfulness.

As Christians, how should we react to false reports against us? Do we retaliate? Do we become like them and stoop to their level and attack our false accusers with a false accusation? Every time the Christian has to make a decision to stand on the side of truth or to tell a lie, what shall it be? If Christians suffer for standing on the side of truth, where is God at such times? Does God

not know? Does God not see? Why does He not intervene? The present study of Jesus' trials, Peter's denial, Judas' betrayal, and the enemies of Jesus will help us to answer these questions and guide us in our Christian walk.

OUTLINE

1. Jesus Was Brought Before Annas (John 18:12-14, 19-24)
2. Jesus Was Brought Before Caiaphas (Peter's Denials of Jesus) (Matthew 26:57-58, 69-75; Mark 14:53-54, 66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27)
3. Jesus Was Brought Before the Sanhedrin (Matthew 26:59-68; Mark 14:55-65; Luke 22:63-71)
4. Judas Iscariot Was Remorseful and Committed Suicide (Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:18-20)

COMMENTARY

Jesus Was Brought Before Annas

Jesus was taken captive. Jesus had to be brought before the Sanhedrin to be tried for blasphemy and sentenced to death. That was the purpose of the religious leaders who arrested Jesus. Caiaphas, the ruling high priest had counselled the Jews that it was "expedient that one man should die for the people." Caiaphas did not mean Jesus dying for the sins of the people. Caiaphas said those words for fear that the Romans might arrest the people for

treason because Jesus declared that He was a king. Rome only recognized the emperor as their lord and none else. But Caiaphas' words were true in a higher law, the law of God, that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and the Son of Man, should die for the sins of the world!

It was already night when they arrested Jesus. The Sanhedrin was not assembled. Therefore, they had to wait till daylight. However, they brought Jesus to Annas first. He was the father-in-law of Caiaphas. Annas was a former high priest. The Romans deposed him. He was succeeded by his five sons. But one by one they were deposed by the Romans, and finally the Romans appointed Caiaphas to be the high priest.

Annas purposed to prepare a charge against Jesus when they would present Jesus before the Sanhedrin in the morning. Annas seemed to have the real power behind the office of the high priest, although he was not officially the high priest. Annas wanted to find out what was the basis on which Jesus taught and made disciples. Jesus ignored his reference to His disciples. But Jesus addressed his charge concerning His teaching. Jesus openly declared that He "spoke openly to the world." He taught in the synagogue, and in the Temple, and wherever the Jews gathered together. He spoke nothing in secret. Why did he ask Him? He should ask the people who had heard Him for they knew what He spoke to them. In other words, there was no need for

Jesus to reply to Annas' question concerning His doctrine. The high priest was pretending to be ignorant of what was known to the multitude of people. On hearing this, the scene turned violent. One of the high priest's officers slapped Jesus for answering the high priest thus. This was a cruel and cowardly act. Annas did not even say a word of disapproval on the action of his officer. What kind of a judge was he? Jesus did not literally turn the other cheek, but with quiet dignity and without anger, Jesus answered him: "If I have spoken evil, bear witness to the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me?" At this point, the examination ended, and Annas sent Jesus to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Should Jesus defend Himself because of the great injustice done to Him? Should we do the same?

Jesus Was Brought Before Caiaphas — Peter's Denials of Jesus

The Temple officers brought Jesus bound to Caiaphas in his house where the chief priests, the scribes and elders had already congregated. The record shifts to Peter's denial of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter followed afar off. He was indeed afraid. He was alone. He entered into the courtyard of the high priest's residence. He wanted to know the outcome of the trial — what would happen to Jesus, His Master. We could at least give him credit for by this time most of the other disciples had fled away. Peter loved the Lord. It was a cold

night. The priest's servants and officers were warming themselves by a fire. Peter stood with them and warmed himself by the fire.

The light of the fire gave Peter's identity away. One of the maids of the high priest recognized Peter. She earnestly remarked, "Art not thou also one of this man's disciples?" Peter answered, "I am not." When she insisted, Peter insisted that he did not know Jesus, "Woman, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest." Peter went out into the porch. The cock crowed. Then another maid saw him, and again said to the people who were gathered there, saying, "This is one of them; this fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth." The people asked Peter, "Art not thou also one of His disciples?" Peter swore and said, "I am not; I do not know the man." Then after a while, another came to him and said, "Surely of a truth thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee: for thou art a Galilean and thy speech agreeth thereto." One of the servants whose ear was cut off said, "Did I not see thee in the garden with Him?" Peter then denied again, and said, "Man, I know not what thou sayest." Peter began to curse and to swear that he did not know Jesus. Immediately after he denied Jesus the third time, the cock crew the second time. Jesus was brought out to another room, and Peter could see Him from the courtyard. Jesus turned and looked at Peter. Peter remembered the words of Jesus that before the cock crew twice; he would have denied Him three times.

Peter went out and wept bitterly when he thought about it.

Peter did not plan to deny Jesus Christ. But he did not know the nature of the battle. He did not know what kind of weapons and the resources that were needed to win the battle. What was the battle? It was between the Truth and the lie. Jesus is the Truth. The battle for Truth was not by physical forces but by spiritual strength. What was required of Peter was that he stood for the Truth. Peter had lost for he did not stand on the side of the Truth. When Peter realized the truth of Jesus' words concerning his denial; that Jesus was right about him, even to its detail of the cock crowing, he knew then that Jesus would be right about the rest of His prophecy. Hence, Peter's weeping bitterly was a genuine deep repentance. Jesus had prayed for him that he would not fall utterly. He would turn again to Jesus and strengthen his brethren. The memory of Jesus' statement that he would deny Him actually saved him from total despair.

Jesus Was Brought Before the Sanhedrin

Jewish law demands that a trial that carries the death penalty be legally held only during daylight hours. In other words, the hearing before Annas and the unofficial mock trial before the Sanhedrin Council in the house of Caiaphas were illegal. Therefore, as soon as daylight broke the darkness of the night, Jesus was led before the Sanhedrin. The Sanhedrin, the highest

Jewish council, comprised of high level Jewish leaders. The Pharisees and the Sadducees were also represented.

Those who sat in judgement brought false witnesses against Jesus. Judges are expected to be fair and uphold justice. But these judges were not. They had already set their mind to put Jesus away. They resorted to lies against Jesus to put Him to death. Many false witnesses came forward but no two witnesses agreed. According to Mosaic Law, judgement against a person could only stand by the mouth of two or three truthful witnesses.

Finally two witnesses came forward to testify that Jesus had said, "I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days." Jesus was asked by the high priest to respond, but Jesus kept silent. Jesus did say those words (John 2:19 – "(You) Destroy this Temple and in three days I will raise it up). Even if this is literally understood, the charge did not justify a death penalty. But they had misinterpreted Jesus' words. Jesus did not say that He would destroy the Temple. Jesus was saying to his hearers that if they destroy the Temple, He would raise it up in three days. Jesus did not say that He would *build* it. Jesus was talking about His resurrection (John 2:21-22 – *But he spake of the temple of his body. When therefore he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them; and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said*).

Then the high priest saw that Jesus was silent, he put Jesus on oath (Matthew 26:63), "*I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether (Greek, "if) thou be the Christ, the Son of God.*" The high priest knew that Jesus had made such a claim. He was inviting Jesus to make an affirmative answer. All that Jesus needed to reply was to say "No," and He might have walked out of there a free man. But if Jesus did so, it would have been perjury. He would not be telling the truth. Jesus would never do this. Jesus plainly declared, "I am. Thou hast said." Then Jesus continued, "*Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven.*" On hearing this, the high priest, Caiaphas, tore his garment. He cried out (Matthew 26:65), "*He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard his blasphemy.*" They accused Jesus of blasphemy. But the charge was false because Jesus spoke the truth — He is the Christ, the Son of God! Caiaphas quickly gave the verdict — "He is guilty of death" — and all his "yes-men" parroted him.

Then chaos broke loose. Those who were there began to abuse Jesus. They blindfolded Him. They mocked and struck Him. They spat in His face. They slapped Him with their hands. They ridiculed Him. It was disorderly and abusive. God could have smitten all of them dead. But He had allowed evil to do its worst, and it did. In Jewish trials, when the accused spoke blasphemy,

the judges would tear their garments and never mend them again.

Judas Iscariot Was Remorseful and Committed Suicide

Judas saw all that happened to Jesus whom he had followed for more than three years. He had received only love and kindness from the LORD and now he saw how He was treated because he had betrayed Him. He could not take it. He “repented” (Greek, *metamelomai*) which was not a true repentance (Greek, *metanoeo*). A true repentance manifests a change of mind, heart and nature. Judas was only remorseful, a mere outward regret of the flesh. This is demonstrated by his committing suicide. Peter, on the other hand, displayed a genuine repentance. He did not take his life. He confessed his sin. There was a change of mind, heart and nature as shown in the inspired account of his life. He could be trusted. He remained faithful to and hopeful in his LORD Jesus Christ.

Judas went back to the chief priests and returned the thirty pieces of silver. He confessed that he had sinned in that he had betrayed Jesus who was innocent. The chief priests were not interested in new evidence. They had used him and he had served their purpose. They now dumped him. When Judas threw the thirty pieces of silver on the floor, the priests could not take the money and put it back into the treasury of the Temple because it was blood money. They purchased a potter’s field to bury foreigners. The cemetery was

called “Aceldama” which means, “The field of blood”. Tradition points out that this field was the very place where Judas committed suicide.

PRACTICAL VALUE

The trial of Jesus before the high priests and the Sanhedrin was a “kangaroo court”. A “kangaroo court” is an unofficial or mock court set up spontaneously for the purpose of delivering a judgement arrived in advance, usually one in which a disloyal cohort’s fate is decided (*Encarta World English Dictionary*). It is a miscarriage of justice, and the people who sat in judgement against the Lord Jesus Christ were all guilty of a heinous crime.

No one will disagree that Peter loved the Lord Jesus Christ. He was always ready to speak for Christ and to protect Him. Peter did not know his weakness and strength. His experience in the company of unbelievers is a testimony that every believer will face in life. Peter’s testing was whether he would speak the truth or tell a lie. In the critical moment, he did not speak the truth. Instead, he lied. That is the battlefield which every believer like Peter would have to face in life, daily. Do we tell the truth about Jesus Christ and our relation to Him? Or do we lie? Let us love the Lord Jesus Christ and pray that in the moment of testing, we will not buckle and deny Him. But that we will always speak the truth, no matter what the consequences might be. For in Christ, we will always have the victory.

Jesus' silence when falsely charged is a valuable lesson for all of us. Silence does not mean consent as is commonly accepted. His silence does not mean that He agreed with the false charges against Him. In fact, His silence was not an agreement to their charges. This writer believes that the reason why Jesus did not respond to the false testimonies against Him was because He knew that those who sat in judgement were set in their mind and intended to have their own way. They did not want to hear the truth and any new evidence. There are times when silence is better than endless argument. In the final analysis, we, who believe in an all-knowing God, can rest assured that He knows the truth, and He is on the side of those who speak the truth. Judgement belongs to God, not man.

God allowed the people to abuse Jesus, His only begotten and beloved Son. How it grieved the heart of God. Such is the condition of the heart of man — evil and wicked. This is contrasted by the great love of God. The Son of God, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ set an example for us. All those who believe and follow the Lord Jesus must be prepared to face the same kind of treatment by others. The disciple is no greater than his Master.

True repentance is necessary for any reconciliation. The restoration and reconciliation of Peter with the Lord Jesus was possible because Peter was repentant. The genuineness of his repentance was seen in his restoration

by Christ. In contrast, Judas was only remorseful and he took his life instead of returning and confessing his sin to the Lord Jesus. The Lord Jesus had forgiven Peter. Peter needed to confess his sin and his relationship with the Lord Jesus was restored. This is a precious lesson for all of us.

We are commanded to be forgiving to one another. Every Christian must always forgive a brother who has sinned against him. The guilty brother must come forth and honestly confess his sin and repent. Only on this ground can a true reconciliation be restored. No Christian has the right to refuse an apology. He must take the person's word and be reconciled with the sinner immediately. Yes time will reveal whether the repentance is genuine but in the meantime the apology has to be accepted without condition immediately since we cannot read hearts.

One of the clear ways to show genuine repentance is to make whatever needful restitution to the person the way Zacchaeus did after he was born again.
AMEN

**DAILY READING & DISCUSSION
QUESTIONS**

Daily Readings

MONDAY: John 18:12-14, 19-24

TUESDAY: Matthew 26:57-58, 69-75;
Mark 14:53-54, 66-72; Luke 22:54-62;
John 18:15-18, 25-27

WEDNESDAY: Matthew 26:59-68; Mark
14:55-65; Luke 22:63-71

THURSDAY: Matthew 27:3-10; Acts
1:18-20

FRIDAY: Matthew 27:3-10; Acts 1:18-20

Discussion Questions

1. What qualities stand out in Jesus' attitude and character as seen in His bearing before Annas, the high priest?

a. Regarding Himself:

b. Regarding others:

c. Regarding the unjust treatment:

2. What could Peter have done to prevent his denial of Christ?

3. Jesus says that if we deny Him He would also deny us before the Father (cf. Matt. 10:33)? Does this apply to Peter here?

4. How should we react when we are placed in the same situation as Christ when we are falsely accused? Is Christ's reaction for Christ only because He is the Son of God or should it be the norm for all believers?

5. In what way did the "fall" of Peter differ from that of Judas'?

6. Would a Christian ever think of taking his own life under great stress?
