

07.11.2020 MORE LESSONS FROM THE MASTER TEACHER

Then Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your faith has made you well.' And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road. Mark 10:52

This week we look at the salvation provided to mankind by Christ Jesus, the Master Teacher.

Instead of Hiding: Genesis 3:1-11

The story of the Fall of Man is found in Genesis 3:1-11. Adam and Eve, our first parents, decided to listen to the lies of Satan and set themselves up as gods... *'you shall be as gods'*. Because of that choice, all their progeny have been born in sin, with a sinful, self-centred nature. None of us have had a choice about being born with the fallen nature of Adam, hence the Bible says of mankind, *"There is none righteous, no not one"* Romans 3:10. The consequences of sin are shame and guilt; hence, like Adam and Eve, we seek to hide from God. As children of Adam we have but one destiny, eternal death... *'for the wages of sin is death'*.

But thanks be to God, He has not left us to suffer the penalty of Adam's sin. *'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life, through Christ Jesus our Lord'* Romans 6:23. Before Adam sinned, from eternity past, the Godhead had a solution for our sin problem...Christ Jesus, the Second Adam.

The first Adam listened to the lies of Satan and thus caused all mankind to be condemned to eternal death.

But at the incarnation, God united the human race with His Son, Christ Jesus and changed the destiny of mankind.

The second Adam was victorious over Satan and in Him, all mankind is redeemed. This redemption is offered as a free gift to all mankind. The OFFER of salvation is UNIVERSAL. The EXPERIENCE of salvation is PARTICULAR i.e. only to those who receive the **gift**.

All who have received the gift of redemption by faith in Christ Jesus no longer hide from God. We have peace with Him and rejoice in the hope of God's glory (Romans 5:1-5).

Therefore, as through one man's offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life. Romans 5:18

For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive. 1 Corinthians 15:21, 22

The first man (Adam) was of the earth, made of dust; the second Man (Christ) is the Lord from heaven. As was the ¹man of dust, so also are those who are made of dust; and as is the heavenly Man, so also are those who are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly Man. 1 Corinthians 15:47-49

On the Run

The story of Jacob, the great Deceiver and great Pretender is a wonderful testimony to the grace of God. We saw above that redemption and all the promises of God are purely of grace. Jacob was a man who was given great and precious promises and yet devised means and methods to gain these gifts of grace without waiting for God's time.

The major promise to Jacob was that though he was the younger twin, he would be given the blessing of Abraham and Messiah would therefore come through his line.

We are familiar with his story. He bargained with his brother for the birthright. He then tried to get the birthright by deceiving his father Isaac. And here, we see the grace of God and of Isaac. Despite learning that he had been deceived, Isaac calls Jacob before he fled from Esau and blessed him with the blessing of Abraham.

"May God Almighty bless you, and make you fruitful and multiply you, that you may be an assembly of peoples; and give you the blessing of Abraham, to you and your descendants with you, that you may inherit the land. Genesis 28:3, 4

Jacob leaves home and that night he sleeps and has a dream. Despite his sin, Christ comes to him with unconditional promises:

"I am the Lord God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and your descendants. Also your descendants shall be as the dust of the earth; you shall spread abroad to the west and the east, to the north and the south; and in you and in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed. Behold, I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have spoken to you." Genesis 28:13-16

Jacob completely ignores the unconditional promises of God and makes a bargain with Him instead:

Jacob made a vow, saying, "If God will be with me, and keep me in this way that I am going, and give me bread to eat and clothing to put on, so that I come back to my father's house in peace, then the Lord shall be my God. And this stone which I have set as a pillar shall be God's house, and of all that You give me I will surely give a tenth to You." Genesis 22:20-22

For Reflection:

Do we make bargains (Old Covenant bargains) with God, when He has given us the unconditional New Covenant promises of salvation?

But God's grace was still upon Jacob all throughout his years of labour with his father-in-law. One day God told him to return to Canaan. On his way back, he had the greatest crisis of his life. He had matured in his faith, for now he was able to say *"I am not worthy of the least of all the mercies and of all the truth which You have shown Your servant"* Genesis 32:10. But at the brook Jabbok, a Man wrestled with him until dawn. Jacob was so naturally strong that the Man had to dislocate his hip joint to prevail.

And Jacob said, "I will not let You go unless You bless me!" So He said to him, "What is your name?" He said, "Jacob." And He said, "Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed." So Jacob called the name of the place Peniel (the face of God): "For I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved." Just as he crossed over Peniel the sun rose on him, and he limped on his hip. Genesis 32:24-32

This experience taught Jacob the difference between Bethel and Peniel. He was content to live by the promises and bargains he had made at the house of God (Bethel). But God wanted more for Jacob. He wanted him to live in His presence (Peniel); trusting Him completely, recognising that all his blessings came from God, and beholding His face daily and thus being transformed into His image.

Christ Himself is the Mediator who through His sacrifice on Calvary gives us the unconditional promises of salvation.

'The mystic ladder of Jacob's dream represented Jesus, the only medium of communication between God and man.' Steps to Christ: p 20

Rabbi Jesus

A rabbi (literally, "my master", also "teacher") in Jesus' day signified that a person had a reputation as a wise teacher or sage. Both Jesus (John 1:38; 3:2) and John the Baptist (John 3:26) were called 'Rabbi'.

Teaching enlightens us. John the Baptist was a witness to Jesus, but Jesus Himself was the Teacher sent from God to enlighten every one...*"I am the Truth."* John 14:6

There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. John 1:6-9

"One is your Teacher, the Christ." Matthew 23:8

The teaching of Moses compared with Jesus:

For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. John 1:17

Then Jesus said to those Jews who believed Him, "If you abide in My word, you are My disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free...whoever commits sin is a slave of sin. And a slave does not abide in the house forever, but a son abides forever. Therefore if the Son makes you free, you shall be free indeed." John 8:31-36

The teaching of Jesus compared with the scribes and Pharisees:

And so it was, when Jesus had ended these sayings (the Sermon on the Mount), that the people were astonished at His teaching, for He taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. Matthew 7:28, 29

And Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the gospel of the kingdom...when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were weary and scattered, like sheep having no shepherd. Matthew 9:35, 36

For Reflection: Are we like our Teacher?

"A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master. It is enough for a disciple that he be like his teacher, and a servant like his master." Matthew 10:24, 25

A Woman Talks Back: Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30

In Matthew 15:21-28 we find the story of the Syro-Phoenician woman, a Greek from Tyre and Sidon. Jesus took His disciples on a journey of approximately 60 miles to teach them that He was Saviour of both Jew and Gentile, that He had come to save all mankind, the 'other sheep' who were not of the Jewish fold.. Just prior to this event, we read that the disciples were concerned that Jesus was offending the Pharisees because He had accused them of hypocrisy. Jesus also wanted to show them that their attitude to the Gentiles was wrong.

Jesus responded to the woman as the Jews would have done; He answered her not a word (15:23).

The disciples were pleased with this and asked Jesus to send her away (15:22).

Jesus replies as the Jews would have done: *'I am not sent but to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'* (15:24)

Look at this heathen woman's response – she came and worshipped Jesus (15:25).

Jesus was seemingly even more unhelpful to her; the Jews considered Gentiles as dogs, so He answers her, *"It is not fitting to take the children's bread and throw it to the little dogs."* (15:26)

Imagine how delighted the disciples must have been to hear Jesus speaking thus to a Gentile.

But the woman demonstrated the perseverance of faith; she would not let Jesus go unless He blessed her daughter. *"Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters' table."* (15:27)

She was willing to be humiliated so that her daughter could be healed.

In this attitude, she demonstrated the faith of Jesus. Jesus made Himself nothing that He might heal us of our sin. And nothing deterred Him from reaching His goal – not rejection or scorn or humiliation.

And Jesus, who came unto His own people, the Jews, who received Him not, answered her with these words, *"O woman, great is your faith! Let it be to you as you desire."* (15:28)

How is it with us? Does our faith endure? Does it persevere despite rejection and humiliation? Do we persist in faith, like Jacob, despite all the seemingly unfavourable circumstances and say to Jesus, *"I will not let You go unless You bless me."*

A Student Who Gets It: Mark 10:46-52

Now they came to Jericho. As He went out of Jericho with His disciples and a great multitude, blind Bartimaeus, the son of Timaeus, sat by the road begging. Mark 10:46

Blind Bartimaeus gives us an image of what we are without God – blind, beggar, outcast, shamed, and rejected.

And when he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to cry out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Then many warned him to be quiet; but he cried out all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Mark 10:47-48

This physically blind beggar had spiritual vision lacking in the Pharisees and even the disciples of Jesus. Prior to this story in the book of Mark are stories of the Pharisees wanting a sign before they would believe in Jesus. The disciples refused to accept that the mission of Christ included suffering and the death of the Cross. They sought greatness because they believed that Jesus had come to bring earthly glory for the Jewish people.

But blind Bartimaeus calls Jesus by a Messianic title... ‘Jesus, Son of David’. He recognises that God sees the consequences of our sinful state – blind, poor, outcast and outside the kingdom of God – and yet, that He is a merciful God, ever willing to hear us and help us. So despite all the opposition, he persists in calling out for mercy.

So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be called. Then they called the blind man, saying to him, “Be of good cheer. Rise, He is calling you.” And throwing aside his garment, he rose and came to Jesus. So Jesus answered and said to him, “What do you want Me to do for you?” The blind man said to Him, “Rabboni, that I may receive my sight.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go your way; your faith has made you whole.” And immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road. Mark 10:49-52

We also see the grace of God in the reply of Jesus. And the boldness of Bartimaeus...*‘let us come boldly to the throne of grace to find mercy and grace to help in time of need’.*

We see the authority of Christ the Messiah; He has power to heal. We see the response of Bartimaeus... *immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus on the road.*

This beautiful story tells us that Jesus the Son of David, now exalted to the right hand of God, has power and authority to give sight to the blind, to restore outcasts into fellowship with God and the community, to grant mercy to undeserving sinners, and to equip the powerless in order that they may serve God and become His disciples, fully committed to following His will. Let us humble ourselves to realise who we really are – sinners in need of a Saviour.

And Jesus said, “For judgment I have come into this world, that those who do not see may see, and that those who see may be made blind.” Then some of the Pharisees who were with Him heard these words, and said to Him, “Are we blind also?” Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains. John 9:39-41

In that day the deaf shall hear the words of the book, and the eyes of the blind shall see out of obscurity and out of darkness. The humble also shall increase their joy in the LORD, and the poor among men shall rejoice in the Holy One of Israel. Isaiah 29:18, 19
