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Sunday School Lesson

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April 14, 1946

HOW JESUS' FRIENDS RESPONDED

Lesson: Mark 1:16-20; 5:18-20; 10:46-52; Luke 5:27,28.

Golden Text: He left all, rose up, and followed him. Luke 5:28.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

Last week we learned of various classes of people who became friends of Jesus. Today we learn how some people responded to his call, or what they did after they became his friends.

I. FISHERMEN CALLED: Mark 1:16 **He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea**—Jesus had already met these brothers about a year before this (John 1:25-42).

17. **I will make you to become fishers of men**—Fishing is perilous work, it creates hope, patience and perseverance. These were not men of letters, but humble, rugged characters, which is of supreme importance in the work of soul winning.

18. **Straightway they forsook their nets**—This speaks of their confidence in Jesus. Their nets were their means of livelihood and it meant much for them to give them up.

19. **He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets**—Jesus does not call men to work for him because they are not employed elsewhere. He does not use loafers.

20. **Straightway he called them: and they left their father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants**—The call of God not only means the separation from all sin, but sometimes separation from legitimate, God-given blessings as parents and friends.

II. DEMON CAST OUT: Mark 5:18. **He that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him**—The man thus delivered from the devil naturally wants to be near Jesus, lest the devil return.

19. **Go home to thy friends and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee.** Jesus desires that this man witness of his deliverance in his own home and among friends as he would do more good where he was known than where he was unknown.

20. **Began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him**—“Not only at home, but in all that country where Jesus himself did not come”. Wesley's notes.

III. BLIND BARTIMAEUS HEALED: Mark 10:46. **Sat by the highway side begging**—This took place during Christ's last journey to Jerusalem.

52. **Go thy way; thy faith hath made thee whole**—One has said that with prayer and faith nothing is impossible. Read verses (46-52) and note: (1) His prayer was based on knowledge: he had heard that Christ had opened other blind eyes and why not his? (2) His prayer was enterprising: he could not see Jesus but he could send his voice in Christ's direction as he heard the noise of the passing throng. (3) His prayer was a model in its persistency. The more the crowd protested the more loudly he shouted at the great physician. (4) When healed he followed Jesus.

IV. A PUBLICAN CALLED: Luke 5:27. **A publican named Levi sitting at the receipt of custom**—This place of toll may have been in a customs house. His experience with the public in this work could be used to advantage in the Kingdom of God.

28. **He left all**—A government position which paid him well.

QUESTIONS AND THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

1. What was the response of Jesus' friends to His call?
2. Suggest some reasons why Jesus called fishermen to the gospel ministry.
3. What demands are sometimes made of the disciples of Jesus?
4. What are some prayer and faith lessons for us in the healing of Bartimaeus?

April 21, 1946

TWO FRIENDS TALK WITH CHRIST (EASTER LESSON)**LESSON: Luke 24:13-21, 25-31.**

Golden Text: And they said one to another, did not our heart burn within us, while he talked with us by the way, and while he opened to us the scriptures? Luke 24:32.

COMMENTS ON THE LESSON

The scripture preceding the printed portion tells of Peter and others who had visited the empty tomb. The two men mentioned in the first verse of the lesson evidently left for Emmaus before Mary reported having seen Jesus.

I. SAD DISCIPLES: Luke 24:13 **Two of them went that same day to a village called Emmaus**—One was called Cleopas (18); the name of the other is unknown. Emmaus is a village about seven miles from Jerusalem.

14. **And they talked together of all these things which had happened**—They apparently were disheartened for the tomb was empty and as far as they knew no one had seen Jesus.

II. AN INTERESTING COMPANION: 15. While they communed together **Jesus himself drew near**—Here is a fulfilment of the promise found in Matt. 18:20. Compare also Malachi 3:16 “Then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another: and the Lord hearkened and heard it”. Condensed from Higgley's commentary.

16. **Their eyes were holden**—“They were prevented from recognizing him” Moffat translation. Had they recognized Jesus at the start it would have prevented a thoughtful consideration of the scripture presented.

17. **What manner of communications are these that ye have one to another, as ye walk and are sad**—These men are not apostles and yet Jesus takes special personal interest in them. This shows that he is interested in all his people regardless of their vocation or talent.

18. **Art thou only a stranger in Jerusalem**—Many strangers were in Jerusalem during the feast of unleavened bread and that the traveller who has joined the two friends was one of them is a reasonable supposition.

19. **Jesus of Nazareth which was a prophet mighty in deed**—They do not name him as Messiah, suggesting that their hopes had perhaps faded some at this point.

20. **Our rulers delivered him to be condemned to death**—They treated him as a male-

factor rather than as a prophet.

21. **We trusted that it had been he which should have redeemed Israel**—They believed that he was the Messiah, but it was hard for them to reconcile this fact with the death of Jesus.

III. REVELATION: Luke 24:25 **O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken**—A failure to understand the works and designs of God. Christ points out two fruitful causes of religious error: (1) Lack of personal, individual, independent thought. (2) Reluctance to receive truth that is opposed to time and prejudice; in other words intellectual sloth and spiritual torpor—Peloubets notes. Emphasis is laid on “all” that the prophets have spoken. They believed some but not all. We face the same danger in the study of God's Word today.

26. **Ought not Christ to have suffered these things**—Fulfilment of prophecy is proof of Christ being Messiah.

27. **Beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded**—It must have been the distinct Messianic passages.

28. **He made as though he would have gone further**—He would have gone further if he had not been invited to stay.

29. **Abide with us**—He will not remain where he is not wanted.

31. **Their eyes were opened and they knew him**—Whatever had hitherto held their eyes (v16) was taken away. Jesus opens our eyes (1) By the fulness of the Spirit (2) By opening up the scriptures, through faithful spiritual study (3) By holy conversation with others (4) By growth in grace, as the higher one climbs a mountain the wider is the prospect spread before his vision. (5) By earnest work for Christ (soul winning) (6) By obedience to all the will of God.

QUESTIONS AND THEMES FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why were the disciples sad?
2. What scriptures tell us of the nearness of Jesus?
3. Give two causes of religious error and show how error may be corrected, or our eyes opened.
4. What change and advance have we in the meaning of fellowship with Jesus since the days of his flesh?

CHINA'S MILLIONS

Take your Bible and carefully count, not the chapters or the verses, but the letters from the beginning of Genesis to the “Amen” of the Revelation; and when you have accomplished the task, go over it again and again and again—ten times, twenty, forty times—nay, you must read the very letters of your Bible eighty times over before you have reached the requisite sum. It would take something like the letters of eighty Bibles to represent the men, women and children of that old and wondrous Empire of China. Fourteen hundred of them have sunk into Christless graves during the last hour; thirty-three thousand will pass today forever beyond your reach. Dispatch your missionary tomorrow, and one million and a quarter of immortal souls, for whom Christ died, will have passed away to their final account before he can reach their shores. Whether such facts touch us or not, I think they ought to move our hearts. It is enough to make an angel weep.—Selected.