

## Lessons From A Crippled Dog

During one of my trips to the Philippines, we gathered with the brethren at the Toril congregation in Davao City, Philippines for worship. I took a seat in the front row of folding chairs. As the singing of hymns began, I observed a dog hobble in, holding one leg off the ground, and he proceeded to the front and laid down under the communion table. After I spoke, I sat in the front row and observed the dog again. After a few minutes, I had the idea that there was sermon material here, and that spiritual applications could be applied to this crippled dog. So, I took my pen and began to jot down a few things concerning the dog's actions. Here is what I noticed:

- The dog realized he was crippled, but hobbled to church anyway. He was also faithful, attending bible class and worship, then came back for the evening service too.
- The dog was quiet, and he did not detract or disturb others from worship (whisper, pass notes, etc.).
- He did not move around, squirm, get up to drink or go to the bathroom.
- He reverently closed his eyes, as if to meditate, listening carefully with his ears open.
- He stayed under the communion table, patiently waiting and hoping for crumbs to fall.
- The dog was alert, snapping at his enemies, flies and gnats, and ridding his body of fleas by biting them off. Are we as alert to ward off Satan?
- He hoped to go home with his master. How many Christians truly are anxious to go home with God, to his eternal home?
- The dog left before the sermon was finished, blowing his influence, example, and credibility. But alas, the dog came back before the preaching was finished ... and he brought a friend! Yes, he brought another dog with him. What an example for us (John 1:45-46).
- The dog stayed after the service, and was friendly, going from person to person for a pat and encouragement on the head. Will we show the same kindness to our brethren, as we would to a dog? Yes, our brethren need a pat on the back from time to time.

Let us be wise as serpents, consider the ant, and learn important lessons (Matthew 10:16; Proverbs 6:6). Yes, we can learn a few lessons, even from a dog. But do not be like the dog who returned to his own vomit, or the sow who was washed and then returned to wallow in the mud (2 Peter 2:22). We must avoid the snares of the devil (Ephesians 6:11). Therefore, let us cleanse ourselves of the defilements of the flesh, walk carefully, and walk in the steps of Jesus (Ephesians 5:15; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 1 Peter 2:21).

Adapted from Earl S. Mitchell