



CHRISTADELPHIAN ISOLATION LEAGUE

EXHORTATION

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SECTION LEADER:

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Readings: Numbers 28, Proverbs 20, John 1

Three Fundamental Truths

In **Matthew 22** the Scribes and Pharisees, the Herodians and Sadducees had all formed an unholy alliance to trap the Lord Jesus. They thought they had questions for which there could be no way out. Now they would be able to accuse him and get rid of him! But all their schemes were to no effect. Each time Jesus totally outwitted them. They were dealing with the Son of God. No man knew the scriptures or the power of God like he did. Each time he gave them an answer which completely confounded them. In his answers, the Lord Jesus didn't just outwit them and show their folly; with each question, he also taught them a fundamental truth. We will consider three of these fundamental truths to help and encourage us.

The first fundamental truth

This was in regard to the question of the Sadducees about the resurrection. The fundamental truth that Jesus taught them is that there will be a resurrection of the dead. **Matthew 22:29-32**: *"Jesus answered and said to them: You are mistaken, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."* (NKJV).

There is no doubt about it. There will be a resurrection and those who take part in it will be like the angels. By God's grace that will be us! God's reward is resurrection to everlasting life. We know it will be totally different from life now. There will be no marrying or giving in marriage. The faithful will be the bride and will be the Lord's. In the parallel record in **Luke 20: 35-36**, Jesus' words are expanded: *"Those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection."*

We won't die any more, we will be equal to the angels and we will truly be the children of God. What an amazing thing that is! The rewards of the age to come are shown elsewhere in the New Testament.

1 John 3:1-2: *"Behold what manner of love the Father has bestowed on us, that we should be called children of God! Therefore the world does not know us, because it did not know Him. Beloved, now we are children of God; and it has not yet been revealed what we shall be, but we know that when He is revealed, we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is."*

John says that we are now the sons and daughters of God! The God of creation who made the world through his limitless power, who created all living things from the tiniest bacteria to the greatest blue whale; from the cutest puppy to the swiftest swallow, the God who knows all the stars individually by name; that God wanted to be your father. We are the children of God now, but soon each of us will be resurrected children of God, equal to the angels. We will be like the Lord Jesus:

"For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to his glorious body, according to the working by which he is able even to subdue all things to himself." (**Philippians 3:20**).

Paul says our citizenship is in heaven. We are looking forward to the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is coming, as saviour, to save us from our sins! He will change our bodies. At the moment, because of sin, we have mortal bodies. As we get older, our bodies wear out and our health deteriorates. However, there will be a resurrection, so we are looking forward to the time when the Lord Jesus returns and changes our bodies of sin and mortality to be like his glorious body; as Jesus said: *"nor can they die any more"*. (**Luke 20:36**). Paul says that he is able to subdue all things to himself so that our feeble bodies definitely will be like his glorious body.

The apostle Peter in his second epistle also looked forward to the reward and what has been promised, (**2 Peter 1:4**): *“by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust.”*

By God’s amazing and abundant grace, through faith in the sacrifice of the Lord Jesus, we are to share in God’s nature! Think about having God’s characteristics to be sinless, loving, merciful, just, long suffering, to be full of righteousness and of course have eternal life.

That’s the incentive. That is what we should focus on, the promise that God has given each one of us, the promise of eternal life in His kingdom. Peter says in God’s eyes we have already escaped from corruption. So we don’t need to faint or despair about our past sins or failing health or old age, instead we can look forward to the wonderful partaking of the divine nature.

So now we have laid the foundation of God’s reward let’s consider two other fundamental truths taught by Jesus in **Matthew 22**. Because of our faith in God and the wonderful promise of resurrection it should motivate us to serve him and to try to do his will.

The second fundamental truth

This is found in the answer to the question, should we pay taxes to Caesar or not? Jesus’ sublime answer was *“Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s and to God the things that are God’s.”* (**Matthew 22:21**).

The image on the coin was of Caesar so Jesus said give the coin to Caesar. We are in the image of God so we must give ourselves to God. As citizens of the Kingdom each one of us must put our faith into action. Not only do we remember the Lord Jesus every Sunday, but also we should honour God with our time and our devotion throughout the week. Because we are now seeking the reward of everlasting life and are in the image of God, we must seek first God’s kingdom and his righteousness. We must set God apart and do what he wants us to do. We, who are in the image of God, will be giving ourselves in faithful service to him.

The third fundamental truth

This stems from the question: *“which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”* Jesus gave the answer: *“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: You shall love your neighbour as yourself.”* (**Matthew 22:36-37**).

God gave his only begotten son so that we who believe will not perish but have everlasting life. He loves us and wants us in his kingdom and so we love him in return. We know that love is not a silly, soppy, sentimental feeling, but is unconditional, a self-sacrificial love.

We show our love to God by our devotion and our worship and we reflect God’s love by showing the same love to those around us. So how are we going to learn to love God with all our heart and with all our soul and with all our mind and our neighbours as ourselves? Selfless love doesn’t come straight away. It needs to be developed.

Think of a violinist who gives a virtuoso performance of a violin concerto. Did she just pick up the violin and play it perfectly straight away? No, she spent years and years practicing.

In the same way to love God with all our being and our neighbour as ourselves takes practise. We can’t say to ourselves, ‘I am not talented in this area, I’ll leave it to those with a more natural aptitude.’ God provided his son for us so that we would not perish. Jesus laid down his life for us, so we must love in return. The only way this love develops is by putting in lots of practice. We must practise loving and doing good to those who we find difficult to love.

Today we remember the love of God by remembering the gift of his son in bread and wine. We love God because he loved us first, now it is time to practice loving in return.