



# CHRISTADELPHIAN ISOLATION LEAGUE

## EXHORTATION

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### SECTION LEADER:

BROTHER RODERICK TITLEY, HOLLIES FARM, ENGLISH FRANKTON, ELLESMERE, SHROPSHIRE. SY12 OJX, U.K.

Readings: Deuteronomy 12, Ecclesiastes 5, Acts 2

### Confidence in the Gospel

As Peter stood up on the Day of Pentecost, he was a changed man. No longer was he the frightened disciple who betrayed his Lord through fear. He stood with confidence and told the Jews that Jesus is “*both Lord and Christ*” (**Acts 2:36 AV**). This was because he knew that Jesus was risen from the dead and had ascended to his Father in heaven. He could have confidence in the Gospel.

We can have that same confidence. The Gospel gives us certainty both now and for the future, and we can be sure that it is true. As we take the emblems of bread and wine, we will remember Jesus’ death by which we are brought into God’s family. We will also remember his resurrection, the guarantee that God will fulfil His promise to raise His faithful people from the dead when Jesus returns; As Paul wrote: “*the Gospel of Christ... is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth.*” (**Romans 1:16**).

Let’s look through **Acts 2** and see the conviction with which Peter preached, taking strength for our own life in the Truth.

Firstly, in **Acts 2:15-21**, he quoted from **Joel 2**, showing that God was letting people use His power, the Holy Spirit. This was why the apostles were able to speak all those different languages. In fact, using this power to perform “*miracles and wonders and signs*” was one way that Jesus proved he was sent from God (**v22**). What a great reason to be confident in the Gospel! Now of course we do not have this power today, but we can read the Bible record of those who did, including the Lord Jesus. We can remind ourselves that God does sometimes openly exercise his power in the world, and remember the amazing things He did through these people in both the Old and New Testaments.

We also have the Bible itself, produced by the Holy Spirit inspiring the writers to record the Word of God. It is a miracle in itself, proven through fulfilled prophecy and the unbroken themes of unchanging truth which run through it. It is a privilege to be able to hold and open our Bible; let’s make sure we keep reading it, building our confidence in its message.

As Peter moved on to speak about Jesus, he reminded his (Jewish) listeners that they had had Jesus murdered (**v23**), but that God raised him from the dead (**v24**). God is just, and so He would not leave the only righteous man in the grave. Through the sacrifice of Jesus, we are counted as righteous, and so God will raise us too! That is another reason for confidence in the Gospel. Peter referred to **Psalms 16**, showing that David prophesied about this a thousand years before; that the Holy One of God would not be left in the grave and would not: “*see corruption*” (**v27**). God does not change; His principles are unchanging. Because of the resurrection of Jesus, both we and Peter can have confidence that he is the Holy One of God; he is the Christ, the anointed Messiah. And Peter and the apostles had witnessed the fact (**v32**); in fact over 500 people were eyewitnesses to the risen Jesus!

The death and resurrection of Jesus is the central fact of the Gospel. It gives us confidence that God will send Jesus to set up the kingdom, so that when Jesus comes, he will raise his brothers and sisters from the dead; and it is testimony to God’s love and goodness. Paul made some powerful statements about it:

*“For I determined not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ, and him crucified... That your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.” (1 Corinthians 2:2, 5).*

*“Yea doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord... That I may know him, and the power of his resurrection, and the fellowship of his sufferings, being made conformable unto his death; If by any means I might attain unto the resurrection of the dead.” (Philippians 3:8, 10-11).*

The knowledge of Jesus’ resurrection can energise our life to belief, obedience and action, having been: *“...buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin.” (Romans 6:4-6).* As Paul wrote in **Romans 8:32** *“He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?”*

This confidence was what enabled Paul to suffer the things that he did, working for the Gospel and that his brothers and sisters might grow in faith (see **2 Timothy 2:8-10**). This can support us too in our own work for the Lord. **1 Corinthians 15** is the wonderful ‘resurrection chapter’, and its climax is: *“Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord” (v58).* When things seem difficult, or we feel that we are failing our Lord, remember this: Jesus rose from the dead and so we can have absolute confidence in the hope of the Gospel.

In **Acts 2**, Peter continued to consider the ascension of Jesus to heaven. This happened in the previous chapter, and again the apostles had seen it with their own eyes. Connecting the event to David’s words in **Psalms 110**, Peter showed that this proves Jesus is Lord. Our Lord is in heaven, sitting at the right hand of God Himself, as our mediator with God. He understands our weaknesses and our needs, having been mortal himself. He knows what is in our heart and mind and knows what we need better than we do ourselves.

*“Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.” (Hebrews 4:14-16).*

Here again is great cause for confidence in the Gospel; the knowledge that the Lord Jesus Christ is there, and that through him we can come to God to seek forgiveness and strength.

As we come to take the bread and wine, let’s reflect on what we have read. God’s power has worked openly in the past and soon will again be seen at work in the world. Jesus rose from the dead by the power of God and sits now with his Father in heaven. Soon God will send him back to the earth, to raise and judge the dead and bring in the Kingdom which we are waiting for. All of these things can give us confidence to live today as citizens of the coming world order, serving God and the Lord Jesus Christ.

Peter concluded his speech with these words of hope and conviction: *“For the promise is unto you, and to your children and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.” (Acts 2:39).* As the Apostle Paul put it, writing to his “son in the faith” (Timothy): *“For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind.” (2 Timothy 1:7).*

*“For as often as ye eat this bread, and drink this cup, ye do shew the Lord's death till he come.” (1 Corinthians 11:26).*