



CHRISTADELPHIAN ISOLATION LEAGUE

EXHORTATION

Date: 28th June 2020

SECTION LEADER:

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Readings: 1 Samuel 9, Isaiah 53, Revelation 15, 16

"The Suffering Servant"

To-day is that day above all others when we "consider him, our dear Saviour". He suffered incredible pain, yet somehow it pleased the Lord to bruise him and to put him to grief. He: "...endured such contradiction of sinners against himself" (**Hebrews 12:3 AV**). He suffered all of this for our sakes. So what of ourselves - do we ever suffer for his sake?

These few verses from **Hebrews 12** and those that follow have always troubled my conscience (**Hebrews 12: 5-7**). Chastening (discipline) is that which inflicts pain in order to bring the sufferer to a better mind, yet this has not happened in the lives of either my late wife or me. Yes, there have been times when we have been unwell. We have experienced disappointments and some sorrow, of course, but these are the common lot of man. I am thinking rather of those things that have happened in our lives because we belong to the Lord. So, I ask you to seek in your hearts at this memorial service for those experiences through which you have gone which have had a disciplining effect upon you.

For instance, there are times when we endure great struggling of our own consciences because we know deep down that we have offended our Father in heaven. Often, in my own case, by what I have said in a thoughtless moment or more frequently by what I have allowed my mind to dwell upon. I have spoiled that wondrous relationship of mutual trust because of my unguarded tongue or because of my sinful thinking and consequently I am not at one with my Father in heaven. We know that He is more than upset about such things! Hopefully, I am always properly penitent before Him, begging His mercy and forgiveness.

Sometimes things go wrong in our relations with our brethren and sisters. Again, hopefully, we all have the courage to make amends straight away, whether we think we or they are in the right (**1 Peter 2: 19-21**). Yes, our relationship with our Father or with our brethren and sisters is the only thing that gives me real concern, so these verses from **Hebrews 12:5-6** still continue to trouble my conscience. How about yourselves?

But such thoughts lead us on to: "*consider him that endured*" (**Hebrews 12:3**) even more closely. Here, as we break bread, we can realize that we can never, however penitent we might be before God, do anything of ourselves to be at one with our Father in heaven. We are now parts of Jesus' body (**1 Corinthians 12:12**); do we all discern that here to-day? It is Jesus who makes amends for us (**Isaiah 53:3-5**). Yet even he cannot do these things instead of us. It is the combination of his efficacious sacrifice and our enduring faith and trust in our God, which together make that bond of love able to achieve enduring reconciliation. He in our lives and we in his, as the apostle so graphically expresses it (**Galatians 2:20**). We affirm: "*Surely, he hath borne our griefs*" (**Isaiah 53:4**);- can there be any doubt? Do we not know as a matter of everyday experience that Jesus, the Lamb of God provides a covering for our sins?

Just how penitent then are we? Have we really forsaken our old way of life? Yes, I know we have renounced it, but have we totally forsaken all those things which Jesus tells us so clearly that they defile a man? Have we laid down our burdens at the foot of the cross and experienced the lifting of the load of sin and thank God, the removal of any sense of guilt? Let us to-day search out from

within ourselves such insidious things as self-pity and wounded pride. These are the things which defile our hearts, spoil our communion and impede our journey to the kingdom.

Have we prepared the best and largest room in our hearts for the Lord and bid him welcome? Or do we keep one room in our hearts locked just for ourselves and hope that he will never ask for the key?

As we take this bread, are we totally aware that his body was pierced and bruised for my transgressions and my iniquities? "The whole of his life on earth was a constant warfare against temptation. He met the full impact of sin in all its attractiveness as well as its horror and unwaveringly rejected it. And he did it while being of our frail nature. He accepted the cross, laying down his life and was resolute in his mind to destroy the power of sin. He alone met the full force of the enemy's power and he alone won that wondrous decisive victory and has shared it with us (**Hebrews 2:14, 15**)! He broke the power of the flesh in mankind and his rejection of that power becomes ours only in him. Jesus gave himself completely, every moment of every hour of every day.

This bread is a symbol of that continual self-giving and of that sacrifice of self. This loaf baked each week becomes a blessed thing shared amongst us: "*Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man..., ye have no life in you*" (**John 6:53**). We thereby identify ourselves with that self-giving and that final ultimate sacrifice of self (**Luke 9:23, 24**).

And as we take this cup into our hands, are we fully aware that it is Jesus who is alive in us? Every time we pray, we plead his righteousness. You and I brethren and sisters have become acceptable to our Father because He sees us as being parts of the Lord Jesus. This cup shows us that we have become identified with his life. My life is not my own, it is his: "*except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you*" (**John 6:53**).

This moment on the first day of the week, is for us the supreme moment of each and every week. It is a special moment of fellowship with our dear Lord.

In our communion to-day with brethren and sisters all over the world, we will thank our God for Jesus our Saviour and for what He has achieved for us. It was he who began our redemption and it is he who is still retaining the initiative to the very end. Our Saviour awakens within us that longing to share his victory and gives us, through our faithful frequent prayer and the Word, the power for that longing to grow in our hearts. To each one of us is given that share of the struggle and of the cross which we are each able to bear. On Christ alone, the full weight of evil broke, he alone won that glorious victory which was self-wrought and all decisive (**1 Corinthians 15:57**).

Brother Trevor Pritchard: Coventry (Grosvenor Road) UK 20.06.20