



God the Son

He shared His life

The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and 'sinners'." But wisdom is proved right by her actions. Matthew 11:19

Setting the scene

Critics of Jesus scornfully called Him the 'Friend of tax collectors and sinners'. He shared Himself with 'outsiders'. The tax collectors were in the service of the Romans and enriched themselves at the expense of their fellow countrymen. 'Sinners' were people who did not accept the strict requirements of the Scribes. Jesus gave these people His friendship because they were of value to God. In fact, it was sinners that Jesus came to save for He said, *"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance" Luke 5:32*. Since we have all sinned, we are just the same as the people described here. Jesus did not come to give simple friendship to those who followed Him. He offered to share (i) the dignity of Sonship, (ii) the rigours of service, (iii) the wealth of friendship and (iv) the victorious life.

The dignity of Sonship

Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. John 1:12

This is the status He bestows on any who *"receive Him"*. When a person is made a child of God, they enjoy the greatest privilege which God can confer this side of eternity. Those who accept Jesus Christ, as He is offered to them in the Gospel, have, through His blood, a right to this sonship. Everyone who is adopted into the heavenly family has the highest honour and dignity which it is possible for a human soul to have. What a remarkable fact this is. No-one is excluded. All who trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, through the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross, receive God's grace and mercy and are saved!

Paul delights to dwell on this status (Romans 8:15-17; Galatians 4:4-7). Sons do not tremble before their Heavenly Father, but rejoice in the freedom God has given them as members of His family.

There is also the deeper truth. Those who have this freedom of sons share in the life-power of the Son Himself, through the indwelling Holy Spirit.

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you for ever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. John 14:16-17

The rigours of service

One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles. Luke 6:12-13

The twelve were called to share in preaching and healing. They were trained for the hard days after the Cross.

These men had very successful ministries for a number of reasons.

- i. They were people who trusted in Christ and were trained by Him in His day by day ministry.
- ii. They received their commission from Christ.
- iii. Christ, by His Holy Spirit, continued to accompany them and bless their preaching.

Today, we, as Christ's disciples, are sent into an unwelcoming world with the promise of the Lord's presence and victory.

The wealth of friendship

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no-one than this, that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. John 15:12-15

Christ's love to His people in giving His life a ransom for them was altogether a new feature in God's dealing with His people. This was to be their standard in their dealing with each other. Jesus was letting the disciples into the secret of His plans. He did not ask for blind obedience, but for an obedience that was based on the confidence of Who He was and in gratitude for what He had done and was about to do for them. He has not only laid down His life for us but He shares His life with us.

The victorious life

God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. Acts 2:32-33

"We are all witnesses" - The whole 120 saw Jesus after He rose from the dead, and were all ready, in the face of persecution and death, to confirm this great truth.

The promise of the Holy Spirit - This was the promise that He had made to them a short time before He suffered and also after He had risen from the dead (Luke 24:1-6). Peter was proclaiming the fact that this Holy Spirit had been given to Christ's followers. They share His victory, serve in His strength, are quiet in His peace and grow in His likeness. At the last they will share in His glory.

Discussion

- How should mature Christians help new Christians in their faith?
- How can we be sure that the testimony of the apostles that Christ rose from the dead is true?