

## **PARADOXES OF CHRISTIANITY** **(Mark 8:35)**

### **I. We must mourn to be blessed (Matthew 5:4).**

- A. We rarely associate mourning with any type of blessing.
  - 1. When death occurs we don't tend to think of the blessings that may or may not come from it.
  - 2. We are generally focusing on the person we have just lost from our lives.
- B. However, Jesus states very plainly for us that if we want to be blessed, we must first mourn.
- C. This is true because of what it is we are mourning about.
  - 1. He was not speaking of mourning over someone's death.
  - 2. Jesus was talking about mourning over our sins.
- D. Every person, before he or she can ever taste of the sweetness of salvation, has to come to a realization that our sins hurt God.
  - 1. Every sin that we commit is an affront to the holiness of God.
  - 2. We mentioned Romans 2:8-9 Sunday night.
    - a. Anguish, tribulation, wrath and indignation come on the one who lives a life of sin.
    - b. This is because God hates sin.
    - c. Proverbs 6 tells us of sins God hates.
      - (1) That list seems small.
      - (2) If you look at the sins listed, they cover all the sins we can commit.
- E. We must come to know that we have hurt God with our sins and that should cause us to mourn before God.
  - 1. Jesus gave Himself for our sins (Galatians 1:4).
  - 2. Jesus became our sin offering (2 Corinthians 5:21).
- F. When we come to a realization of the terrible effects sin has on us and on God, we will mourn.
- G. This is called godly sorrow (2 Corinthians 7:10).

### **II. We must die to live (Mark 8:35).**

- A. No one in his right mind would ever tell us that in order to live we must die.
  - 1. We know that death is the end of life.
  - 2. There is no way to live if we are dead.
- B. However, Jesus said this to us in a spiritual sense.
- C. You and I must die to sin.
  - 1. Our sins bring spiritual death (Romans 6:23; James 1:15).
  - 2. Sin causes separation from God (Isaiah 59:1-2).
  - 3. Without a relationship with God we are spiritually dead.
- D. We can, however, die to sin in order to live (Romans 6:1-4).
  - 1. When we put that old man of sin to death we are free from sin (Romans 6:7).
  - 2. The Ephesians are a great example of people who did such (Ephesians 2:1-7).

- E. We die to sin by being made alive in Christ through baptism.
- F. We have to put away those sins that separated us from God in order to have eternal life.
  - 1. This is only possible in Christ.
  - 2. All those things that entangled us in the world are removed when we put on Christ.
  - 3. The old man of sin is buried in water and the new creature in Christ rises up out of that water (2 Corinthians 5:17).
- G. As the great hymn says, "dead to the old life of folly and sin."
- H. Paul stated this same fact in paradox form (Galatians 2:20).
  - 1. We must be crucified as well (Galatians 5:24).
  - 2. We must put to death the old man of sin in order to live in and with Christ.

### III. **We must serve to rule (Luke 22:26).**

- A. Once we have died to sin, we have to really reign in self.
  - 1. The life we lived before dying to sin was one that was focused on pleasing self.
  - 2. We did what we wanted because we put self first.
- B. In order to be great in the kingdom of God, self has to be put last and we must serve others.
- C. Jesus taught this lesson in a very vivid way in John 13.
  - 1. No one had done the task of providing water and towels with which to wash one's feet.
  - 2. All the apostles were too good to do that.
  - 3. Jesus, the night before His death, donned the servant's towel and washed the nasty feet of the apostles.
  - 4. Noticed what He then told them (vs. 12-17).
- D. If we are going to be pleasing to God, we must serve others.
  - 1. We must serve the Lord (Colossians 3:24; Hebrews 12:28).
  - 2. We are to serve one another (Galatians 5:13).
  - 3. We are to serve our neighbors (Luke 10:30-37).
  - 4. This indicates we are to serve everyone.
  - 5. Everyone comes before we do.
- E. The world tells us to please self.
  - 1. This is the whole premise of humanism.
  - 2. The world tells us to do what we want as long as we don't hurt anyone else.
  - 3. Our Lord knew nothing of that kind of lifestyle and preached the exact opposite.