

Christian Advantage

Eccles. 6:8

For what hath the wise more than the fool? what hath the poor, that knoweth to walk before the living?

A Teaching Outline

Compiled By Dr. Harold Bollinger

Christian advantages

Deuteronomy 24:14

"You shall not oppress a hired servant who is poor and needy, whether he is one of your countrymen or one of your aliens who is in your land in your towns.

Throughout the Old Testament God told his people to treat the poor with justice. The powerless and poverty-stricken are often looked upon by some people as incompetent or lazy when, in fact, those facing that situation may be victims of oppression and circumstance.

God says we must do all we can to help those who are needy. His justice did not permit the Israelites to insist on profits or quick payment from those who were less fortunate. Instead, his laws gave the poor every opportunity to better their situation, while providing humane options for those who couldn't.

None of us is completely isolated from the poor; many of us face needs at one time or another. God wants us to treat each other fairly and do our part to help meet one another's needs.

God's people were instructed to leave some of their harvest in the fields so travelers and the poor could gather it. This second gathering, called gleaning, was a way for them to provide food for themselves. Years later, Ruth obtained food for herself and Naomi by gleaning behind the reapers in Boaz's field, picking up the leftovers (Ruth 2:2). Because this law was being obeyed years after it was written, Ruth, a woman in Christ's lineage, was able to find food.

What is the advantage of the wise man over the fool?

Ecclesiastes 6:8

For what advantage does the wise man have over the fool? What advantage does the poor man have, knowing how to walk before the living?

God knows and directs everything that happens, and he is in complete control over our lives, even though at times it may not seem that way. How foolish it is for us to contend with our Creator, who knows us completely and can see the future.

What is the advantage of the Jew?

Romans 3:1

Then what advantage has the Jew? Or what is the benefit of circumcision?

The Jews observed three times of prayer—morning (9:00 AM), afternoon (3:00 PM), and evening (sunset).

At these times devout Jews and Gentiles who believed in God often would go to the Temple to pray. Peter and John were going to the Temple for the afternoon prayer service.

The Beautiful Gate was an entrance to the Temple, not to the city. It was one of the favored entrances, and many people passed through it on their way to worship.

Giving money to beggars was considered praise worthy in the Jewish religion. So the beggar wisely placed himself where he would be seen by the most people who were on their way to worship at the Temple

What was the advantage of Jesus going away?

John 16:7

"But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you.

Unless Jesus did what he came to do, there would be no Good News. If he did not die, he could not remove our sins; he could not rise again and defeat death. If he did not go back to the Father, the Holy Spirit would not come. Christ's presence on earth was limited to one place at a time. His leaving meant he could be present to the whole world through the Holy Spirit.

Three important tasks of the Holy Spirit are

- (1) Convicting the world of its sin and calling it to repentance,
- (2) Revealing the standard of God's righteousness to anyone who believes, because Christ would no longer be physically present on earth, and
- (3) Demonstrating Christ's judgment over Satan.

According to Jesus, not believing in him is *sin*.

Christ's death on the cross made a personal relationship with God available to us. When we confess our sin, God declares us righteous and delivers us from judgment for our sins.

Both Jew and Gentile are under sin.

Romans 3:9

What then? Are we better than they? Not at all; for we have already charged that both Jews and Greeks are all under sin;

We must remember who we are in his sight—alienated sinners. Don't deny that you are a sinner. Instead, allow your desperate need to point you toward Christ.

There was no advantage in eating the king's meat.

Daniel 1:15

At the end of ten days their appearance seemed better and they were fatter than all the youths who had been eating the king's choice food.

The Babylonians were trying to change their *thinking* by giving them a Babylonian education, their *loyalty* by changing their names, and their *lifestyle* by changing their diet. Without compromising, Daniel found a way to live by God's standards in a culture that did not honor God.

Wisely choosing to negotiate rather than to rebel, Daniel suggested an experimental 10-day diet of vegetables and water instead of the royal foods and wine the king offered. Without compromising,

Daniel quickly thought of a practical, creative solution that saved his life and the lives of his companions.

As God's people, we may adjust to our culture as long as we do not compromise God's laws.

Amos 6:2

Go over to Calneh and look, and go from there to Hamath the great, then go down to Gath of the Philistines. Are they better than these kingdoms, or is their territory greater than yours?

The Babylonians were trying to change their *thinking* by giving them a Babylonian education, their *loyalty* by changing their names, and their *lifestyle* by changing their diet. Without compromising, Daniel found a way to live by God's standards in a culture that did not honor God. Wisely choosing to negotiate rather than to rebel,

Daniel suggested an experimental 10-day diet of vegetables and water instead of the royal foods and wine the king offered. Without compromising, Daniel quickly thought of a practical, creative solution that saved his life and the lives of his companions.

The advantage of knowing the mighty one.

Luke 1:49

"For the Mighty One has done great things for me; and holy is His name.

When Mary said, "From now on all generations will call me blessed," was she being proud? No, she was recognizing and accepting the gift God had given her. Pride is refusing to accept God's gifts or taking credit for what God has done; humility is accepting the gifts and using them to praise and serve God. Don't deny, belittle, or ignore your gifts. Thank God for them and use them to his glory.

The advantage of prayer

James 5:16

Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another so that you may be healed the effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

Christ has made it possible for us to go directly to God for forgiveness. But confessing our sins to each other still has an important place in the life of the church.

(1) If we have sinned against an individual, we must ask him or her to forgive us.

(2) If our sin has affected the church, we must confess it publicly.

(3) If we need loving support as we struggle with a sin, we should confess that sin to those who are able to provide that support.

(4) If we doubt God's forgiveness, after confessing a sin to him, we may wish to confess that sin to a fellow believer for assurance of God's pardon. In Christ's Kingdom, every believer is a priest to other believers (1 Peter 2:9).

The Christian's most powerful resource is communion with God through prayer. The results are often greater than we thought were possible. Some people see prayer as a last resort to be tried when all else fails. This approach is backward. Prayer should come first. Because God's power is infinitely greater than ours, it only makes sense to rely on it—especially because God encourages us to do so.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door to Jesus

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

New American Standard Bible

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print

