

My Beliefs, my Faith; My Religion

Related to Earthly Life, Death and Situation after death.

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(Preface: This article is for the adolescent who might be confused of various critical interpretations they come across, about values of Religion, Christianity and Orthodox Christian faith. It reflects my adolescence experience, the turmoil and the thoughts that helped me to get over them. Later I met many youngsters across the world going through the same experience, and I wrote this for them. May be some thoughts are radical and may not be agreeable to the scholars and palatable to elders. Take what you like and ignore the rest.)

Introduction:

The Orthodox Christian liturgy is so original in faith, deep in its meanings and rich in values. Nevertheless, after hearing some of these sermons based on liturgy, at least some of us occasionally happened to end up a little confused, bit sadder and sometimes a feeling some sort of dejection. May be it is because most the conventional preachers often tend to dwell some of the negative thoughts and aspects from early scriptures, making things too complicated, difficult and impossible for the normal laymen to adapt and follow and practice in real life.

Seldom have we found preachers who explain in specific, clear and practical terms, what one should do to lead a good Christian life. In the paper an attempt is made to highlight that in contrast to above,

how our lord Jesus Christ, taught us very precisely, the true meaning of 'life' and everything related to it; about what one should do in the earthly life to attain salvation, in very simple, clear and practical terms in simple proverbs and otherwise so that it can be grasped and understood by every one.

The essence of teachings of every righteous religion:

- Obedience (Anusaranam)
- Tolerance, Forgiveness, (Sahishnutha, Skhema)
- Humility, Humbleness, (Thazhazhma, Elimam)
- Compassion, Kindness, Love (Karuna, Sneham)
- **Faith in God (Daiva Viswasam)**

It is by making these virtues, the corner stones of our life and our home, we become good human beings. Meditate on these often and grade ourselves to know how we fare and where we stand in our worldly and spiritual life.

However, do not despair in your failings. To err is human. Remember, nobody is perfect. Keep on trying if we are below par, go on meditate and continuously pursue and follow teachings of Jesus with full belief that He will never abandon us.

The Christian differentiation.

For the believers in Christ, there is absolutely no need to become despondent because, we have His living promise; that differentiates the believer in Christ from others. This is given to us by HIM in the form of a living and continuous contract and assurance that, with

repentance and true confession, our sins will be forgiven. This of course, on condition that, we should not fall into same sin again and again. It should not be like our New Year resolves, easily made and quickly broken and forgotten, because the biggest ever sin is sinning against Holy Ghost, by falling in the same sins again and again for which we had confessed and sought God's pardon.

The Essence of Christianity:

Introduction: An attempt is made in the following analytic discussion with the aim to make us understand Christ's teachings on the 'Essence of God' and about the need to lead our life with Compassion, Kindness and Love, and at the same time seeking always God's forgiveness for our sins. We shall also dwell upon how these correlate our Life with the situation 'after life'.

Love and Forgiveness are the 'Essence of Christianity'.

St. Mathew 22: 37- 40. Christ said in few simple words that every one can understand. *"Love your neighbor as you love yourself."* *'This is the second most important commandment.'*

Compassion, Kindness, Love and seeking Forgiveness from God.

St. Mathew 9: 13 *"It is kindness that I want, not animal sacrifices."*

Let us see how the teachings of Christ on these subjects, correlate the situation in Earthly Life, Death and after death.

1. **Earthly Life.** First, let us see about the situation in our Earthly

life.

For a moment let us assume that we all have the resolve to live as good human beings with righteous behavior, repent and confess our sins and seek God's forgiveness as true Christians.

Is that enough? Is that the end of it? Or what happens then?

Is there anything more? If there is; then how these are related to our actions and situations in our earthly life?

Before this, let us see what are generally we hear about the situations after life?

- Death
- Rising from death
- Final Judgment. Salvation, or Redemption.
- Eternal life, Kingdom of God.

2. Death. Death is certain; who ever born has to die. Can we do anything to prevent it, may be nothing at all, at least as far as we know as of now.

- **Fear of death:** Do any of us feel happy about death? Mostly not. Going back to the beginning of this paper, about the influence of religious sermons; the time we spent in prayer and religious interactions shall be an experience of enlightening, happiness of rejoicing in Christ; not an experience of desperation and hopelessness.

But often than not, what is talked in most of these sermons is about sin, death and those horrible things waiting for us after death. These are often used as sticks to ward us off from sin. Most of the preaching imply to make us believe that we have broken many rules

of the scriptures and sinned against God and therefore are beyond any salvation. Therefore, we start feeling as if we are in a 'mourning house' and make us appear grim and grumpy faced. The irony is that all these are aimed at generalizing the few who happen to be present there. So they either turn ourselves off allowing their minds to wander, or go to sleep and remorseful later.

Why we fear death?

Reason 1. Fear of 'Worldly' losses: Reluctance to leave our worldly possessions, family, wealth and many other things we struggled so much to acquire. The more our earthly possessions, the more will be our dislike to die.

What is the most valuable thing for us: There are so many things dear to us. Parents, Wife, Children, our worldly possessions? Actually it shall be none of these?

What about our next breath? Yes, the most valuable thing for us is "our next breath" Is it not? It was not given by our parents, neither earned by us.

It is God given. It is HIS, a gift given free. Need we complain if the giver takes back what is his? Our ambition at any point of time in our life shall be a mere simple desire to see the next day, if HE will.

Reason 2. Fear of Spiritual loss.

Why we fear death? The uncertainty of what is waiting for us after death. Heaven, Hell, or is it something else or nothing at all. We learn in scriptures that Death is the wages of Sin. To live without sin is

almost impossible. The more our sins are, the more will be our fear about death.

3. Our belief of the situation after death:

Death is certain, but situations after death, everything seems to be uncertain. Then do we really believe in what the scriptures say about Rising from Death, Final Judgment and Eternal Life as certain as our belief in death? If not, why not? Do we think it is only nothingness after death?

We always try to understand these from its literal explanations, but most of these are matters beyond our comprehension. Then, are not many things in life hard to believe if we try to understand these from only its literal explanations and our limited ability to comprehend it.

Let us ponder a little philosophy here:

The Universe has existed from a very, very, very long period of time.

The infinite nature of Universe, its beginning, its age, wonderful creations, and the marvels of its functioning, the uniqueness of our planet in a virtually infinite space etc., always remain as mysteries and beyond the comprehension of mankind.

Only in the recent past, a famous poet of ours said:

“Anantham, Anjanam, Avarnaneeyam, Eee Loka Golam chalikkunna margam, Athingal engand oridathirunnu charikkunna marthyan katha entharinju”

Infinite, unknown and beyond explanation and comprehension are the existence, and the motions of the Universe; How trifle little of it is

known to the puny humans toddling about at some place, somewhere in it.

The earliest known human civilization according to our scriptures is that of 7500 B.C i.e. just less than ten thousand years behind us. This is a very small period when compared to the infinite period of existence of whole Universe.

Nevertheless, the Human beings at every stage of their evolution had strong conviction about what they believed at that point time. At every point of civilization, they tried to interpret their experiences with explanations as known to mankind at that point of time. They also believed and experienced existence of some power of a higher and supreme nature and gave different shapes and meanings for the concept.

A few thousands years ago, it was thought that Earth was flat and the sky seen above was the upper limit and there are different Gods sitting above it and some place like hell is there somewhere down below. Later it turned out that that those beliefs were wrong, but when Galileo told that earth is round, no one cared to believe him then.

Jewish scriptures:

According to Jewish scriptures, Abraham lived around 4000 B.C. Exodus led by Moses was in 13th Century B.C. Starting from Adam & Eve, many different civilizations existed before, in between and along with these period. When we look at the history of Jews, it was only few thousands of years ago, they started calling God as '**Jehovah the God and our Lord**' (may His name be exalted), **visualized** and defined,

the creation of everything in this planet and around it, according to their perceptions and convictions.

The few enlightened ones among them literalized and conveyed these experiences at different times in human history in a way to make it understandable to the laymen and primitive nomads amongst. A part of it we have in the Old Testament in the Holy Bible as a book mixing the profound wisdom and experiences of sages through many bygone centuries. These were passed down to later religions which converted these into their scriptures and liturgy.

In the pages of these scriptures, it is described About Adam and Eve, how they came into being and how their disobedience to God in committing the unpardonable sin, caused them to suffer God's wrath and punishment. About their descendants, Cain, Abel and Seth, and how the mankind in this planet Earth came to being, about the happenings in the times of Noah, Abraham, Jacob (who later became Israel), Moses and David and all the prophets in between and after them.

Are everything in the old scriptures fully convincing to every one now?

As these scriptures were written later according to their level of knowledge at that point of time, on assumptions of happenings of period of non-existence of human kind well before them, the scriptures in its literal form may not seem to be convincing, to at least for a few now.

What shall we do about this? Attempt to discredit what is in the scriptures shall neither be our objective nor our intention. While honoring the scriptures fully, it is not unfair to look beyond its literal meaning where there are doubts, to better understand, by mixing these perceptions and insight with modern knowledge as the life goes on.

God is real. None shall have doubt about that. But can human words, human formulae, and the human religious systems ever be able to fully capture that reality. Will it not be anything but idolatrous and foolhardy if any one at any time claims to have done this? The fact is that human beings try to approach God only with human analogy, nothing more. Even they had created God in their own image and of many other different shapes.

One cannot begin at a point where he is not; one must begin where he is:-

If God is not a Being but the ground of All Being, the source of life and the source of love, then can God be contained within any religious system, or can any people continue to live as if God were the tribal deity of their particular nation or group.

God being, life and love, transcend all boundaries? Can any amount of voluminous scriptures of any religious tradition claim that in its pages the fullness of God has been captured? Are many of these religious propaganda bordering fanatics or otherwise, we see around now are sustainable?

Let us come back to the Adam and Eve story. The literal explanation in the scripture describe that they disobeyed God in eating the fruit of a forbidden tree at the centre of the Eden garden and so God punished them. We are taught so and thus so we believe. Perhaps, some of us in some point of our life, might have gone through the experience of finding it difficult to believe some of these in its literal meaning when start analyzing things in our own way as we grow up. But then let us look at it in this way: - Basically the earliest ones of the creations in this planet did something against the intentions of their creation. It is certain that when the created ones act against the intention of the creation, it will definitely lead to negative effects and disharmony. This must be easy to understand, because, we see these happenings every day around us.

From the beginning of their existence, the descendants of Adam & Eve, somewhere somehow and in many ways started to persecute, hurt and kill each other for no worthy reasons and continue to do many ghastly things against the nature's intention and purpose. With great vengeance we indulge and compete with each other, in many ways destroying the only livable planet in the whole Universe, always trifling the value of this very special and marvelous gift of nature. Bad actions against providential entity will definitely breed bad effects. All that hurts and cause disharmony and sadness cannot have good effects. On the other hand, for the good deeds we do, we will be rewarded with happiness, harmony and peace.

According to scriptures, the "MAN" whom He made in his own image, is the one that God loved the most among His creations. Then God

would definitely despise his loving creations of his own image indulge in hate, hurting and killing each other and living in sadness. The opposite to hate is Love, the most valuable thing in the eyes of God. Only deeds evoke and involve Love pleases Him. Where there is Love there is Forgiveness, Compassion and Kindness.

If we can understand this, it becomes easy to comprehend the meaning of the "God and Mrs. & Mr. Adam story". It is also easy to understand, which deeds are good and which are bad. The scriptures are to be learned not only through its literal words but also from the effects and implications of its substance.

So much so for the philosophical part; Going back to our subject "The situations in our earthly life and after", look at what HE taught us about all these; how Forgiveness, Compassion, Kindness and Love are co-relates the situations in life, death and after that based on these.

4. Situation after Earthly Life and Death:

Rising from death:

We have many literal explanations about God's incarnation as "Son of God and Son of Man" through a virgin mother, and the ultimate sacrifice for the sins of mankind, the resurrection after physical death and His ascension back to heaven. But there exist many who are skeptic about the happenings in Christ's life and his Resurrection and cast doubts on its literal explanations that we have.

Here again, like we believe in the existence of God just by

experiencing God's effects, look at the effect and the experiences of the life and death of Jesus and the happenings afterwards, such as those had never occurred in this world again. Then none should have any difficulty in believing in life and deeds of Christ and His resurrection and ascension to eternity.

As Christians, we all believe in the Resurrection of Christ, if we do not, then the existence of our religion itself becomes questionable.

We also believe that Christ lives with us and God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Look at what Christ taught us quoting the Lords words as written in **Exodus 3:6,**

St. Mathew 22:32, St. Luke 20: verse 37-38.

"I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob."

In our prayer for departed ones we say every day:

"Karuna Niranjavane Punarudhanathil Ninnude Shrishtiye Nee pututhakeedename,

Ninnil sharanathal nidrayilay Ninte varavinu katheedum mrutharil kaniyaname"

"O Thou, full of mercy, Renew Thy creation at the time of the Resurrection.

O Lord, comfort and absolve our departed ones who died with the hope in Thee, and await Thy coming. O Lord, make them dwell in the bosom of Abraham, and of Isaac, and of Jacob. May the living and the departed together cry out, "Blessed is He, who has come, and is to come, and give life to the dead". - Amen

Our God is the God of the living, not of the dead, as for to Him all are alive.

From this we learn two very important truths about life and death:

1. We have a living God. He is always with us.
2. Our God is the God of living ones; not a God of the dead.

According to Christ, real death happens only if our soul loses the Godly spirit. Those who are absolved of sins and attain salvation never die; and one who live in sin without seeking salvation is already dead. This is how we need to see the Physical Life in us and the God's Spirit in us (both living and departed) as two different entities.

Again, in the above daily prayer for the departed we say: *"May the living and the departed together cry out, "Blessed is He, who has come, and is to come, and give life to the dead"*. It means that, the God's spirit in the living, and that in the departed ones, together are to cry out praising God.

The spirit never dies. With the presence of God in our spirit we continue to live and without it we remain dead. It is due to our living in sin, the presence of God in our spirit is lost. The spirit gets corrupted due to sin. When the spirit in one is stained, his body is as good as dead.

When raised from death, Life and Spirit become one entity.

St.Luke 20: Verses: 35-36. *'The men and women who are worthy to rise from dead and live in the age to come will be like angels and*

cannot die. There, no one is given in marriage. All are in an equal state of existence.'

Life and spirit becomes one entity in the presence of God. So our physical death and loss of our physical body become insignificant. If we understood this, then we could understand what Jesus meant when he said: "Let the dead ones go and bury their dead"

That is why we should understand that Christ's teachings have far fetching meaning. With the advent of Bio science, it might be possible to overcome physical death in future. Also may be a physical body with life in it could be created by cloning. The question is whether, such a body with life will have the presence of Godly spirit? And what is the use of a body without grace of the Godly spirit. It will be a body like just like that of any other animal.

God's spirit in us produce patience, kindness, faithfulness, humility, love and self control and give us to joy, peace and tranquility.

"What is the use of you gaining everything in this world without earning Godly Spirit?"

What shall we do to save our spirit?

Answer is simple; we have to obey His teachings and make ourselves eligible to attain salvation. How to make ourselves eligible is our main theme. For this let us proceed through the next point in our discussion. We will come back to this again.

5. Situation after Earthly Life, Death and Rising from Death:

The Final Judgment:

We believe that when we are raised from death, we will be judged according to our deeds.

Mathew 7:23. *'Go away, I never knew you.'*

These are the most fearsome words of God, we all tremble to hear.

First of all, to get a fair judgment, the Judge should know us either directly or through a mediator. Either way we should be known to him.

How can He know you? Or how can we know Him? We have to know Him before hand.

We have to know Him here itself, in our earthly life.

How? Whom He knows?

He knows only those who do His likings.

Mathew 7:21 *"Not everyone who calls me "Lord, Lord" will enter the Kingdom of heaven, but only those who met only what my father in Heaven wants them to do."*

What are His likings? Who are His friends?

"Enne Viswasal Suchiyodu Kaikkondu, Kalpana Palichal, avan En Snehithanam"

"My friends are those who consume me with belief and purity and obey my commandments"

Look again at the Lords saying; *"It is kindness that I want, not animal*

sacrifices.”

“Yagatthilalla, Karunayilathre Jnan Prasadikkunnathu”. It was the practice to offer sacrificial substitutes to absolve ones sins; big animals for big sins small ones or birds for smaller sins. All these changed with the coming of Jesus.

See what Jesus said about the hypocrisies of the elites and the priestly classes of that period:

“ Ooh yudo yoho Kohnuso, Lonpiyuso.....”

*“Paurohithyam, Rajyam, Pravachanam ennivayenye,
Yoodanmare Ningade Nilayam sarvam soonyam.”*

“ Your temples are empty and wasted as other than show of Priestly pride, Political manipulations and falsified Prophecies, you do nothing good”

And more of these you could see in the entire Chapter 23 in the book of St. Mathew.

“It is kindness that I want, not animal sacrifices.”

What is kindness and which are the kind deeds?

Look what the good King said at the time of judgment: St: Mathew 25: 35-36

“I was hungry, you fed me, thirsty and you gave me a drink, I was a stranger and you received me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick you took care of me, I was in prison you visited me.”

But then, where can I find Him to know Him and do these kind deeds?

Who is the least of our brethren? Where do we find them?

St. Mathew 25: 40. *"What you did for the least of your brethren, you did for me."* He is every where; only just you have to look for. If you know any one of those who are in need of you, then you saw him. May be a needy friend, may be someone who is very ill and no means of care and so on.

Also it is said that *"Charity begins at home"* May be there is one of your not-so-lucky dear ones or relatives, in some kind of difficulty and need some help.

Just look around, we will find Him. May be through a charitable institution or an association in the church that helps the needy, is another way to find and reach him.

6. Situation after Earthly Life, Death, Rising from Death and Final Judgment:

Eternal life. Living with God.

What shall I do to earn eternal life and live with God?

What are the things in our control to acquire eternal life? *"It is kindness that He want, not animal sacrifices."* We saw that Compassion, Kindness, and Love are the necessary ingredients for us to become His friend for a 'Final Judgment' in our favor.

But, is "loving our neighbors as ourselves" enough to earn our Life in Heaven? Definitely not; it is only one part. The other part is also equally important and indispensable to attain eternal life.

St. John 6: 56-58 and Mathew 26: 26-29

His promise:

"Ente Shareeram bhakshich-En rektham panam cheyvor, pathalathil pokanayi vidaa Jnan"

"Gathram Mochanamam, Rektham Kasayam, Iva kaikkolvoril, Chernnu vasikkum Jnan."

"This is my body and blood. Take part now and always, for the forgiveness of your sins."

We beseech: *"Atmavinu mukti nedan Punyamezhum Rektha Shareerangal Nalkaname Natha."*

So the other part is that we should instill His spirit in us. How? By consuming His body and blood as far as we live, for the forgiveness of our sins. But to make ourselves eligible to take part in his body and blood, we have to find Him here and become His friend with our love, compassion and kind deeds in this life.

"Enne Viswasal Shuchiyodu Kaikkondu, Kalpana Palichal, avar en Snehitharam"

It means that to get over the 'Final Judgment' and thereby to attain eternal life, our physical and spiritual actions in our earthly life shall go hand in hand as a continuous process and not one following other.

Heavenly Kingdom:

Let us see his teachings as given in the gospels, about Heavenly kingdom and how we can acquire it. Kingdom of God is mentioned 80 times in the Gospels, few of which are quoted below.

St. Mathew 19: 17-21. *"You follow the commandments and then go*

and sell all you have, give it to the poor and then follow me.”

St. Mathew 20: 1-16 *“Heaven is like the one who hired workers at different times of the day but pays them the same wages.”*

The parable of five wise girls in St. **Mathew 25: 1-13**, Parable of the wedding feast in St. Mathew 22: 2-14: and many more in St. Mathew Chapter 13: 3-52.

The Essence of Christianity.

Coming back to our topic: In these discussions, we have seen that Compassion, Kindness, Love and seeking God’s forgiveness of our sins are the necessary ingredients of the Essence of Christianity and how these commandments of Christ correlates the Situation in Earthly Life, Death and Situation after death.

Let us now look at how things have changed after the happening of Jesus Christ. Through simple Parables and Proverbs, Jesus had explained and made out things simple for everyone to understand the relationship between man and God, the true meaning of the values of Life, Death and Life after Death and the Essence God through the effects of God we experience.

We know that, Christ did not put down anything in writing by himself. We have His teachings in the New Testament written by his disciples in the form of epistles of St. Paul, then gospel of St. Mark in the middle of the first century and the gospels of St. Mathew, St. Luke and St. John later. (The Gospel believed to be written by St. Thomas, was found out only very recently.)

If clarity is lacking or in-consistency found by someone, somewhere in any part of these Gospels, it is not because the Teachings of Christ was not clear; it could only be due to the residue of influence of Jewish and other tradition on the Gospel writers or crept into it during its transcriptions.

Jesus crossed every boundary of tribe, prejudice, gender, and religion shall be honored by all those who as his disciples. Also it was not in the scheme of Jesus to found any institutional set up for specific groups or sect which can be somehow be institutionalized as attempts on the part of human beings to accrue power for themselves and their particular religious institution or their nation. On the contrary, Jesus of Nazareth has ventured to remove the divisions between creeds and tribes. Jesus knew nothing of England, Germany, Scandinavia, Scotland, Italy, Ireland and Southern Europe. Jesus never wanted his followers to have different faiths such as Orthodox, Catholic, Anglican, Lutheran, Presbyterian, Pentecost and many others and its sects and sub-sects we see now in different parts of the world.

So it is one's responsibility to separate good grain from chaff of his tradition in order to discover the essence of God.

- Every true Christian believes that Jesus is our Lord and believes that he has mediated God in a powerful and unique way to change human history.
- Every true Christian believes that their particular life has been dramatically and decisively impacted not only by the life of this Jesus, but also by his death and indeed by the aftermath of the

happenings of Easter experience that Christians truly know as resurrection.

- Every true Christian believes that in Christ they discover a basis for meaning, for ethics, for prayer, for worship, and even for hope of life beyond the boundaries of their mortality.

Over and above, the true Christians are those, and only those, who have faith in His teachings, and tread the path he had shown, whichever his materialistic religious beliefs be.

The happenings of Christ are one of the effects of God. Christ is the best phenomenon ever happened in this world. Christ has made everyone to understand the true meaning of the values of Life, Death and Life after Death and with that the essence and effects of God. Christ was not for any change of the Covenants of God and the rules set by God through Moses and many others. He never disregarded or contested anything in the scriptures. Christ was only against the miss-interpretations of the scriptures and prophecies by self serving Jewish priestly and elite classes of that time. Remember his saying: St. Mathew 16: 6 *"Take care; be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees."* In saying this, He meant about the corrupt ones willfully misguiding the lay men and down trodden with their twisted interpretations of God's covenants, rules and prophecies written in scriptures.

Christ explained to us the real meanings of the substance of the

scriptures and how these are relevant in our life. Explaining the implications with parables, Christ made it simpler and clearer for the common man to understand, believe and follow. He removed the heavy burdens, both physical and spiritual, thrust on people by willful false interpretations of the old scriptures.

The most wonderful aspect of Christ's teaching is that these are continuous and permanent. What he taught were relevant 2000 year ago, it is valid now and it will be even more relevant in the future to come. It is because, as the mankind advance in their knowledge, Christ's way of thinking becomes more relevant in real sense of things that matters in life.

Christ has summed up the whole Law in one commandment telling us in very simple terms: Love each other, have compassion on those who are in need of us. It is not for them. It is for our own benefit. It is for us, for knowing Him here by becoming His friend in our earthly life, to make our life useful and meaningful according to God's wish and to pave our way to reach eternal life.

Christ taught us that Kindness has no measure. The quantity is not important.

Some may say; "Okay, I am compassionate. I have feeling of kindness about the needy. But I myself am always in want. What I can spare is only little and insignificant."

The answer to above is in His teachings in following parables:

Luke 21: 3-4 The widow's offering. *"He said, Of a truth I say unto you,*

that this poor widow hath cast in more than they all: for all these have of their abundance cast in unto the offerings of God; but she of her penury hath cast in all the living that she had"

So quantity is not important. Give from what you have. He did not want us to bear any heavy burden beyond our means.

Where unto shall we liken the Kingdom of God? St. Mark 4: 30-32.

Jesus said "It is like this; A man takes a mustard seed, the smallest seed in the world, and plants it in the ground. After a while it grows up and becomes the biggest of all plants. It puts out such large branches that the birds come and makes nests in its shade."

The small seed had finally turned out to be useful to many. Given all the materials and resources, can any of us in our lifetime, make a tree like the one God make out of a small seed. Why, even the smallest of God's creations, is beyond our ability to make. Look at an ant, small as it is, can all of us joined together make one like that. And remember always what He said; *"See how the Lilies of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor, was never dressed like one of these."*

So the quantity is not that matters. Quantity is the work of God. We are trifle things. Our efforts cannot equal His. Greatness comes only from Him. What God want with us, is to do small things of good deeds according to our mite. Rest will be taken care of by Him.

St. Mark 4: 26-29 *“Kingdom of God is like this. A man scatters seed in his field. The man sleeps in the night and up and about during the day. All the while the seed is sprouting and growing, yet the man does not know how it happens. When the corn is ripe the man starts cutting it with sickle because the harvest time has come.”*

Luke 13:20-21 *“What shall I compare the Kingdom of God. It is like this; A woman takes a very little quantity of yeast and mixes with 40 liters of flour and the entire dough rises.”*

Give out what little we have is just what we need to do. Making it into great things is God’s work. God converts our small good deeds to much big things for our heavenly life. We need not toil or worry further for that. Is it not fairly simple for us to understand?

Luke 17: 20-21. The Kingdom of Heaven is here.

“The Kingdom of God does not come in such a way as to be seen. No one will say, look here it is or there it is, because the Kingdom of God is within you.” This is the most significant and revolutionary teaching of Christ about the Kingdom of God.”

If we believe that the Kingdom of Heaven is here and within us, then it is valid during the phase of our life here. It means that we need to earn and own the Kingdom of Heaven here itself in our worldly life and thus pave way for eternal life. How? By knowing Him here itself and become His friend by doing His likings in our earthly life. Whenever we do the little that we can, it will be multiplied many fold and given back to us and for our coming generations. If we do not

ignore, overlook and go wasted the many chances that come across in our life for sharing what we can afford with the needy, we will get big yields for it later.

Is this very difficult to understand? When we lead our life with compassion, kindness and caring and sharing with the needy, we will be filled with self contentment giving joy and happiness to our spirit. If we do not, with all the vanities we have, there will be only despair, sadness and emptiness about the future.

But then, do we take these simple and very practical teachings of Christ seriously, even though He made it so simple for us? If we are not, why so?

It may not be that most of us don't believe in Christ and His teachings. Then why?

Is it because we are not fully convinced of the meaning of life and the matters related to life after death? What about our life after our Job, and our old age situation. Don't we take care of it, by keeping aside something while we have? If we are doing this just for the few years of that later part of life we presume we would have, and then is it not worthy to safe guard for our eternal life, which could be done, may be with much less than the contribution to any superannuation fund and other such instruments. Just give it a thought!!.

What happens otherwise? Answer is simple. Existence in vanity is und deserving.

Mark 11:13-14 *“And seeing a fig tree afar off having leaves, he came, happily he might find anything thereon: and when he came to it, he found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.”*

That fig tree stood there in vain, thickly covered with leaves, out of place at wrong season. True that it was not the season for fruits. But then the tree had no reason to show off. Without producing fruits, its existence with thickly covered leaves was in vain and un-deserving.

With this action of his, Jesus taught us that if our life is not useful to others, we do not deserve all the good things God provided us and to live elegantly in vanity. If we do not have compassion, our life is meaningless and we have no right to exist.

Let us not live in vanity like that undeserving tree. Let us strive to be fruitful and make ourselves deserving to live. Let us beseech the Lord to make us understand the Essence of Christianity and lead our life with compassion, kindness, love, and always seeking forgiveness for our sins, as taught to us by our master.

Safe guard our next generation: Some may say *“It is my life, I have struggled to make it, let what may happen, why should anyone bother”* Please remember that effect of the sin and the sadness and harm caused by it will not stop with us. It is proven that the bad effects are mapped onto our genes and passed in the DNA on to the next generations. Forget the liturgy and the teachings for a moment, but we have to believe this.

To sum up:

Do not loose heart and do not live in despair thinking of our sins. Nobody is perfect. Seek forgiveness of our sins by repentance and true confession and take part regularly in Holy Communion.

The happening of Jesus Christ is the best thing ever occurred in this world. Believe in his teachings. Do not get carried away by disparate interpretations and many critical views about the validity of the ancient scriptures, the essence of orthodox faith in confirmation of the Life, Crucifixion, Resurrection and Ascension of Christ, the doctrine of Trinity and the divinity of the Holy Mother. Learn and follow scriptures and religious teachings not only through its literal words but also by its effects and implications.

Teachings of Christ are continuous, permanent and relevant in every thing that matters in life. These were relevant 2000 year ago, it is valid now and it will be even more relevant in future to come.

Jesus crossed every boundary of tribe, prejudice, gender, and religion and so it shall be honored by all those who are his disciples.

One can see how political divisions in different parts of the country found expressions by church's people to historically make much of these divisions that are part of their tribal mentality.

But many in the new world order do not believe that Jesus wanted to found any institutional set up for specific groups or sect, and thus be presided over only by those ordained by them to somehow exercise control over the body of the Church constituted and contained by believers in Christ.

All these things represent to them as attempts on the part of human

beings to accrue power for themselves and their particular religious institution.

The religion of Jesus is Love, the embodiment of the Essence of God. A religion of Love with out boundaries and barriers, Love without divisions, Love without discretion of cast, creed, rich or poor, Love without animosity and the ultimate Love that make one to love the foes more.

A true Christian is the one who believe in Christ and have faith in his teachings, whichever his worldly religion be. Christ has made things simple, easy and practical for us.

Jesus taught us the **“Essence of God”**.

- God is infinite and beyond human comprehension.
- God is not a Being but the ground of All Being.
- He is the past, present and the future.
- God is the embodiment of Love, the Love with no boundaries and barriers.
- We have a living God. He is always with us.
- Our God is the God of living; not of the dead.
- The Kingdom of Heaven is here because the Kingdom of God is within us.
- Build our Heaven and pave way for Eternal life here, in our worldly life.
- To be favored in God’s final judgment, we should be already known to Him.
- We need to know Him and also be known to Him here, in our

earthly life.

- God knows only those who do His likings. The way to do His liking and become known to Him is by helping the least of our brethren.
- We find the least our brethren everywhere; if we care to look for.
- Reach out to those in need and give the little we have. Rest will be taken care of by Him.
- Quantity is not important. Our abilities are insignificant, Greatness is His.
- Seek forgiveness of our sins and revive the Godly spirit in us making ourselves eligible to it and continue doing so.

“It is kindness that God want, not sacrifices.” Amen.

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