

PATRIOTISM (1)

Patriotism applies to all citizens. Some of us are citizens by birth – others by choice. The dictionary states, “Patriotism is a love and loyal devotion to one’s country, and it is right and fitting that we honor our country on special days of the year. I have chosen just three days from our history to share with you.

Memorial Day is remembered on May 30. There have been many wars since our country was founded, and none of them has been easy to bear. We must never forget the sacrifice that so many have made that we might have liberty.

The next day I would like you to recall is **Flag Day**. The birth of the Stars and Stripes is June 14, 1777. Its creation was proclaimed in a resolution of the Continental Congress. Red stands for courage, zeal, fervency. White stands for purity, cleanliness of life and conduct. Blue stands for loyalty, devotion, friendship, justice and truth. This flag which we honor and under which we serve is the symbol of liberty, both civil and religious. It is the emblem of unity, our power, our thought and purpose as a nation.

Patriotism - a love and devotion to ones’ country. Yes we are citizens of this land. But America has many problems that need correcting. We need a return to honesty, caring for others, seeing worth in every human being, and a return to God. Someone has said, “Evil flourishes when good men do nothing.” We must work to right the wrongs of our beloved country.

But there is another land that we as Christians belong to: the kingdom of God, and we journey toward that bright city that is eternal, where God is the light, where there is no darkness, where love, joy and peace abide for ever and ever. We are born into this kingdom by a gift of God and we elect it by choice.

Patriotism applies to this land also. Love and devotion is our responsibility (and our privilege) to God and His kingdom. We must work to share the Good News with others. What a glorious heritage is ours. So don’t be in despair - a better day and a better land will be ours for eternity.

Revelation 21:1-8

Margaret Brown †

WHICH IS THE GREATEST COMMANDMENT?

By Irma F. Matrai

People repeatedly tried to trap Jesus through his speech because they wanted to find a reason for his crucifixion. Once the Pharisees and the Herodians asked him: “Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?” Yet, his wise reply immediately silenced them. Another time the antiresurrection Sadducees tried to tempt him by asking a strange question on that subject. Yet, he silenced them also. Then a Pharisee who was an expert in the law tested him by asking: “**which is the greatest commandment?**” Only to receive a clever answer too. In Matthew 22:34-39 (NIV) we read:

Hearing that Jesus silenced the Sadducees, the Pharisees got together. One of them, an expert in the law, tested him with this question: “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the law?” Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the law and Prophets hang on these two commandments.

Last time, we talked about how Jesus and the apostles asked Christians to love one another so that people may believe that Jesus was the Son of God, and they were his followers. For, God’s children are able to love each other – if they want to – because if they totally yield themselves to the indwelling Holy Spirit, he will bring forth this love in their life.

At the same time, Jesus’ reply to the question: which is the greatest commandment? – Explains the same thing when he said: “**Love the Lord our God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment.**” And only afterwards added: “And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself.” **Why is this the sequence? How should we love our neighbors? And what will be the results? – We may ask.**

Why should we love God first and only afterwards our neighbors? Because we are only able to truly and fervently love our neighbors – whether they deserve it or not; whether they return our love or not; whether they agree with us or not; **if, first of all we love God with all our heart, soul, and mind.** For, when we sincerely try to love God, we will aim to be as obedient and pleasing to him, as possible. Therefore, first of all, we will follow his instructions when he asks us to invite his son, Jesus into our heart. Then, we will totally yield ourselves, our time,

our strength, and our all to his indwelling Holy Spirit and will continuously allow him to rule, cleanse, and use us, and to make us more and more holy and **loving**. Till we will be filled with his visible, wonderful love.

In case however, we want to love our fellow-men **first**, and don’t care about loving God; we are left to depend on our human ability to love them. Which – without the love of God – is practically impossible! Oh, we may be able to temporarily love our children, spouses, or parents; without loving God. But if, or when, they attack or hurt us; we may not be able to continue to love them. That is why so many wives and husbands turn against each other when the other attacks them with a knife, or hits them. Also, why so many old parents look with fear at their children instead of love. Like the grandmother who lived next door to us in my childhood, and was brutally and repeatedly beaten by her daughter. I don’t think she was able to love her daughter, nor was her daughter really loving her. For, only a person who is led by the Holy Spirit, is able to love others with an eternal, gracious, forgiving, kind love. Thus, **to love God is of primary importance in order to love others.** That is why Jesus used this sequence when someone asked him **which was the greatest commandment?**

Then, how should we love our neighbors; according to Jesus? As ourselves. For, to pay attention to our own needs, happiness, health, etc., is most important to all of us. And Jesus would like us to love others with the same desires for them. In other words, he would want us to take into consideration their needs, happiness, health, etc. also; and so relate to them. That is why in 1 Corinthians 13:5 (NIV) we learn that: “**Love...is not self-seeking.**” Furthermore, in Philippians 2:4 (NIV) we are warned: “**Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others.**”

All these warnings were given to us by Jesus and the apostles because in order to love our neighbors in such a way; it is not enough to experience a warm emotion as we think of, or meet them; but also – **using every drop of our willpower – to decide** to take the necessary steps to obtain such love. For, you and I have to **decide** to invite Jesus into our heart. Then, we have to decide to yield ourselves totally to his Holy Spirit, who moved in to represent him. In

addition, you and I have to **decide** to stay yielded in good days and bad. In other words, when people are rude, or hurt us; we have to repeatedly **decide** to stay yielded and loving with the help of the Holy Spirit.

Then, what will be the results of such love? According to Jesus, one of the results will be that by doing so, we will **fulfill all the requirements of the law.** In other words, we will lead a God-pleasing life. For, our every step, decision, and our whole personality will be guided by the thought of what would serve the best interest of God and our neighbors? Or, what is God and my neighbor expecting from me? **How could I best please them, or fulfill their desires?** In which case, I will not covet, or steal, or kill him for what is his. Nor do anything bad against him or them.

Thus, our neighbors will see how wonderfully tender, forgiving, and loving is the God, who we serve, and who turned us into such loving persons too! Then, they may also realize that Jesus Christ must indeed be the **Son of God**, who has the power to change anyone into a blessed, loving person. Finally, some of them may even invite him into their heart and follow him, just because of the love we demonstrated toward them.

Our calling is not easy, for it is accompanied by many hardships; but it's worth it! For, it brings great joy and many blessings into our life here on earth already, and even more in Heaven. Therefore, my Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ: **“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your mind...”** and **“Love your neighbor as yourself”!**

Are you, and am I willing to do so?

HONORARY AND MEMORIAL FUND

Sister *Ethel Kish* had encouraged us during the 2009 Convention to establish an *“Honorary and Memorial Fund”* for the purpose of supporting the missionary initiatives of our young people. Donations from this fund will be allocated by the Missionary and Benevolence Board at its mid-year meetings. The written applications addressed to the MBB should state the goals and the duration of the mission trip, and should include a letter of support from the pastor of the applicant.

The initial deposit is the money donated in memory of *Ernest J. Kish*.

We request donations to the Fund mailed to the Treasurer.

PÜNKÖSD UTÁN

Kaptam egy jó címet, és most először is megmagyarázom, mit jelent számomra. Pünkösöd: a Szentlélek kitöltetése. Mondhatnám úgy is, hogy Pünkösöd = Szentlélek. Pünkösöd után = Szentlélek után. Időlegesen, „post festum”, és következményként, vagyis hogy mit eredményez a Szentlélek. Mik a következmények, ha valahol megjelenik, úgymond „realizálódik” a megfoghatatlan.

Mondok valamit magamról. Nem nagyképszerűségről, hanem a tárgyilagosság kedvéért. – Attekintettem eddigi igehirdető és egyáltalán mindenféle gondolat-közlő szolgálatomat. Egyértelműen megállapítható, hogy legtöbbször és legtöbbet a Szentháromság Isten Fiának nevezett személyiségéről „szóltam”. Persze ez önmagában nem rossz. Sőt. Mintegy feleennyiszter a Szentháromság Isten Atyaként ismert és tisztelt személye, az ő teremtő és fenntartó munkássága adta igehirdetésem, írásaim tematikáját.

Pirónkodva kell beismernem, hogy a Szentháromság Isten harmadik személyéről, a Szentlélekről aránylag keveset beszéltem, noha mindig próbáltam – több-kevesebb sikerrel – uralma és vezetése alatt maradni.

Elhatároztam tehát, hogy mintegy vezeklésképpen, megpróbálom (először is) összefoglalni, majd esetleg bővebben kifejteni azokat az igehelyeket, ahol a Szentlélek áldott tevékenységéről van szó. Óriási a választék!

Persze a „Pünkösöd után” ily módon azt is jelenti már, hogy „eső után köpönyeg”, mert vajon ki garantálja, hogy nemesnek látszó elhatározásom meg is valósul a jövőben. Mert ez a „jövő” – hátha már nem evilági lehetőség számomra...

Pünkösöd után. – Azt vizsgálom a Szentírásban, mi történik, amikor és ahol Isten Szentlelke kiárad, kitöltetik, megjelenik, amikor valaki a hatása alá kerül, amikor valakinek szent élménye, Szentlélek-élménye, „szentlelkes” Isten-élménye van. Pünkösöd után, vagyis a Szentlélek következtében, jelenlévő hatalma által.

Pünkösöd után – azt is jelentheti, hogy „amikor az Úr Jézus Krisztus már elvégezte a maga munkáját a hívő ember életében”. Ez a gondolatmenet már átível a keresztyénség korába. Ha az edény tiszta (az Ő vére által), bele árad a Szentlélek, és akkor kezdődik egy „minőségi”, szent élet. Eseteket keresek a Bibliában, de azzal a meggyőződéssel, hogy ahol, amikor, akinél hasonló feltételek teljesülnek, hasonló módon munkálkodik Isten Lelke, mint ahogy a régi időkben munkálkodott.

Kezdem az őstörténet prologusával: „Isten Lelke lebegett a vizek felett”. Tehát az univerzum egy parányi részében, amely viszont minket közelről érdekel, mintegy varázsütésre, elkezdődött az átalakulás. Pünkösöd után, Isten Lelke megjelenése után – a Káoszból Kozmosz lett, a ködös kavargásból rendezett világ. Az elemi erők tombolásának



iszonyatos csataterén kialakult az ember számára egy lakható világ. Isten Lelke lebegett mindenek fölött, de végül ugyanő leérkezett az ember világába is, az ember számára is élő valósággá lett.

Olvasunk aztán emberekről, akik Isten kiválasztottai voltak, az üdvtörténelem kezdetétől – Pünkösödön át – egészen a célba érésig.

Csak úgynevezett szemelvénynek tekinthető, ami most következik. Behatárolja idézeteimet a szöveg, ahol szó szerint Isten Lelkéről van szó. Legyen József az első, akiről azt olvashatjuk, hogy Isteni Lélek volt benne. Nagy ugrás, amikor az egyéni kegyesség átcsap közösségibe: Épülni kezd a közösségi kultuszhely. Szent sátor (később templom).

Becalél és Oholiáb, e két kiszemelt személy. Így szól az Úr: Betöltöttem őt (őket) isteni Lélekkel. E beteljesedés (Pünkösöd) után a két kiváló tehetség rendkívüli mesterségbeli tudást kap a Szentlélek által. Kitekintést enged ez a momentum az egész földön élő minden ember felé. Ahol megjelenik a szép-élmény, a „múzsák” bármelyikének szívet-lelke gyönyörködtető, netán katarzist kiváltó „terméke”, ott legtöbbször a Szentlélek jelenlétére lehet gyanakodni. Hosszú-hosszú a sor Becaléltól és Oholiábtól, mondjuk, Beethovenen és Bachon keresztül, és mondjuk, Munkácsyval, Kodálllyal folytatva, nem kihagyva például Héthalmi Károlyt.

S ha nem tűnik orcátlan szerénységnak, magamat is besorolom – sok-sok szolgatársammal együtt. Ha valaha tettem, mondtam, írtam valamit, ami valamelyik testvéremnek, olvasómnak, hallgatómnak gyönyörködni valót, gazdagodást, élményt jelentett... bizonyára nem tagadnak ki maguk közül a dicsőséges „szentlelkes” elődök.