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We are considering today the benefits accrued to the believer by the sacrificial death of our Lord, Savior, Redeemer, and King – Jesus Christ. There is, in legal parlance, a Living Will, and a Final Will and Testament. The Living Will was ordered by God the Father for the work and death of His only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ. It provided for His coming to earth in the form of a Man, and suffering and dying in a designated way, time, and place as a redemption for our sins. But there exists also a Final Will and Testament of the Lord for those who are His beneficiaries – those elect of God who have been called and chosen as disciples of Jesus Christ.

Your attention is invited to the Parable of the Prodigal Son who demanded his full inheritance from an aged father long before it would normally be granted – at the death of the father. Because the grant of inheritance was not made according to law, the prodigal profited in no way from it, but was, instead, ruined in his living and lifestyle. The benefits of a Final Will and Testament do not accrue until the death of the Testator. If we rest our claim on any resource other than the death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, we will profit nothing. We may believe every facet of the Gospel EXCEPT the Cross and remain as lost and damned as ever before. It is the Cross that certifies the Final Will and Testament of Christ. It is His official Stamp and Seal of our Salvation.

A Final Will and Testament is not in effect until after the death of the Testator – in

this case, Jesus Christ. *For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator.*

Let us examine thirteen characteristics of a Testator:

First, the Testator must be solvent to grant an inheritance to His successors. Christ our Lord has all of the riches of Heaven and Earth to grant, and spiritual blessings untold.

Second, those beneficiaries must be able to provide proof of their blood-relationship to the Testator. They do this by making their calling and election in Christ sure: *Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure: for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall: For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.* (2 Peter 1:10-11 (KJV) Those whom Christ has received into covenant relation with Himself are entitled, as family of God, to an inheritance eternal.

Third, the Testator (Christ) must publish His intentions prior to His death, and that is precisely what Christ has done for us. Not only in the Gospel has He spelled out the terms of our Salvation, but also in the law, prophets, and Epistles.

Fourth, the Testator must have full power to dispose of the goods He bequeaths. Christ is fully able and willing to meet this requirement. I read of a multi-millionaire who recently died and whose friend asked another, "How much did Fred leave behind?" "He left it all," was the answer. While it is true that we take nothing with us, Christ left the Way, the Truth, and the Life for us to follow. He was the only One able, qualified, and willing to purchase our Salvation – and He did it! He defeated death and Hell in the process. He has bequeathed us power to become the sons and daughters of God. *But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name: Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.* (John 1:12-13) At death, our only treasure will be in heaven.

Fifth, the Testator sets down in His Testament the persons to whom His Testament is applicable. Those are all that the Father has given Him, all of His sheep that hear His Voice and follow, and all who truly believe and repent. *11 I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. 12 But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. 13 The hireling fleeth, because he is an hireling, and careth not for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. 15 As the Father knoweth me, even so know I the Father: and I lay down my life for the sheep.* (John 10:10-15) Only those whom He has purchased will know of their calling and election. They follow the Good Shepherd without question or hesitation.

Sixth, the Testator must have a witness to the veracity of His Will and Intent for purposes of notarization. The witnesses which Christ called to the bar were God the Father, God the Holy Ghost, the Voice of John the Baptist crying in the wilderness, His miraculous works, the whole of Scripture from Genesis to Revelations, and, finally, His apostles. No Last Will and Testament has ever produced such an array of witnesses.

Seventh, it was the custom of the eastern nations, and still is in many others, to seal every Will and Testament with the blood of the Testator. This Christ did with abundance. *16 For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. 17 For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.* (Heb 9:16-17) As our Lord has proclaimed, *For this is my blood of the new testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.* (Matt 26:28)

Eighth, by making a Last Will and Testament, the Testator disannuls the provisions of previous testaments. This may be a presumed disannulment only, for the laws and commandments were never able to save. Only the looking forward in faith to

the coming Redeemer were men saved from Abraham until Christ. Men today are saved by the lesser faith of looking back on the historic and actual event.

Ninth, in making a Last Will and Testament, the Testator makes His Testament unalterable either by Himself or others. Unfortunately, we see many Laodicean-style churches of our day attempting to alter that will and testament to their own ruin. They even medal with the very Word of God in their new, error-filled Bible versions. *My covenant will I not break, nor alter the thing that is gone out of my lips.* (Psalm 89:34)

Tenth, the Testator takes measures to have His Will and Testament widely published after His death so that all who share in His Blood-Relationship may be assured of their legacy and inheritance. Our Lord clearly did so in His last Counsel just before His Ascension. *19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: 20 Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.* (Matt 28:19-20)

Eleventh, the Testator conveys clear title to the beneficiaries of His Will. In old England, the hereditary conveyance of royal title redounds to the blood-line descendents of the deceased royal. Though we may claim salvation, grace, mercy, and redemption in Christ; we may also claim the royal title of Christian. Beyond that, being sons and daughters of the Lord of Lords, and King of Kings, we are justly called princes and princesses.

Twelfth, the Testator assigns executors and legal instruments whereby His Will is expeditiously and thoroughly executed. This our Lord has left to the Father, *29 My Father, which gave them me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of my Father's hand.* (John 10:29) *Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.* (John 17:11) and to the Holy Ghost: *16 And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; 17 Even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you.* (John 14:16-17)

Thirteenth and final, only can the beneficiaries lay claim to the riches made available by a Testator when that Testator dies as did Christ in laying down His life at Calvary. *And for this cause he is the mediator of the new testament, that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first testament, they which are called might receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead: otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth.*

I am certain there additional similarities between the Last Will and Testament of Christ with those of mankind; let it be sufficient for us to know we are the inheritors of untold riches in Christ and doubt it not.