

God hath long contended with a stubborn world, and thrown down many a blessing upon them; and when all his other gifts could not prevail, He at last made a gift of Himself. —Henry Scougal

When I consider the cross of Christ, how can anything that I do be called sacrifice? —Amy Carmichael

The Baptist Catechism

AS PRINTED BY THE CHARLESTON ASSOCIATION IN 1813 *(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)*

17. Q. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God (1 John 3:4).

18. Q. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6, 12, 16, 17).

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Sunday Morning Bible Study -- 10:00 AM

Sunday Morning Worship -- 11:00 AM

Prayer and Bible Study Wednesday Evening 6:30 PM

WCWV 92.9 FM – 8:00 AM Sunday Morning

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST REPORT

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

“The Pillar and ground of the Truth” -- 1 Timothy 3:15

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THE BASIS FOR STRENGTH AND COURAGE

This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth; but thou shalt meditate therein day and night, that thou mayest observe to do according to all that is written therein: for then thou shalt make thy way prosperous, and then thou shalt have good success. Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the LORD thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest. (Joshua 1:8-9)

In the days of my youth, I was often prone to question my parents concerning some task they had assigned me. Why me? Why does it need to be done? May I do it later? At times, they would respond with an explanation. If I persisted in my resistance the response was “do what you are told and don’t ask questions.” Usually at that point I realized that theirs was the authority to direct my duties and that they likewise had the ability to enforce their orders and I begrudgingly complied. I had early manifested resentment on such intrusions on my sense of independence. Such is certainly the case with depraved man and his resentment to the directives of the Word of God. Joshua may have had occasion to react in a similar manner when given the commission to lead the Israelites into the promised land.

Joshua had lived in the shadow and under the leadership of Moses. He had had many occasions to observe the operations of the Lord both through Moses and in Moses. It seems he was never far from the man he served and was submissive and faithful to the God he served. But now, Moses was dead, and it was he who was to deal with the Lord in the leadership of a people whose past had left much doubt as to their character. So, his first line of concern may have been the people themselves. The Lord had directed Moses to lay hands on Joshua in the

presence of the people that they might recognize his divinely appointed positions as the successor. But they had rebelled against Moses.

It is further to be remembered that Joshua had been among spies who had searched out the land and had seen the strength and the nature of those who held the land. Ten of those had cowered at the sight with only Joshua and Caleb believing that the Lord was able to lead them in conquest. The people had believed the ten and so it was that the sentence of death was passed on the men above the age of twenty. Joshua would be leading an army that had grown up in the wilderness. They would have not only witnessed the dying, but they would also have heard the murmuring and expressions of unbelief. The people that the spies had first seen were still there and were perhaps stronger. There was nothing in the situation to inspire confidence in General Joshua.

Thus, the Lord did not speak to Joshua of a superior army, nor did He encourage him in the matter of an incompetent enemy. He would rather direct the focus of Joshua to Himself. And so, the words, “Have not I commanded thee?” As we begin a new year there does not seem to be much, if anything, to encourage us. The pandemic is on the rise, our leaders are in disarray, the people are still clamoring for personal pleasure. Truly, Nero is fiddling while

Rome burns. (I do not make that statement with reference to any individual; rather to human governments and their failures in general). So, what are we as believers to do and where is there hope for any? The words of encouragement given to Joshua are precious and should be claimed as promise to any believer.

Even among believers, fear seems to prevail through much of the land today. Surely, Joshua must have felt some sense of inadequacy. But he was thrust upon the task with the statement, "Moses my servant is dead." The message to Joshua is "You are it." But he was given, along with the commission, the perfect reason to obey and to get on with what was at hand. The claim had been registered: "Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you..." None would be able to stand before him, of either the enemy or the Israelites. What followed were reasons for strength and courage.

The promise had been made over 400 years before that this land was to belong to Israel and so the very oath of the Lord was given as his authority. It was not a hopeful quest; it was rather a declaration of the Lord Himself that he, Joshua, would divide the inheritance. See v. 6. He was further told to exercise that strength and courage to observe the Law given by Moses. In so doing, he would discover prosperity despite opposition. See v. 7. Are we strong and courageous enough to believe the Word of God and to trust the One who gave it in the face of all obstacles? With Joshua and the Blessed man of Psalm three, we are to live life in the Word. It is life and strength to us. It is to be the subject

of continuous meditation. Such study and meditation will bring obedience that is sweet and need no further explanation – prosperity and success in spiritual things. Our Lord taught that we should learn of Him and He will give us rest.

The most powerful word of encouragement is, "Have not I commanded thee?" This is the third time the Lord has directed Joshua to be strong and of good courage (v. 6) and to be very courageous (v. 7). We might at first read think that the commandment here is to be something that is beyond our capability; an order with which we cannot comply. At any time, we look to our own strength, weakness and fear will prevail. Joshua's faith would have understood that his loving Lord would not have directed him to something that would harm him. It was the same Lord who had destroyed Egypt and parted the Red Sea who would now lead him over a flooded Jordan River and on to the conquest of the Land.

Our Lord declared that He had the power to lay down His life and to take it up again and then added "This commandment have I received of my Father." That which is divinely commanded is assured of success. Jesus declared to the arch enemy, "Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." He did just that, in our stead, and then laid down His life and took it up again and holds the keys of hell and death. How shall we not "Be strong and of good courage?" Do we not know that "The Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest?" "Lo, I am with you always!" *bhs*

It pleased me nothing to see people drink in opinions, if they seemed ignorant of Jesus Christ, and the worth of their own salvation, sound conviction for sin, especially for unbelief, and a heart set on fire to be saved by Christ, with strong breathings after a truly sanctified soul: that it was that delighted me; those were the souls I counted blessed. – John Bunyan, *Grace Abounding*

The Lord is My Shepherd Psalm 23:1

A SHEPHERD is a relative name; it has reference to a flock. This great and good Shepherd has a flock, whom he loved from everlasting, and whom having loved, he will love to the end... he humbled himself for their sakes, submitted to partake of their nature and their sorrows, took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of sinful flesh. He died for his sheep, 'the just for the unjust', to redeem them from the curse of the law, from the guilt and dominion of sin, from the power of Satan, and to bring them to God. They, by nature, are all 'gone astray, every one to his own way'; but having thus bought them with his blood, in his own appointed time he seeks, finds, and restores his sheep. By the power of his word and Spirit, he makes himself known to their hearts, causes them to hear and understand his voice, and guides them into his fold. Then they become his sheep... They are under his immediate protection and government.

Considered as individuals, they are fitly described by the name of sheep. A sheep is a weak, defenceless, improvident creature; prone to wander, and if once astray, is seldom known to return of its own accord. A sheep has neither strength to fight with the wolf, nor speed to escape from him; nor has it the foresight of the ant, to provide its own sustenance. Such is our character, and our situation: unable to take care of ourselves, prone to wander from our resting—place, exposed to enemies which we can neither withstand nor avoid, with— out resource in ourselves, and taught, by daily experience, the insufficiency of everything around us. Yet, if this Shepherd be our Shepherd, weak and helpless as we are, we may be of good courage. If we can say with David, 'The Lord is my Shepherd', we may make the same inferences which he did, 'Therefore I shall not want: therefore I need not fear.' -- John Newton

All Things For Good – Thomas Watson

We know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose. ROMANS, 8:28.

If the whole Scripture be the feast of the soul, as Ambrose said, then Romans 8 may be a dish at that feast, and with its sweet variety may very much refresh and animate the hearts of Gods people. In the preceding verses the apostle had been wading through the great doctrines of justification and adoption, mysteries so arduous and profound, that without the help and conduct of the Spirit, he might soon have waded beyond his depth. In this verse the apostle touches upon that pleasant string of consolation, 'WE KNOW THAT ALL THINGS WORK TOGETHER FOR GOOD TO THEM THAT LOVE GOD.' Not a word but is weighty; therefore I shall gather up every filing of this gold, that nothing be lost. In the text there are three general branches: First, a glorious privilege. All things work for good. Second, the persons interested in this privilege. They are doubly specified. They are lovers of God, they are called. Third, the origin and spring of this effectual calling, set down in these words, 'according to his purpose.' First, the glorious privilege. Here are two things to be considered. 1. The certainty of the privilege - 'We know.' 2. The excellency of the privilege - 'All things work together for good.'