

When contemplating what he is in himself--the Christian mournfully cries, "O wretched man that I am!" But when he views himself in Christ--he triumphantly exclaims, "Who shall lay anything to my charge!"

Ah, my reader, this is the first great lesson we must learn:
that God is the Creator, we the creature;
that He is the Potter, we the clay. -- Arthur Pink

The Baptist Catechism (Keach's Catechism)

1677

(Presented here as originally published – this does not constitute a full endorsement of the Riverside Baptist Church)

Q. 27. What offices does Christ execute as our Redeemer?

A. Christ, as our Redeemer, executes the offices of a prophet, of a priest, and of a king, both in His estate of humiliation and exaltation.

(Acts 3:22; Heb. 5:6; Ps. 2:6)

Q. 28. How does Christ execute the office of a prophet?

A. Christ executes the office of a prophet, in revealing to us, by this Word and Spirit, the will of God for our salvation.

(John 1:18; 14:26; 15:15)

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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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MY TEXT

I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain. (Galatians 2:20-21).

It has now been a few years ago that I had opportunity to hear a preacher, who was nearing ninety years of age, speak on a conference program. As his text, he read the narrative of Mephibosheth, the lame son of Jonathan. He entitled his message as “My Story.” He then proceeded to identify with the various points in the life of Mephibosheth from the place of “no hope” to being seated at the King’s table. He very precisely injected his own experience of the grace of God in his life and so led us all to relate it to our own experience. He, like Paul, saw the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ every step of the way.

Galatians 2:20 has long been a go-to text for me. I love the story of Mephibosheth, and I love the personal testimony of Paul. And I delight to be able to identify with this concise declaration of faith with due acknowledgement of its source. Often, we hear people refer to our Lord as their “personal Savior.” It would seem that this is what Paul was declaring here. If that claim stops at the idea that He saved me personally without the thoughts and experience that Paul expresses here, it may be lacking. Paul took it to the depths of his need and brought it to a present reality – Christ was living in Him.

In the text passage the Apostle sets forth the conditions of his salvation in the most personal of terms. The claim that “I am crucified with Christ,” could only be made by one who realized

that death was required because of his sins. Clearly the Apostle Paul had seen himself in such a state. By seeing himself crucified with Christ he acknowledges two things. First, that he deserved to die and second that he was dead. It is interesting and important that we note that he said, “I am crucified with Christ,” not I was crucified with Christ. Then he expresses what seems impossible. “Nevertheless I live.” We understand then that he considered himself dead in the sense of that old life wherein he was in opposition to the things of the Lord. Yet, he claimed to experience the life of Christ in him. We must wonder at the nature of professions of faith. Where salvation is claimed, experience must follow. Especially when he goes on to say that Christ lives in him. It is to be understood that one who has Christ as his personal Savior would manifest the character of Christ in their lives.

We understand that this passage is the end of the statement made regarding his rebuke of Peter (see v. 2:11) wherein he declared, *Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. (Galatians 2:16).* Paul then proceeded to assert that his was a justified

life by virtue of being crucified with Christ and then having Christ living in Him.

Earlier in this Epistle, Paul had described the manner of Christ's coming to him and to us. *But when it pleased God, who separated me from my mother's womb, and called me by his grace, To reveal his Son in me, that I might preach him among the heathen; immediately I conferred not with flesh and blood: (Galatians 1:15-16).* It is to be acknowledged that this is both miraculous and mysterious to say the least. Paul's conversion was both radical and complete. We may say of the work of grace that it is not a proposition to be decided upon, it is a revelation that develops into "Christ in you the hope of Glory." We persuade men and we are persuaded, but the effectual realization is discovered. The thoughts of men would have salvation to hang on their will and their way. Paul would have them to look inward for verification of a work of grace. It will be Christ living in them.

Much of the assurance our Lord gave to His disciples concerned this wondrous existence they were to know and live. We consider such passages as: *Yet a little while, and the world seeth me no more; but ye see me: because I live, ye shall live also. At that day ye shall know that I am in my Father, and ye in me, and I in you. (John 14:19-20).* This personal testimony of Paul's life of "the faith of the Son of God" would continue all along the way. We later read of his claim to Christ in him in this way: *For we which live are always delivered unto death for Jesus'*

sake, that the life also of Jesus might be made manifest in our mortal flesh. (2 Corinthians 4:11).

We are often reminded, in the way of warning, of Paul's words toward the end of his second epistle to the Corinthians. *For though he was crucified through weakness, yet he liveth by the power of God. For we also are weak in him, but we shall live with him by the power of God toward you. Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates? But I trust that ye shall know that we are not reprobates. (2 Corinthians 13:4-6).* We are thus called to serious self-examination. What is it that we are to look for as we would do so? The condition of distinction from reprobation is "Jesus Christ in you." The nature of those so identified is made clear in Paul's declaration to both the Galatians and the Romans that the Spirit of adoption is in us who are saved and that there is a crying "Abba Father." Christ in us causes us to cry to our Father in every need, in acknowledgement of Him, and in worship and praise.

The thought of this being My Text takes nothing away from "the whole counsel of God" in my mind and heart. But this text takes me quickly from what I was, dead in trespasses and sins; assures me that I was in Christ as He went to the cross; and that Christ now lives in me administering this life of faith in Him. To paraphrase Colossians 1:27, my hope of Glory is Christ in me. *bhs*

God kills thy comforts from no other design but to kill thy corruptions; wants are ordained to kill wantonness, poverty is appointed to kill pride, reproaches are permitted to destroy ambition. —John Flavel

When the world slew Jesus Christ, it showed what it would do with the eternal God, if it could get its hands on him. —De Witt Talmage

That Bible is read best, which is practiced most! —J. C. Ryle

DIVINE SELF-SUFFICIENCY

It is distressing that so many have fallen so far that they can no longer see when an opinion is a direct contradiction of the Scriptures and historical Christian thought. One of the most important and encouraging doctrines regarding the attributes of God is His self-sufficiency. He has no need of anything; least of all does He need a relationship with man. Christianity in the West has exalted the worth of man beyond measure so that it now practically holds humanity above God as the end of all things and possessing a value beyond all estimation. We have convinced ourselves that heaven would not be heaven without us, and God would not be complete if humanity were lost. However, the Scriptures calculate the total worth of the nations as “a drop in a bucket” and “as the small dust on the scales” (Isa. 40:15). To answer the notion that God has a need that only man can meet, the apostle Paul puts forth the following rebuttal: “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24). God has no lack and therefore no need for anything or anyone outside of Himself to maintain or enhance His existence. Furthermore, God has no need of relationship, since the Father, Son, and Spirit have existed in perfect fellowship with one another throughout eternity. The infinitely bountiful God did not create the world out of some divine need but out of His superabundance. –Paul Washer, *The Gospel Call and True Conversion*

After all that has been spoken and written by godly men on prayer, we need something better than that which is of mere human origin to guide us if we are to perform aright this essential duty. How ignorant and sinful creatures are to endeavor to come before the Most High God, how they are to pray acceptably to Him and to obtain from Him what they need, can be discovered only as the great Hearer of prayer is pleased to reveal His will to us. This He has done: (1) by opening up a new and living way of access into His immediate presence for the very chief of sinners; (2) by appointing prayer as the chief means of intercourse and blessing between Himself and His people; and (3) by graciously supplying a perfect pattern after which the prayers of His people are to be modeled. Note the wise instruction of the Westminster divines: “The whole Word of God is of use to direct us in prayer, but the special rule of direction is that form of prayer which Christ taught His disciples, commonly called The Lord’s Prayer” (The Westminster Shorter Catechism). –Arthur Pink, *The Lord’s Prayer*

TOO MUCH OF THE PUBLIC FACE OF EVANGELICALISM IS CHARACTERIZED BY VOCIFEROUS, ANGRY VENTING OR PANICKING, RATHER THAN PRAYERFUL, HUMBLE, CALM, AND CONFIDENT BELIEF IN A SOVEREIGN GOD WHO IS IN CONTROL OF THINGS.

–ALISTAIR BEGG, *BRAVE BY FAITH*