

Never doubt in the darkness what God has told you in the light. —Victor Raymond Edman

The Scriptures teach us the best way of living, the noblest way of suffering, and the most comfortable way of dying. —John Flavel

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. 55. Which is the second commandment?

A. The second commandment is, "Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image, or any likeness of any thing that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth. Thou shalt not bow down thyself to them, nor serve them; for I the Lord thy God am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me: and showing mercy unto thousands of them that love me and keep my commandments."

(Exodus 20:4-6)

Q. 56. What is required in the second commandment?

A. The second commandment requires the receiving, observing, and keeping pure and entire, all such religious worship and ordinances, as God has appointed in His Word.

(Deut. 32:46; Matt. 28:20; Deut. 12:32)

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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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THAT WHICH WE AFFIRM

This is a faithful saying, and these things I will that thou affirm constantly, that they which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works. These things are good and profitable unto men. (Titus 3:8).

The faithful saying that Paul references here is contained in verses 4-7 of this chapter. This is the fifth time that the thought of something being faithful or trustworthy appears in the Pastoral epistles. We see it in Paul’s personal testimony to Timothy (1 Timothy 1:15). It is a True saying in 1 Timothy 3:1 concerning the office of a Bishop. The third mention (1 Timothy 4:9 is regarding the profitability of godliness. The fourth occurrence (2 Timothy 2:11) reminds us that “For if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him.” Here the thought is applied to foundational Gospel truth.

In his instruction to Titus concerning the behaviors of the Cretans, Paul reminds him that the same behaviors were characteristic of all believers. The list given in verse 3 is quite comprehensive in exposing the nature of fallen man. Of special note is that we were given to “serving divers lusts and pleasures, living in malice and envy...” Men tend to think of sin as a choice (and in a sense it is) but in Romans 6, Paul spoke of being freed from sin, of sin reigning, of deliverance from the dominion of sin. Here we consider *Know ye not, that to whom ye yield yourselves servants to obey, his servants ye are to whom ye obey; whether of sin unto death, or of obedience unto righteousness? (Romans 6:16).*

This description of a past way of life is then brought into stark contrast with the appearance of the Amazing Grace of our God and Savior. The

fact is that it appeared to those who had lived in the darkness of depravity all their lives and were then brought out of darkness into His glorious light. This is the work of effectual calling as it is the love of God that appears. The love of God is neither resisted nor frustrated in those to whom it is effectually directed.

To be included here is the fact that man has made no contribution to these things. No righteousness of men could have attained to the satisfaction of our Holy God. Therefore, mercy is required for salvation. It is specifically recorded that it was “His mercy.” Elsewhere we read that “He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy.” That which was required could have no other basis. It was the aim of God from eternity that the outcome for His chosen would be to be made “Holy and without blame before Him in love...” This is radical change and change that none could make of themselves. It required regeneration with a pure result (total washing) and renewal (newness of life). All by the sovereign work of the Holy Spirit. This was all brought through Jesus Christ our Savior. Thus, we have it: justified by the Grace of Christ through the shedding of His blood and sanctified by the Holy Spirit.

We return to the thought of this being a “faithful saying.” It is that which is to be trusted in that it is an expression of the love and kindness of God and should be presented as such. This is not to be taken as hard truth; it is

loving truth. It is that which declares the determination of God to save. We are given these things as the reminder of the love of God we have experienced in receiving salvation. We do not merely speak of the fact of God's love for us; it is living truth within us. And so, it is expressed through us as we relate to others.

We have heard of people who excuse themselves from witnessing to others in that they don't know what to say. It is in passages such as this that we find the very words we need to say. Every true believer can relate to what is declared here. Paul was reminding Titus of this and includes himself in the process. And so do I remember that I once fit the description of verse 3. The words "affirm constantly" is one word in the original language. Its meaning includes such thoughts as to confirm thoroughly. It means to do so strongly. And it should be declared confidently. We do not have opinions about this; it is foundational to the faith once delivered to the saints. It should be undergirding every testimony to salvation claimed.

Certainly, the sovereign grace of our God is in view in this passage. The mention of mercy needed settles that. I have heard people respond to the thought of sovereignty with such arguments as "If I believed that I would sin all I want." Such a response would not be characteristic of one who had experienced that which is here described. It is only in the absence of a sense of the love and kindness of God that

men act in that way. There are many answers to be given to that. Here the thought of such a wondrous truth is that it provokes carefulness to engage in and maintain good works. Those who have believed in God know of His righteousness applied and seek to exhibit the same in their approach to others.

These things (a second mention in this verse) are good and profitable unto men. They are Gospel to all who hear. They are precious in consideration of their source. They are good in terms of their outcome. From Gill: "they come from God, they are concerning Jesus Christ, and His grace, they contain good tidings of good things; and are exceeding useful to influence faith, hope, love, and a cheerful obedience to the will of God; they are profitable in the hands of the Spirit of God for conviction, conversion, comfort, and edification; for the quickening of dead and dark sinners; for the reviving, establishing, and building up of the saints..."

These are those things to take with us as we go. They are proper for all situations. They apply as we witness to the unregenerate. They provide assurance and comfort to the saints. They are the topic of conversation among believers. They are a source of wonder and amazement to us all. They speak to us of grace that is greater than our sin. They assure us of the determination of God to abundantly bless His people and to continue to manifest His kindness and love to us through our Lord Jesus Christ. *bhs*

JESUS SAID SO!

Imagine someone going to the repentant criminal crucified with Jesus Christ and asking him, "Have you any final words before you die?"

The criminal may reply, "I am going to heaven today!"

"How can you go to heaven? Have you any good works to merit heaven?"

"No, I have no good works. Indeed, all my works were bad. I was crucified as a robber. And I confessed on my cross that I was a transgressor of God's law and under His condemnation, and justly deserved my death. I never did anything good."

"Have you been baptized or joined the church?"

“No.”

“Do you believe the doctrines of grace?”

“I never heard of them.”

“Are you a Calvinist?”

“No. For I do not know what a Calvinist is.”

“In the Lapsarian controversy, do you take the supra- or the infra- position?”

“Neither. For I never heard of that controversy.”

“Then how can you believe you are going to heaven?”

“Because one of the men crucified with me was ‘Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews’, and I acknowledged that He had done nothing worthy of death, and I trusted in Him and begged Him to be merciful to me, and He said to me just before He died, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.’ I am going to heaven because Jesus said so!”

O that you and I may have the same confidence that if Jesus said it, that settles it, and I believe it! – Daniel E. Parks

God commands us to sing. Yet while some of God’s people are gifted singers, the plain fact is that others are not. In any congregation it’s likely that some have near-perfect pitch while others are functionally tone-deaf. Those who struggle to sing may be self-conscious, tempted to stay quiet or to do no more than mumble along. Should they? Not at all, for singing is a matter of the heart before it is a matter of pitch or tone.

In Ephesians 5:18-19 Paul writes, “Be filled with the Spirit, addressing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing and making melody to the Lord with your heart.” What matters far more than the sound that comes out of the mouth is the posture of the heart. There is more beauty in an off-pitch voice that is the outpouring of a submissive heart than in a perfectly pitched voice that is the outpouring of a rebellious heart.

Though few Christians have voices that are truly professional, every Christian has a voice that can be confessional—that confesses and publicly professes the great truths of the Christian faith. Jonathan Leeman says rightly that “the most beautiful instrument in any Christian service is the sound of the congregation singing.”

--Tim Challies

ON PATIENCE

Patience is, indeed, the virtue many of us may need most in our Bible reading. For the deepest joy, the kind “inexpressible and filled with glory” (1 Peter 1:8), comes only to those who prayerfully and thoughtfully plod the path. They read the Bible to know what God says and how he says it — in order that they might then feel that knowledge become worship by the power of the indwelling Spirit. —Scott Hubbard (quotes from an article THE WORD OF GOD IS WORTH THE WORK)