

The reason God commands us to love Him with all our heart is not because He is an egomaniac! It is because He knows that anything we love more than Him will betray us. —Matt Papa

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. 104. What is the duty of those who are rightly baptized?

A. It is the duty of those who are rightly baptized to give up (join) themselves to some visible and orderly church of Jesus Christ, that they may walk in all the commandments and ordinances of the Lord blameless.

(Acts 2:46-47; Acts 9:26; 1 Peter 2:5; Heb. 10:25; Rom. 16:5)

Q. 105. What is the visible church?

A. The visible church is the organized society of professing believers, in all ages and places, wherein the Gospel is truly preached and the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper rightly administered.

(Acts 2:42; 20:7; Acts 7:38; Eph. 4:11-12)

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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 CHURCH

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

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FAITH MADE PERFECT

*Was not Abraham our father justified by works, when he had offered Isaac his son upon the altar? Seest thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?
(James 2:21-22)*

The thought of being justified by works has caused many to cringe as their thoughts immediately turn to the other reasons of justification. Yet, James here cites the example of being justified by works in reference to both Abraham in the offering of Isaac and Rahab in her action with the spies in Jericho. Many have sought to set James and Paul at odds with each other and have erred in that James very clearly asserts the grace of God in declaring that “Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of firstfruits of his creatures.” Paul, on the other hand reminds of the fact that “...not the hearers of the law are just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified.” Perhaps the conflict arises in the minds of some who labor so hard for one position or the other that both err in their considerations of the words of James or any other words that imply faith without works.

I remember early on in my ministry trying to persuade a dear old aunt of the facts concerning the grace of God in salvation. After listening patiently as I pontificated on things of which I had insufficient knowledge at that time, she replied, “all I know is that you have to live it.” My first reaction was to think that she just didn’t get it. Reflection over the years has revealed to me that she may have had it right all the time.

When we read of the many mentions of justification in the Word of God, we defer very quickly to the will and purpose of God “in

bringing many sons to salvation.” We recognize that it is all due to the merit of Christ our Lord and that salvation could never have come by the works of men. Paul declared that it was by faith in his words to those at Antioch of Pisidia: *And by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses. (Acts 13:39)*. Paul lays great emphasis on the grace of God in this regard by declaring that, *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (Romans 3:23-24)*. In that same context he declares that justification is by faith: *Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law. (Romans 3:28)*. As to the legal aspects of justification he declares further on that, *Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him. (Romans 5:9)*. If indeed, we are delivered from the wrath to come, what further assurance do we need? It seems that here is where James takes issue with the faith of some.

Paul is quite emphatic in declaring that “by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified in His sight.” Again, we read in in his treatise on Abraham, *For if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God. (Romans 4:2)*. To the casual reader this may appear to put James and Paul in conflict. We know that this cannot be. Twice Paul quotes Habakkuk concerning the just living by faith. The

writer of Hebrews quotes it once. We read in Galatians the following: *But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. (Galatians 3:11)*. The emphasis with many turns to justification by faith alone, and that certainly is implied. What is missed by many is the fact that in all cases it is that the “just shall live” and that is more than merely being alive. Paul, as well as James, is indicating that a life of faith will be well lived and that the evidence of regeneration will be realized both in those having been born again and those observing them.

It is apparent that James intended no affront to the grace of God in any aspect of salvation and certainly in the matter of justification. It is generally understood that we are passive in the matter of justification from the legal perspective. However, like all things pertaining to the grace of God, there is a visible evidence of the presence and power of the Holy Spirit attending. How fond we are of quoting that by “grace are ye saved through faith.” We love to go on and quote the next verse from Ephesians 2, “not of works lest any man should boast.” But we must continue on to, *For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. (Ephesians 2:10)*. This then is perfectly consistent with the message of James that connects justification with the works that are to be expected.

It is obvious that many would abuse and distort the matter of the place of works in salvation. Even those constrained to admit to declarations of the sovereignty of God often attach the necessity of works and shift the emphasis to the same. James saw the actions of Abraham as that which is expected to proceed from the life of the faithful. In verse 23, James quotes the fact of Abraham’s justification by faith: “And the scripture was fulfilled which saith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteousness: and he was called the Friend of God.” There is no record of Abraham questioning the will of God. His was to act on the command given him. And he did.

I have often found the Epistle of James to be quite difficult. The difficulty does not lie in understanding. It is that he is so thoroughly complete in his explanations that he leaves me no “wiggle room.” O that like Abraham, my faith would be made perfect. O that my actions were consistent with that which I profess to believe. The illustrations in the early part of this chapter are very much to the point and may not be ignored any more than any other part of the inspired Word of God. The “Royal Law” is invoked upon us as being confirmed by the very words of Jesus Himself. How shall we not seek to be responsive to such as we find here? Justification is by Grace, it is by faith, it is by the blood, and it is by works wrought in us because of faith. Such works are the manifestation of true faith. *bhs*

JESUS CHRIST IS LORD OF ALL -- David Martyn Lloyd-Jones (1899-1981)

GOD has revealed Himself to the Old Testament fathers in various ways. But, as evangelical Christians, we start with the great central fact of the Lord Jesus Christ. The whole Bible is really about Him. The Old Testament looks forward to Him. It tells us that Someone is coming. The promise seems vague, nebulous,¹ and indefinite at some points, clearer and more specific at others. But there it is. God is going to do something, and Someone will come. At last, the Voice will be heard. An Authority is going to speak. The Old Testament attitude is one of waiting on tiptoe,

as it were. Then, of course, as soon as we come to the New Testament, we find it is full of Him.

At this point, to make all this practical, I want to emphasize that fact. When the apostle Paul (our great example in this matter of preaching, teaching, and evangelizing) went to Corinth, he reached a certain decision. Whatever his reason, Paul determined solemnly at Corinth “not to know anything among [them], save Jesus Christ, and him crucified” (1Co 2:2). This was a deliberate decision, reinforced by strong determination on his part. In other words, Paul decided that...he was not going to start with a preliminary philosophical argument and then gradually lead them on into the truth. No! He begins by proclaiming authoritatively the Lord Jesus Christ. And in Galatians 3:1, he uses an even stronger term: he reminds the Galatians that he “placarded” Christ crucified before them. He was like a billposter,² a man carrying a placard.³ There also he started with Jesus Christ.

I have an increasing feeling that we must come back to this. I am not sure that apologetics⁴ has not been the curse of evangelical Christianity for the last twenty to thirty years. I am not saying that apologetics is not necessary. But I am suggesting that, with a kind of worldly wisdom, we have been approaching the world on the grounds of apologetics instead of (with the apostle Paul) determining not to know anything “save Christ crucified” (see 1Co 2:2). We must become fools for Christ’s sake, says Paul. “If any man among you seemeth to be wise in this world, let him become a fool, that he may be wise” (1Co 3:18).

Proverb 26:1

As snow in summer and rain in harvest,
So honor is not fitting for a fool.

As snow in summer and rain in harvest, – Snow in summer is most unseasonable and virtually unheard of. Rain in harvest is most inconvenient and even destructive to crops. Such an event was so exceedingly rare in Palestine that it was portentous and supernatural (1 Samuel 12:17).

So honor is not fitting for a fool. – It is most unwise to honor a fool. For a fool neither deserves honor nor knows how to use it. And it confirms him in his folly and makes him even dangerous. They who put fools into high offices or positions are bigger fools.

– Daniel E. Parks

If you are looking for the perfect church, you’ve come to the wrong building. That’s the one down the road or across the country. This is a family of sinners saved by God’s free grace in Christ. We’ve come here to worship him, sing his praise, proclaim his goodness, hear from him, and help one another along the way.

--Don Fortner