

...you can't imagine a more victimized person than Jesus. Yet when he died, he didn't say, "I am finished" but "It is finished." He did not play the victim, and thus he emerged the victor.

—Joni Eareckson Tada

It is hypocritical to pray for victory over our sins yet be careless in our intake of the Word of God. —Jerry Bridges

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)*

44. Q. What is the duty which God requireth of man?

A. The duty which God requireth of man is, obedience to his revealed will (Mic 6:8; 1 Sam. 15:22).

45. Q. What did God at first reveal to man for the rule of his obedience?

A. The rule which God at first revealed to man for his obedience, was the moral law (Rom. 2; 14, 15, and 10:5).

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Services:

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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PROFITABLE

Only Luke is with me. Take Mark, and bring him with thee: for he is profitable to me for the ministry. (2 Timothy 4:11)

The issue of profitability was etched in my mind by an old doctor. A company physical was required by my first employer after college. There were three or four of us new hires in the room with the doctor who commented that it would be two or more years before we would be proficient enough to be profitable to the company. It was then I realized that if I were not soon profitable to them, I would not be needed. It changed how I approached my responsibility to my employer.

Reflecting on that thought I was reminded of another perspective on profitability. In Luke 17 our Lord related a lesson to His disciples. They had asked Him to increase their faith. His answer was that even a small amount of faith would enable great things such as causing a tree to be uprooted and cast into the sea. This He followed by portraying a servant laboring all day and then coming in and being required to serve his master's meal before eating himself. Then followed a most important declaration from our Lord: *Doth he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I trow not. So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do. (Luke 17:9-10).*

We are reminded that we are not our own, we are “bought with a price.” Our duty and devotion are first to the Lord. Further, we understand that we are incapable of rendering unto the Lord the service of which He is worthy.

To be profitable means to add value to something or to provide a gain on an investment. We cannot contribute to the grace of God let alone being able to add to it. At our best we are still unprofitable. Even if we were to remove mountains and uproot trees, we would be unprofitable. Yet, we are given joy in the service of our gracious Lord.

Paul, in this last epistle, made several requests of Timothy. Among them was that he take, or pick up, Mark and bring him with him. Paul considered him to be profitable to him for ministry. We are thus constrained to make a distinction between our Lord's characterization of unprofitable and Paul's definition of profitable. We are reminded of Paul's past experience with Mark. He had started with Paul and Barnabus on the first missionary journey. Mark had turned back long before the journey was completed. When the time came for the second journey, Barnabus (a relative of Mark) wanted to take him again. This resulted in a serious disagreement between Paul and Barnabus. Paul then chose Silas to continue with him. We do not know what transpired after that, but that a reconciliation and restoration had occurred seems certain. And that Mark was no longer given to departures; rather he had obtained the favor of Paul so that he was considered valuable to Paul and the Gospel ministry. He had, no doubt, learned from past failure and had grown in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. While we

may add nothing to the grace of God, in manifesting the gifts of grace we are able to be profitable to the Kingdom work before us and perhaps be considered as was Mark in this regard.

Jeremiah relates a lesson given him of the Lord. He was told to take his girdle and go to Euphrates and bury it. After a time, he was directed to return and found the girdle marred. We read, *Then I went to Euphrates, and digged, and took the girdle from the place where I had hid it: and, behold, the girdle was marred, it was profitable for nothing. (Jeremiah 13:7).* Of course, this was prophetic of the effect that captivity in Babylon would have on Israel. It reminds us that being subjected to the things of this present world may render us unprofitable. How sad the thought of being no longer useful in any way.

Paul used the same term for profitable in another instance. We are reminded of Philemon's runaway slave, Onesimus. In sending him back to Philemon from Rome, he gave a wonderful commendation based on what the grace of God had accomplished in him. Perhaps, the summary thought concerning Onesimus is given in this: *I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds: Which in time past was to thee unprofitable, but now profitable to thee and to me: (Philemon 1:10-11).* It was that Onesimus would serve in a way that was far beyond that of a mere slave; he would be of benefit to both Paul and Philemon in the propagation of the Gospel. In the cases of both Mark and Onesimus, the issue is the Kingdom work of Paul. In all who know the

Lord and are the beneficiaries of His mercy and grace there should be both desire and labor in ministry and the support thereof in whatever way possible. The same term was used earlier in this epistle: *If a man therefore purge himself from these, he shall be a vessel unto honour, sanctified, and meet for the master's use, and prepared unto every good work. (2 Timothy 2:21).*

The writer of Hebrews addresses the issue of profitability as it relates to those who preach: *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you. (Hebrews 13:17).* The Epistles preserve the names of many who were supporters of the ministry. One case stands out: *I beseech you, brethren, (ye know the house of Stephanas, that it is the firstfruits of Achaia, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints,) That ye submit yourselves unto such, and to every one that helpeth with us, and laboureth. (1 Corinthians 16:15-16).*

Mark was not only profitable to Paul, but he is also profitable to us. Peter claims him as his son. It is thought that from this association with Peter that he gathered the material for what is preserved for us in the Gospel account written by Mark.

O that we might look to the example of Mark with the desire to be profitable. Again, we may add nothing to the grace of God as it is in Christ Jesus our Lord. But we, by that same grace, are able to be profitable to others as we seek the furtherance of the Gospel. *bhs*

Their strength is to sit still. Isa.30:7

In order really to know God, inward stillness is absolutely necessary. I remember when I first learned this. A time of great emergency had risen in my life, when every part of my being seemed to throb with anxiety, and when the necessity for immediate and vigorous action seemed overpowering; and yet circumstances were such that I could do nothing, and the person who could, would not stir.

For a little while it seemed as if I must fly to pieces with the inward turmoil, when suddenly the still small voice whispered in the depths of my soul, "Be still, and know that I am God." The word was with power, and I hearkened. I composed my body to perfect stillness, and I constrained my troubled spirit into quietness, and looked up and waited; and then I did "know" that it was God, God even in the very emergency and in my helplessness to meet it; and I rested in Him. It was an experience that I would not have missed for worlds; and I may add also, that out of this stillness seemed to arise a power to deal with the emergency, that very soon brought it to a successful issue. I learned then effectually that my "strength was to sit still."

—Hannah Whitall Smith (Contributed by Kelly Tyler)

What is our purpose as children of God who have been given such positions as we have? The purpose is "that you might set forth His virtues, who has called you out of darkness into his marvelous light." We set forth or show our God's virtues out of the necessity of our redemption. We primarily do this by the daily life and worship and by the corporate worship. The local church exists to glorify God by corporately doing that which we should be doing personally all the time. And what is that? It is the worship of God in spirit and in truth. The Greek word for "virtues" refers to the praises given to exalt the divine excellencies. This has reference to the exalting of the pre-eminence and divine perfections of our great and glorious God. We are redeemed to glorify God in worship. Do you aim to praise God today for His pre-eminent glory through Christ?

We are given a warning by A. W. Tozer in this context: Tozer spoke of the importance of worship in the local church. "Why is this important? For the simple reason that if a local church in one generation fails of its high design of worship, the next generation in that church will depart from the faith altogether. That is how liberalism comes about. Many churches stand as a monument that the generation before failed God, and as a result the present generation succumbs to liberalism and does not preach the Word of God at all. With no Spirit of God upon them and no fire-baptized leaders, they need to compensate. Therefore, they keep it up by social activities and by tying into whatever is going on in the world. But as a church, it has failed and is not a church anymore. The glory has departed." ICHABOD!

--Dr. Ron Rumburg (excerpt from an article)

Something to ponder:

"I fear it is sometimes forgotten that God has married together justification and sanctification. They are distinct and different things, beyond question--but one is never found without the other. All justified people are sanctified, and all sanctified people are justified. Do not tell me of your justification, unless you have also some marks of sanctification. Boast not of Christ's work for you, unless you can show us the Spirit's work in you" --J.C. Ryle.

"Many Christians estimate difficulties in the light of their own resources, and thus attempt little and often fail in the little they attempt. All of God's giants have been weak men who did great things for God, because they reckoned on His power and presence with them." --Hudson Taylor