

Pragmatism is the enemy of obedience. When we base our decision-making on what looks more sensible or beneficial or understandable, then, when it comes to it, we're going to worship our culture's idols instead of obeying God. —Alistair Begg

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)*

58. Q. Which is the third commandment?

A. The third commandment is, Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain (Ex. 20:7).

59. Q. What is required in the third commandment?

A. The third commandment requireth the holy and reverent use of God's names (Mt. 6:9; Deut. 28:58), titles (Ps. 68:4), attributes (Rev. 15:3, 4), ordinances, (Mal. 1: 11, 14), word (Ps. 136: 1, 2) and works (Job 36:24).

THE RIVERSIDE BAPTIST CHURCH

55 Avenue A

P. O. Box 628

Richwood, WV 26261

B. H. Seacrist, Jr., Pastor

Phone 304 846 6406

Email: branthsi@msn.com

Website: www.riversidebaptistchurchwv.com

WXTH-LP 101.7 FM— In Richwood

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

Volume 14, No. 22

May 30, 2021

OBEYING THE GOSPEL

For the time is come that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first begin at us, what shall the end be of them that obey not the gospel of God? And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear? (1 Peter 4:17-18)

It has always taken troublous times to drive and separate the Lord's people into open identification with Him. Times of relative ease tends to presumption upon the grace of God and carelessness in attending to the things given us. Peter, Paul, and others relate to the suffering of the saints both to encourage them and give examples in their own lives. In the process of doing this, important truths are revealed as to salvation and the place of the Gospel in the lives of believers. It is important enough that it is the primary issue in such passages as: *And to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with his mighty angels, In flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ: (2 Thessalonians 1:7-8)*. While the typical concept of the Gospel in the minds of men is that of attraction; it is much more. It declares the very precepts by which we are to live.

Certainly, we are committed to preach the Gospel to every creature. We are to declare its essence as did Paul in 1 Corinthians 15:1-8. And we are reminded that our Lord would declare that in being lifted up He would draw all men unto Him. Also, we are reminded that Peter had earlier pointed to Him as our ultimate example. Thus, not only did He, in His life and suffering and death, secure for us eternal salvation, He displayed the life to which we should aspire.

It was in the context of suffering and

persecution that Peter was inspired to write these words. While the thought of judgment often brings negative thoughts, that to which Peter refers is to the testing and proving of the Lord's people. It is to discover who is genuine. We are reminded of the words of the Apostle Paul concerning suffering: *For unto you it is given in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake; (Philippians 1:29)*. Such trials have a proving effect upon all who suffer them, but especially to them who are of the true House of God. Albert Barnes described this as, “The severe trial that would determine character.” Peter's word is that it “begin at us.” That is, the Lord's people and their full identification with Christ is the object of this judgment. This is grace, not punishment. The very thought of judgment will drive a believer to Christ and to the grace of Christ our Lord.

Having declared judgment as a necessary part of the believing experience, Peter sets forth two criteria that define the unique qualities of believers. The first, obedience, has always been an issue with men. We are all obedient to something. In the case of the Jews, it was the servile obedience to the Law. Or we might think of the many references to the unregenerate and their servitude to sin. But then, note the gifts of repentance and faith and note the nature of their rendering up before God. There is a surrendering to Christ and the terms He has set

before us. Peter reinforces this thought by referring to those who “obey not” the Gospel.

We might ask then, what are the Gospel precepts we are to obey? We look to and discover them in Christ. In Him we see such things as humility, submission, and sacrifice. We need not elaborate here; we would rather see to those things in us. Imitation of Christ is not servile; it is entered into freely and lovingly by those born again of the Spirit of God. We would be reminded of Paul’s reference to his own “obedience to the faith (Rom. 1:5).” He would also refer to the obedience of Christ (Rom. 1:5). And Paul would declare the aim of the commandment to be “the obedience of faith.” To true believers, repentance and belief of the truth is practice of life and they love after the example of Christ. The songwriter expressed it well: “Trust and obey, for there’s no other way, to be happy in Jesus, but to trust and obey.” In 1 Peter 1:2 he declares that, among other things, we are elect unto obedience.

The second of the criteria deepens the thoughts and looks to the precision required. The thought of being “scarcely saved” troubles many. The characteristics of salvation are the substance of salvation. True experience brings a sense of the absolute necessity with regard to all issues of character and life. “Scarcely” means “by much work” or “with great difficulty” and it necessarily involves the thought of just “barely.” Many think of this in such terms as “I just barely made it in.” Some would, no doubt, be given to thoughts of all the work they must do to earn

salvation. But the application here is to observe what Christ has done. We would contrast the use of “scarcely” here with that of abundance of grace or of life more abundantly referenced elsewhere. Abundance does not imply that we have anything to be wasted! Everything that Christ has done, is doing, and that is ordained of God is absolutely essential to salvation. Dare we ask, what could have been left out? The answer is abundantly answered here – absolutely nothing. It took everything, even to the death of Christ on the Cross. “And when I think that God His Son not sparing, sent Him to die, I scarce can take it in.”

Salvation is absolute, obtained with infinite difficulty, with no room to spare. There is no cause for either fear or sadness here; rather we rejoice. Our salvation is not “barely salvation” but is rather abundant and all that was required He precisely provided that we might have joy to the fullest in all circumstances.

Sadly, the absolute is just as sure to them who “obey not the Gospel,” they who are identified as “the ungodly and sinner.” In pointing to what they do not, we are shown what, by the grace of God, we of the “House of God” must do – we aspire to obey the Gospel. In the next verse Peter gives us a final word of encouragement: *Wherefore let them that suffer according to the will of God commit the keeping of their souls to him in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator. (1 Peter 4:19).*

O that we might be given fully to such commitment to our Worthy Lord. *bhs*

There is a difference between joy and thankfulness. Joy focuses more upon the blessings, but thankfulness focuses on the One who blesses. Scripture teaches us to count God’s blessings, as the old hymn states, to “name them one by one.” We are more prone to count our blessings by hundreds and to give thanks in bundles. In our busyness, we often ignore or trample on the God-given grass and lilies of the field! We rarely pause to see a flower’s beauty, or smell its fragrance. How many “flowers” in your life have you passed by, never noticing the love and beauty with which God clothed each one of them? Do we pause to thank God for His “flowers” petal by petal?

--Joel Beeke

HEART WORK

Many Christians of old held Sunday as the greatest day of the week — and corporate worship as the greatest part of Sunday. The Puritans called Sunday the “market-day for the soul,” the day when Christians gather a week’s worth of spiritual goods. Not that they neglected their daily personal devotions; they just knew that God visits his people in a special way every Lord’s Day.

With this background in mind, John Owen offers a stern but needed warning, To make a pretense of coming unto God, and not with expectation of receiving good and great things from him, is to despise God himself . . . and deprive our own souls of all benefit thereby. (Works of John Owen, 7:437)

The word we hear — not only in the sermon but in the songs, prayers, and Supper — is filled with “good and great things,” even with “all that our souls do stand in need of,” Owen goes on to write. So if you would both honor God and serve your own soul, go to the gathering as a mother might go to a weekly market: eager, prepared, and expecting to bring something good home. —Scott Hubbard

"With lowly reverence at the foot of the Cross, bow down your soul and say, "My Lord, between me and the worst reprobate, there is no difference--but what Your grace has made. Between me and lost souls in Hell, there is no difference--except what Your infinite compassion has been pleased to make!" "By the grace of God I am what I am!" 1 Corinthians 15:10. -- Charles Spurgeon

Was it not Hudson Taylor who said while addressing a meeting in Perth, "God gives His Holy Spirit not to those who long for Him, not to those who pray for Him, not to those who desire to be filled always; He gives His Spirit to those who obey?" And after all, salvation and sanctification are realized from the human side in obeying God. Are you going to bring your empty vessel? If you do, He will fill it. —Duncan Campbell

I want you to know that the greatest heresy in the American evangelical and Protestant church is the false idea that if you pray and ask Jesus Christ to come into your heart, He will definitely come in. You will not find that in any place in Scripture. You will not find it frequently in church history until the last century or two. What you need to know is that salvation is by faith alone in Jesus Christ. And faith alone in Jesus Christ is inseparable from repentance. Repentance is a turning away from sin; a hatred for the things that God hates and a love for the things that God loves; and a growing in holiness and in the desire not to be like the latest popular idol, like the world, like the great majority of American Christians. It is a desire to be like Jesus Christ!

--Paul Washer

THIS IS THE TRUE OBEDIENCE, WHETHER TO GOD OR TO MAN, WHEN WE LOOK NOT SO MUCH TO THE LETTER OF THE LAW AS TO THE MIND OF THE LAW-MAKER.

—JOHN TRAPP