

Every exposition of Scripture is an extended personal counseling session in which the Holy Spirit shows us the wonder and power of the gospel and also exposes the secrets of our hearts. — Sinclair Ferguson

Spurgeon's Catechism
Compiled by Charles Haddon Spurgeon
[1834 -1892]

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

30.Q. What is effectual calling?

A. Effectual calling is the work of God's Spirit (2 Tim. 1:9) whereby, convincing us of our sin and misery (Acts 2:37) enlightening our minds in the knowledge of Christ (Acts 26:18), and renewing our wills (Ezek. 36:26), he does persuade and enable us to embrace Jesus Christ freely offered to us in the gospel (Jn. 6:44-45).

31.Q. What benefits do they who are effectually called, partake of in this life?

A. They who are effectually called, do in this life partake of justification (Rom.8:30), adoption (Eph. 1:5), sanctification, and the various benefits which in this life do either accompany, or flow from them (1 Cor. 1:30).

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:

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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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BEING JUSTIFIED

Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ: By whom also we have access by faith into this grace wherein we stand, and rejoice in hope of the glory of God. (Romans 5:1-2)

The things which follow in this chapter are the conclusions which the Apostle would have us to enjoy and so be found in a way of full partaking and participation. It is to be feared that we often know things but remain unaffected by them. The “therefore” found here embraces all that has gone before in the Epistle to the Romans. We are reminded of the universal condemnation of men in chapter 1, that God is no respecter of persons in chapter 2, the declaration of righteousness without the Law in chapter 3, and the revelation that justification is by faith in chapter 4. Our attention is thus called to the blessedness of being justified with a view toward glorifying God as we claim these things and rest therein. We would then begin with the consideration of the justified state of believers and see in it the means of reconciliation with God by His grace and for His glory.

The thought of “being” draws our attention to the continuing nature of our salvation as we note that we are being, having, accessing, and standing. As to the matter of justification and faith, there are some that suggest that the comma is in the wrong place. That is, that this should read, “...being justified, by faith we have peace with God.” I do not feel qualified to argue with the translators at this point. We would carefully note that where justification is realized, there is peace with God through Christ our Lord.

We would be reminded here that faith is not the efficient cause of our justification. It is the work of Christ alone, ordained from all eternity, as the means whereby the elect of God would be reconciled to God. It is brought to accomplishment by the suffering of Christ under the justice of God and His subsequent resurrection. It is realized in the believer when God-given faith lays hold on the fact of it in Jesus Christ our Lord and so finds application of it in our (their) minds.

The realization of it brings to us the reality of a divine work accomplished for us and applied to us both on our account and in our lives. In verse 9 of this chapter Paul again uses the thought of being justified. This time he declares that it is “by His blood.” Thus, we are made to understand the implications of the guilt and penalty of our sins being laid on Him. Earlier in the epistle Paul had referenced justification in this way: *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: (Romans 3:24)*. To the Jews in Antioch of Pisidia he had preached that justification is “by His grace.” At the end of the preceding chapter Paul writes that Christ was “delivered for our offenses, and raised again for our justification.” In the parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, Jesus declared that it was the one who had manifested self-abasement and pled for mercy that was justified. While we are certainly passive

in the accomplishment of our justification, faith brings us to the knowledge, the perception, and the experience of being justified.

A most precious effect of being justified is that “we have peace with God...” Such is the experience of one who has come to know why justification was needed in that all have sinned and were found constituted as sinners. We have been brought to the realization of sins forgiven and the way cleared for access to God. It is to know that divine justice is satisfied with the judgment that fell on Christ Jesus as He took our place. The terms of peace with God have been made forever effectual. We who ran from God, knowing the terror of falling into the hands of the living God, are now encouraged to come boldly into His presence.

There is some debate concerning the terms used here. It is the position of some that the terms here are imperative – given as a command. If that is so, we would read this as “let us have peace with God.” The objections are raised in that we are shown justification by grace and then commanded to act of our own volition. Again, I will not enter the debate here. For me, the issue is resolved as we understand that the thought of peace here is that which we have with God in sensing that we are reconciled to Him. This is not mere tranquility; it is rather that we might enjoy being in the presence of God and given to praise and adoration for Him and to receive the overtures of His lovingkindness to us who were once His avowed enemies. How then could it be said “let us have peace with God?” We would return to the matter of “being.” Paul urged the thought on the Corinthians thusly: *And all things are of God, who hath reconciled*

us to himself by Jesus Christ, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation; (2 Corinthians 5:18). But then he continues with this thought: *Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us: we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. (2 Corinthians 5:20).* We would conclude then that it is a fact that we have peace with God and the testimony of the cross assures us of that. And we are bidden to enjoy that peace as a matter of experience.

Thus, we are brought to the presence of God by a “new and living way.” Whatever aspect of salvation we may name, be it pardon, forgiveness, sanctification, and so on, it is all of grace. And faith directs us into it all. So, we read, *Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need. (Hebrews 4:16).* And so, we stand, “which denotes boldness, courage, and intrepidity, and a freedom from a servile fear and bashful spirit, and a constant attendance at it; all which is consistent with reverence, humility, and submission to the will of God.” (John Gill). We are assured of the power of God as to both authority and ability to stand for the Gospel. We may stand having the confidence of acceptance with God.

Are we suitably affected by the realization that we are justified? Being freely justified is a matter often claimed verbally. Is it likewise reflected in our actions and in our humble approach to God? As it is with all the word of God, meditation upon the truths of God’s Word will always move us to a more sensed identity with the One who has freely justified us. *bhs*

Fallen human beings enter into joy only through the door of despair. Fullness can be had only through emptiness. That happens decisively at conversion, as we confess our hopelessly sinful predicament for the first time and collapse into the arms of Jesus, and then remains an ongoing rhythm throughout the Christian life. If you are not growing in Christ, one reason may be that you have drifted out of the salutary and healthy discipline of self-despair. – Dane Ortlund

DEAD MAN WALKING

A criminal on death row being conducted to his execution is called a “dead man walking”.

This term is spiritually applicable to all of us in our native state, that in which we were born. All of us are by nature condemned criminals on spiritual death row.

Yes, this world is a death row! Everyone in it is a convicted criminal guilty of a capital crime and sentenced to die. For “all have sinned” (Romans 3:23), and “the soul who sins shall die” (Ezekiel 18:4), “for the wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23). Everyone still in his natural state passes through this world to the place of execution as a “dead man walking”.

God’s Word describes the natural “dead man walking” in Ephesians 2:1-3. He is indeed a dead man, for he is “dead in [or because of] trespasses and sins” (v.1). He is walking, for he “walks according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air [Satan], the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience” (v.2).

But there are differences between the criminal and the natural “dead man walking”.

First, they are conducted to the place of execution by different people. The criminal “dead man walking” is conducted by guards. But the natural “dead man walking” needs no conducting guards, for he willfully and voluntarily “conducts himself” (v.3).

Second, they approach the place of execution in different dispositions. The criminal “dead man walking” dreads the place of execution, and is sad as he approaches it. But the natural “dead man walking” is gleefully “fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind” (v.3) as he approaches the place of execution –

Unless God intervenes!

Thankfully, God in His sovereign grace has intervened for all who believe the gospel of the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

For believers in Jesus Christ are assured that “God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us in Christ Jesus” (vv.4-7).

Are you walking as a dead man or a quickened believer? – Daniel E. Parks

The convinced sinner is deeply impressed with a sense of the insufficiency of his own works; he has given up all hope of acceptance with God by anything which he has done, or ever can do; if we therefore suppose him to have no trust in the Savior of sinners, he must be in a state of absolute despair; and this is entirely inconsistent with that faith which, as we have seen, implies the choice and approbation of God's way of saving sinners by Jesus Christ. Hope and trust are the immediate and natural consequences of such believing views of the propriety and glory of the Divine remedy,

--John Fawcett