

Jesus' sheep were safe even when their Shepherd died, and are safe because He died, for in His death He conquered their enemy. – Daniel E. Parks

And yet, the power of this promise rises only as high as our knowledge of the one who gives it. The presence of a vague Benevolence is of little help when suffering steals toward us. And so, God not only promises his people that he is with them; he also reminds them of who he is.

--Scott Hubbard

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)*

42.Q. Which is the first commandment?

A. The first commandment is, "Thou shalt have no other gods before me."

43.Q. What is required in the first commandment?

A. The first commandment requires us to know (1 Chron. 28:9) and acknowledge God to be the only true God, and our God (Deut. 26:17), and to worship and glorify him accordingly (Matt. 4:10).

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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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WHO HATH BEWITCHED YOU?

O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (Galatians 3:1-2).

The questions with which Paul challenged the Galatians are preserved for us as both a warning and an encouragement to cling to the things they had let slip at the enticement of others. Thereby, we are urged to maintain our focus on Christ alone and to be exercised in the obedience of the Truth that we be not swayed. The term with which this chapter begins is not meant to be demeaning to a people in general so much as the moral course they had chosen. When one is shown the obvious and responds to it in a positive and profitable way, to turn away to a lesser and more detrimental course of action may be termed foolish. It is for us to remember that Paul is treating these people as believers who have fallen into serious error. This is demonstrated in Paul's manner of addressing them. *My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you, (Galatians 4:19).* It is critical that we be reminded of our own vulnerability.

This passage, along with all truths set forth in the book of Galatians, needs to be considered in the context of the whole book to see Paul's concern. So, we will draw from other places as we go along and seek to be more anchored in the foundational things he emphasized. The evidence of Christ in the Gospel and the manner, method, and consistency of its presentation is so plain and profound that it is a foolish move to pursue other ways of pleasing God -- *Trust in the*

LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. (Proverbs 3:5).

Having established that their behavior and departure from the faith was of such a serious nature as to be termed foolish, we turn to the question. We are quickly made aware of just how Paul regarded this error in the first chapter of the book (Galatians 1:6-9). And as if to show that none was exempt from such failure, Paul recorded the fact that Peter was even swayed and acted in a fleshly manner. We read the account in Chapter 2 beginning at verse 11. Paul felt so strongly about this that he rebuked Peter to his face. Paul defended this rebuke with what is seen as a most powerful testimony to his own faith: *For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. (Galatians 2:19-20).* The Galatians' error was that they were being enticed to embrace legalism over faith in Christ alone. The same would apply to any error that directs attention away from our Worthy Lord.

The use of the term “bewitched” is not that of sorcery. It is rather a reference to the commonly held idea of someone “casting an evil eye” and thus entrancing another. The intent of Paul was to point out that it must have been a

powerful deception to lure them away from the foundational truth of Christ our Lord. Such lapses are evidently of the flesh and is pointed out elsewhere: *Then he said unto them, O fools, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken: Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? (Luke 24:25-26)*. Another example is found in Paul's words to Timothy: *But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition. (1 Timothy 6:9)*.

The obvious objective of the enemy is to obscure the truth as it is in Christ Jesus and the obedience to that same truth. It is imperative that we learn that Satan is not out to get us; he is out to destroy the image of Christ in us. He operates in any way to appeal to the fleshly tendencies that remain with the aim of countering the faith of God's elect. With the Galatians it was the enticement to legalistic ceremonialism. In this age it is the idea that profession is alright, but obedience is not necessary. Men then act in a very predictable way. The obedience here is that of faith wherein lives are caught up in the delightful belief of all that Christ has done leaving nothing for us. That it is Christ to whom we look, there can be no doubt.

Paul very forcefully reminds them of what they had experienced in the past. The gospel had been preached to them, witnessed to by the Apostle, experienced by them and so proven as to its authenticity. The term "evidently" has the thought of "placarding." That is holding up a message before them with bold strokes. The

graphic was thorough in setting forth Christ and declaring the Gospel. Christ had been "...set forth crucified among you." They had seen and heard and had responded to such preaching of the Gospel of the Substitute, the bodily resurrection of our Lord, and they had experienced that life from above. The Scripture is void of any methodology other than preaching Christ and Him crucified. That they should have departed in this way was astounding to Paul and it should be to us. *Let us therefore fear, lest, a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it. (Hebrews 4:1)*.

Further questions reinforce the rebuke of Paul. How had they originally received the truth? It is important that we understand that they did receive the Truth. They had been born again. How had they understood what had happened to them? Paul answers the question by asking it. *So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. (Romans 10:17)*.

Paul concludes that all will admit to having had a spiritual beginning (see v. 3). He implies that they were perhaps thinking of a jump-start and then going on alone. The enemy would lure one away into a fog of self-reliance, self-determination, and pride. It is the same Spirit that makes the compassions of God precious to us day by day. It is He that brings constant renewal and freshness in Christ. Has our Christianity become mundane and ordinary, or do we find our greatest excitement beholding the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ? *bhs*

CONSIDERATIONS IN GIVING – Excerpt from Tim Challies, *Blog 8/23/23*

Consider that your money is actually God's money. While your name may be on the bank account and stamped on the debit card, it is God who owns it. You merely manage it on his behalf. And so as you consider your finances, the controlling question should not be "What should I do with my money?" but "What does God want me to do with his money?"

Consider the human tendency to become captivated by money. The Bible warns that money can control us to such a degree that it competes with God for our ultimately loyalty. Every one of us will be tempted to try to find in money what God means for us to find only in himself. Is there something we can do to prove to ourselves and to God that we put him ahead of money? Read on.

Consider that God promises to provide what you need. One of the reasons we can become so easily enamored with money is that it seems to be the solution to so many of our problems. Money can put food in our bellies, a roof over our head, and so much more. Yet it is God who has promised he will provide these things. Yes, he is likely to use money to do it, but it's important to ultimately trust in him rather than in the strength of our bank account.

Consider that God expects you to commit some of your finances to his causes in the world. He makes it clear that he expects each Christian to give—and to give primarily and as a matter of first importance to the local church. He expects his work to carry on through the means provided by his people.

Finally, consider that obedience fosters joy. When you do what God calls you to do, you experience joy rather than guilt or sorrow. Hence, if you give to the Lord's work, you'll find it a joyful rather than difficult experience. In fact, when you choose not to give, you are denying yourself the pleasure of doing so.

With all of those building blocks in place, it falls to you to take God at his word. You do that by giving, and as you give you are essentially putting God to the test (though in a good and acceptable way). As you give you can prayerfully say to God, "I have trusted you with my soul and am now choosing to trust you with my money. This doesn't really make sense to me, but I trust you. So please show me that your ways are better than my ways. Please show me that you will provide even as I give to your work. Please accept this gift and prove yourself to me."

And he will. God cannot prove himself if you will not give him the opportunity. But he can and will prove himself once you create the context. He will prove that he will provide not despite your generosity, but because of it. Because when it comes to God, the normal, accepted, and seemingly common-sense principles of finance just don't add up.

How much should you give? That is a whole different topic. But briefly, the Bible does not provide an exact amount or percentage, though the Old Testament tithe of ten percent of your income is probably a good place to begin. (And no, don't get all hung up on pre-tax or post-tax income—just pick one and go with it.) My recommendation—and, to be clear, this is me and not the Bible speaking here—is that you should give enough that you notice it in some way. It is one thing to throw a few spare coins in the offering plate but another to give an amount that is noticeable and that actually makes a difference in your life. Perhaps that means you cannot buy something you had hoped to buy or that you'll be heading into a new semester with a little less buffer than you had expected. But God knows and God honors that. That small sacrifice is one you can lay before him and joyfully do without for the sake of trusting him and serving his cause.