

We ask that God would make us holy. It is a good request indeed. But are we prepared to be sanctified by any process that God in His wisdom may call on us to pass through? Are we ready to be purified by affliction, weaned from the world by bereavements, drawn nearer to God by losses, sicknesses and sorrow? Alas! these are hard questions. But if we are not, our Lord might well say to us, "You don't know what you are asking."~ J.C. Ryle

"It is not the absence of sin but the grieving over it which distinguishes the child of God from empty professors" - A. W. Pink

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)

17. Q. What is sin?

A. Sin is any want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the law of God (1 John 3:4).

18. Q. What was the sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created?

A. The sin whereby our first parents fell from the estate wherein they were created, was their eating the forbidden fruit (Gen. 3:6, 12, 16, 17).

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Sunday Morning 11:00 AM

Sunday Evening 6:00 PM

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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ALL THE COUNSEL OF GOD

For I have not shunned to declare unto you all the counsel of God. Acts 20:27

Many years ago during a conversation with a much older preacher I asked Him about the doctrines of Grace and the sovereignty of God. He quickly replied, “I don’t preach those things because they tend to upset people.” He went on to say “I preach whatever it takes to get them into the church and then I work on getting them aligned in the truth.” I pressed the challenge a little further by saying that these things are the very Word of God to which he replied that he knew that but he wanted to preach what worked. I will credit him with being honest in saying that he knew they were there but he was not going to preach them. The difference today is that men deny the sufficiency of the Word of God and proceed to implement programs and champion philosophies with scant reference to the Word of God. When they do, it is with disconnection to the word of Truth rather than in the context of “all the counsel of God.”

This text is found in the midst of one of the most tender and loving discourses to be found in the Bible. The Apostle had long served and served with the Ephesians. Reading the entire account we sense the great degree to which the love of God and of Christ is manifested in them and Paul. Their mutual affection is exemplary in its witness to the presence of the Lord with them. Paul would make the point that this great Love was expressed to them in what he had delivered to them. He is not endeavoring to express pride in accomplishment. He would rather have them to know that he had supplied them with all concerning the counsel of God

with respect to the salvation of souls. Thus he would encourage them to know and rejoice in what had been accomplished in their behalf and would urge them to continue to hold nothing back that had been revealed concerning the divine declaration of the Gospel.

In listening and reading much that is passed off as gospel today I am reminded of the labels on packages of processed food. An example would be something like: “Texturized chicken made from select parts.” What is probably meant is that they have taken the less desirable things, ground them up, added some kind of a binder, added seasonings and a coating, fried it and called it a chicken patty or nugget. The end result bears no resemblance to a chicken or any part of one. So it is when men decide that certain parts of what is in the Bible just won’t sell or be palatable to the tastes of fallen man, they take them out and devise a curious admixture that bear no resemblance to the truth and build their ministries on that which will fuel the religious pride of man.

Such was not the case with Paul or any other of God’s true gospel preachers. He was not presenting his ideas about the counsel of God. He was delivering the message that God gave him, in the order that it was given and its necessity was thus pressed upon them. Men hear of the doctrine of election and immediately begin to reason. Such arguments are offered as “if that is true, why preach.” The proper answer is because God said to preach. We are reminded as was Paul and the others that the first

member of our audience is the Lord Himself and we stand before Him. What has happened to “thus saith the Lord” being preached without regard to consequences?

It is important that we see the display of love of Paul towards these men. We must assume that it had always been so. So it would be that as he preached and told them the absolute truth that it was in a context of love for them and their souls. Thus would we begin declaring “all the counsel of God” by showing the eternal nature of His love and the way it drove Him to obtain the salvation of His people even at the cost of His Son.

Sadly missing in many circles today (many of them claiming to be fundamental) is the necessity of repentance born out of Godly sorrow. It is shown by example (God be merciful to me a sinner”) and taught by precept: *For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation not to be repented of: but the sorrow of the world worketh death. 2 Corinthians 7:10.* Above all else it is to be understood that it is a divine commandment incumbent on all men that they repent. It was the necessity presented by John the Baptist.

Paul had in this same passage reminded

them that he had testified of “repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.” This was not the mental assent whereby many are declared saved by those who have no authority to do so. It is that which lays hold on Christ Jesus our Lord, falls on His mercy and clings to no other. It is that which is way of life to the possessor. Is that which moves them to acknowledge Him in all their ways and to serve Him without reservation. It is that which believes God concerning His Son and responds to “all the counsel of God.”

So much could be said on this topic and all God’s men should be in the way of saying it. Theories about God are just that and no more. But, that which is left us of the Word of Truth is plain. It is of God and is to be echoed by His messengers. There is much that we may not know. *The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law. Deuteronomy 29:29.* It is that which is revealed that comprises Paul’s ministry and ours. He would convey it to all as “all the counsel of God.” *bhs*

AN AUDIENCE OF ONE

The Audience of One Jesus is the Audience of One. Let’s live for the applause of God, not for the praise of men. We should do what we believe pleases our Lord, regardless of how it pans out in opinion polls. That includes loving others and giving radically, ministering to the down and out and addressing addictions, and saying we think it’s wrong to kill children of all ages, including the unborn. We do such things, not seeking the approval of our culture, but of our King, entrusting ourselves “to him who judges justly” (1 Peter 2:23). Paul said, “If I were still trying to please man, I would not be a servant of Christ” (Galatians 1:10). Jesus is the Audience of One. We will stand before His judgment seat, no one else’s. We should long to hear Him say, “Well done, good and faithful servant.” Live for the approval of others and you will not live for Christ’s approval, and therefore you will not endure. John Chrysostom, the church father, said, “Men who are in love with applause have their spirits starved not only when they are blamed offhand, but even when they fail to be constantly praised.” It was said of some religious leaders that “they loved human praise more than praise from God” (John 12:43, NIV). Let’s live our lives not for the praise of men, but for the applause of God, the Audience of One. Perspectives from God’s Word “So whether we are at

home or away, we make it our aim to please him” (2 Corinthians 5:9). “Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ” (Colossians 3:23–24). Perspectives from God’s People “Now think, my brother, you will be in Heaven very soon. Since last year a great number have gone home: before next year many more will have ascended to glory. Sitting up in those celestial seats, how shall we wish that we had lived below?” —Charles Spurgeon “The beginning of true nobility comes when a man ceases to be interested in the judgment of men and becomes interested in the judgment of God.” —J. Gresham Machen – Randy Alcorn



The course we must take is as simple as it will be difficult. We must commit ourselves to proclaiming the attributes of God as they are found in Scripture—raw, uncut, unedited, and unfiltered by the humanistic philosophies of our age. God has no need for us to make a defense on His behalf. If we proclaim Him as He reveals Himself to be in the Scriptures, He will defend Himself! We must stand in the midst of self-absorbed men, challenge their beliefs, and point their eyes upward through the proclamation of truth. We must tell them that the Lord is the only God, eternal, immortal, and invisible, the “most high above all the earth.” We must warn them that the nations are like a drop from a bucket before Him, and He regards them as a speck of dust on the scales. We must lead them to the conclusion that to Him belong greatness and power and glory and majesty, indeed everything that is in the heavens above and on the earth beneath. For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things. We must proclaim with the greatest clarity and precision that this is the God against whom we have sinned, and it is because He is so great that our sin is so evil.
Paul Washer



WHAT GOOD IS IT? And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the LORD of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. —Isaiah 6:3 If you want to pray strategically, in a way which would please God, pray that God might raise up men who would see the beauty of the Lord our God and would begin to preach it and hold it out to people, instead of offering peace of mind, deliverance from cigarettes, a better job and nicer cottage.... What good is all our busy religion if God isn’t in it? What good is it if we’ve lost majesty, reverence, worship—an awareness of the divine? What good is it if we’ve lost a sense of the Presence and the ability to retreat within our own hearts and meet God in the garden? If we’ve lost that, why build another church? Why make more converts to an effete Christianity? Why bring people to follow after a Savior so far off that He doesn’t own them? We need to improve the quality of our Christianity, and we never will until we raise our concept of God back to that held by apostle, sage, prophet, saint and reformer. When we put God back where He belongs, we will instinctively and automatically move up again; the whole spiral of our religious direction will be upward. Lord, I do indeed pray that You might “raise up men who would see the beauty of the Lord our God and would begin to preach it and hold it out to people.” Amen. A. W. Tozer



The purpose of God is as eternal as He is and has always included the salvation of a people for His Name in which He would glorify Himself. This would be accomplished by the appearing of our Lord Jesus (2 Tim. 1:9-10) and will be brought to fruition at His appearing the second time without sin unto salvation. *bhs.*